

Response to inquiry into voting rights for prisoners | Electoral Commission

Search Response to inquiry into voting rights for prisoners

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application to register as an anonymous elector or a declaration of local connection, the latter of which is used for remand prisoners and includes an attestation requirement. If EROs need confirmation of the length or other details of a sentence, this could be provided through some form of attestation. The level of prison staff who could attest these applications could be prescribed, as it is for certain police ranks in relation to anonymous registration. The prescribed level should be low enough that the registration process is not reliant on too few people but high enough that the attester will be aware of who can and cannot register, and would carry sufficient authority. There is a risk that prisoners won't have access to the information required in order to verify their identity as part of their application to register to vote, such as their national insurance number or any other documentary evidence. Consideration would therefore need to be given to alternative ways for prisoners to verify their identity so that they can register. The method by which prisoners would cast their vote In a polling station The setting up of polling stations in prisons would logically be very difficult and require significant resourcing. For example, making sure that all prisoners were issued with the correct ballot papers for their registered address, and that the completed ballot papers were returned to the correct wards or constituencies ahead of the count would be difficult to deliver in practice. If polling stations were set up in prisons, consideration would also need to be given to how to maintain the integrity of the voting process, ensuring that the voter can cast their vote in secret. In addition, all voter materials and the ballot boxes would need to be kept secure at all times. There are questions around who would run the polling station and how they would be trained. Given the practical challenges highlighted above, we do not recommend that polling stations are set up in prisons. This would therefore mean that prisoners would need to rely on absent voting methods, such as postal voting or voting by proxy.

Currently, prisoners on remand are classified as special category electors, and are only able to vote by post or proxy. By post There is a relatively short window between the issue of postal ballot packs by Returning Officers and the deadline for returning a completed postal ballot in time for it to be counted. The HM Prison Service - Wales would therefore need to ensure that their current arrangements for processing prisoners' mail would enable prisoners to receive and return their postal ballots within the necessary timeframe. If prisoners are entitled to vote by post, we would expect there to be necessary safeguards in place so that they can complete their postal ballot pack in secret. This may be achieved through including specific wording in the legislation or receiving an assurance from the prison service this will happen. By proxy If prisoners are able to vote by proxy they should not be required to have their application attested, as is the case for overseas and service voters. This is because by nature of being in prison the voter has a sufficient reason for not being able to attend their polling station. Information provision If some prisoners are in future eligible to vote at elections in Wales, it will be important to ensure they know that they can vote and how to register and cast a vote. The Commission would expect to work with governments and the prison service to explore how an awareness programme for prisoners would be delivered to enable this. Prison officers would need to be trained so they can support prisoners, and signs on voting rights and how to register to vote and vote could be displayed in relevant areas of the prison. Prisoners who are disabled or who have any learning difficulties should be able to receive help to complete forms if they ask for it. We would be happy to explore with the prison service the practical steps they could take to support prisoners to vote and advise on the materials that they could use to raise

awareness. Access to campaign arguments If prisoners are eligible to vote at elections in Wales they must have access to information about the policies of candidates, parties and other campaigners so they can make an informed decision when they vote. The prison service would need to consider how this would be delivered.

Cross-border issues arising from prisoners from Wales being imprisoned in England As residence is one of the main criteria for registration there will need to be careful consideration about how to register people who have previously been resident or registered to vote in Wales but who are serving a prison term in a prison in England, Scotland or Northern Ireland. If prisoners were registered at the prison address, this could have a disproportionate impact on the electorate in the ward in which the prison is located. It would also mean that Welsh prisoners in prisons in England would not be able to vote in Welsh elections. Allowing prisoners to register in respect of a previous or intended address in Wales could help address this issue.

Special considerations for young offenders in custody if the franchise is extended to 16 and 17 year olds generally We are aware that the Welsh Government intends to legislate to extend the franchise for National Assembly and local government elections in Wales to include 16 and 17 year olds. This means that the local government register will include 16 and 17 year olds as full electors. Additionally, 15 year olds and some 14 year olds will be entitled to be included on the register as 'attainers'. If the franchise is extended further to include prisoners, information and support would need to be made available to 15, 16 and 17 year-olds in custody by the prison service about entitlement to register to vote, and to encourage them to apply to register online. Example of an existing special category of elector –

service voters The current process for registering HM Forces as service voters is an example of a system used for registering a specific group of people who are not living at their usual UK address. HM Forces service voters complete a service declaration which states either the address where they are living in the UK, the address where they would have been living if they are serving abroad, or if they do not have either, an address at which they have lived in the UK. The application to register as a service voter is prescribed and differs from the standard registration application form. All applications to register are processed by the ERO who determines if the applicant is entitled to be registered. If they are, information on postal and proxy voting is generally provided to them as they are likely to be unable to vote in person. In the case of service voters, each unit of the services has a designated member of staff who acts as the Unit Registration Officer (URO). Each base commander gives assistance to the URO and other personnel in their unit to promote participation in the electoral process. HM Forces service voters are listed as 'other electors' on the register when they no longer have a connection to their qualifying address. Other countries' approaches to prisoner voting: Canada Canadians who will be 18 years of age or older on polling day, and who are in a correctional institution or a federal penitentiary in Canada, may vote by special ballot in an election or referendum. In each institution a staff member is appointed liaison officer and facilitates the process of registering and voting. For electoral purposes, the incarcerated elector's place of ordinary residence is not the institution in which he or she is serving a sentence. It is either: his or her address before being imprisoned the address of a spouse, common-law partner, a relative or dependant of the elector, a relative of his or her spouse or common-law partner or a person with whom the elector would live if not incarcerated; the place of his or her arrest; or the last court where the elector was convicted and sentenced. To register to vote, the incarcerated elector must fill out an 'Application for Registration and Special

'Ballot' form, which is returned to the liaison officer, who validates it. During a general election or referendum, eligible prisoners vote in their prison on the tenth day before polling day. A polling station is set up from 9am and remains open until all those who wish to vote have done so, but closes no later than 8pm. The elector is responsible for sending their ballot paper to Elections Canada no later than 6pm on polling day. They can either send it themselves or leave it with the deputy returning officer to forward by special arrangement. The ballot papers of prisoners are counted at the same time as those of other residents temporarily absent from their electoral districts. At the end of polling night, special ballot votes are added to the total results for each district. Further information is available on the Elections Canada website . Related content Register to vote All you need to register to vote is 5 minutes and your National Insurance number. Our Commissioners Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run

May 2018 voter identification pilot schemes | Electoral Commission Search

May 2018 voter identification pilot schemes You are in the Voter identification pilots section Home Our research Voter identification pilots In this section

Background Impact on voters Impact on electoral administration Impact on public confidence Impact on security Our recommendations Summary of identification requirements Feedback on voter identification pilots Pilot area evaluations Our findings This report sets out what we found when we looked at the results of the May 2018 pilot schemes. It also looks beyond these pilot schemes at the implications for the future, and what we think the UK Government should do next. Overall, the voter identification requirements trialled in May 2018 worked well. Nearly everyone in the five pilot scheme areas who went to vote in their polling station was able to show identification without difficulty. The number of people who did not vote because they couldn't show identification was very small. Our findings People in the areas where the pilot schemes took place were significantly less likely to think that electoral fraud took place than people in other areas with elections in May 2018. Returning Officers and their staff in polling stations were able to run the new processes well and without any significant problems. These pilot schemes have provided useful and important initial evidence about how a voter identification requirement in Great Britain might work in practice. They have also highlighted areas where further work is needed, because there is not yet enough evidence to fully address concerns and answer questions about the impact of identification requirements on voters. The authorities in England that took part in the 2018 pilot schemes were not sufficiently varied to be representative of the different areas and groups of people across the rest of Great Britain. This means that we can't be sure whether people in other areas would have problems showing identification. We also know from previous analysis and feedback from other organisations such as Mencap and RNIB that some groups of people may find it harder than others to show a passport, driving licence or travel card as part of a photo identification scheme. We have some limited evidence from these pilots that younger people and those who don't always vote were less likely to say that they would find it easy to show identification. More work is needed to make sure these people can easily get the right kind of identification to be able to vote. When the UK Government invited local councils to run pilot schemes in May 2018, it also said that it was open to looking at piloting in future elections. We agree that it would be helpful to collect more evidence from further pilot schemes at elections in 2019. These pilots have shown that there may be several different ways of delivering a voter identification scheme in Great Britain. The UK Government should now focus on what further evidence they need to answer questions and address concerns about the more detailed impact of a voter identification requirement, and how the design of future pilot schemes will help to provide that evidence. We have identified some important lessons from the 2018 pilot schemes in this report and made recommendations for further work and future pilot schemes. These recommendations would help provide the best possible evidence base for any decisions about identification requirements for voters at polling stations in Great Britain. Our main recommendation is that the UK Government should encourage a wider range of local councils to run pilot schemes in May 2019. These should include a mixture of rural areas and large urban areas, and areas with different demographic profiles. This would help make sure there is more detailed evidence about the impact of voter identification on different groups of people. Further work and future pilot schemes Further work and future pilot schemes When the UK Government invited local councils to run pilot schemes in May 2018, it also said that it was open to looking at piloting in future elections. We agree that

it would be helpful to collect more evidence from further pilot schemes at elections in 2019. These pilots have shown that there may be several different ways of delivering a voter identification scheme in Great Britain. The UK Government should now focus on what further evidence they need to answer questions and address concerns about the more detailed impact of a voter identification requirement, and how the design of future pilot schemes will help to provide that evidence. We have identified some important lessons from the 2018 pilot schemes in this report and made recommendations for further work and future pilot schemes. These recommendations would help provide the best possible evidence base for any decisions about identification requirements for voters at polling stations in Great Britain. Our main recommendation is that the UK Government should encourage a wider range of local councils to run pilot schemes in May 2019. These should include a mixture of rural areas and large urban areas, and areas with different demographic profiles. This would help make sure there is more detailed evidence about the impact of voter identification on different groups of people. Related content Register to vote All you need to register to vote is 5 minutes and your National Insurance number. Our Commissioners Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run

Letter from Commissioners: Strategy and Policy Statement measures in the Elections Bill | Electoral Commission Search Letter from Commissioners: Strategy and Policy Statement measures in the Elections Bill You are in the Key correspondence section Home Key correspondence First published: 21 February 2022 Last updated: 21 February 2022 Summary of the letter Date: 21 February 2022 To: The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP - Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Communities and Housing The Rt Hon Kemi Badenoch MP - Minister for Levelling Up Communities The Rt Hon Lord True CBE - Minister of State, the Cabinet Office From: John Pullinger – Chair and Electoral Commissioner Sarah Chambers - Electoral Commissioner Rob Vincent - Electoral Commissioner Dame Sue Bruce - Electoral Commissioner (Scotland) Professor Dame Elan Closs Stephens - Electoral Commissioner (Wales) Dr Katy Radford - Electoral Commissioner (Northern Ireland) Alex Attwood - Electoral Commissioner (nominated by the smaller parties) Alasdair Morgan - Electoral Commissioner (nominated by the Scottish National Party) Joan Walley - Electoral Commissioner (nominated by the Labour Party) Format: Sent by email Full letter Dear Ministers, As the Elections Bill enters its Lords stages, we write to you to urge the Government to reconsider those measures which seek to change the oversight arrangements of the Electoral Commission. Our aim, which we anticipate you share, is to maintain the Commission's current independence and its accountability to all parties elected to the parliaments of the United Kingdom. Reflecting the significance of this matter, this letter is signed collectively from the full board of the Commission, save for Lord Gilbert of Panteg (our Conservative nominated Commissioner) because the House of Lords where he sits is now considering this legislation. It is our firm and shared view that the introduction of a Strategy and Policy Statement – enabling the Government to guide the work of the Commission – is inconsistent with the role that an independent electoral commission plays in a healthy democracy. This independence is fundamental to maintaining confidence and legitimacy in our electoral system. If made law, these provisions will enable a government in the future to influence the Commission's operational functions and decision-making. This includes its oversight and enforcement of the political finance regime, but also the advice and guidance it provides to electoral administrators, parties and campaigners, and its work on voter registration. The Statement would place a duty on the Commission to have regard to the government's strategic and policy priorities and to help the government to meet those priorities. The Statement would also place a duty on the Commission to have regard to guidance issued by the Government relating to any of its functions. It would thereby provide a mechanism, driven by the then governing party, enabling that party's ministers to shape how electoral law is applied to them and their political competitors. While the stated position of the current government is that it would not intend to use these powers to impact on the Commission's independent oversight and regulation of the electoral system, no such assurances can be given about how the broad scope of these powers would be used over time. The Statement has no precedent in the accountability arrangements of electoral commissions in other comparable democracies, such as Canada, Australia or New Zealand. Indeed, the Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters of the Venice Commission, of which the UK is a member, states that "Only transparency, impartiality and independence from political motivated manipulation will ensure proper administration of the election process". The Commission's accountability is direct to the UK's parliaments and should remain so, rather than being subject to government influence. The current mechanism for scrutiny and accountability to UK Parliament – with parallel arrangements in the Scottish Parliament and the Senedd – is through the

Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission, a cross party committee which scrutinises the Commission's financial, operational and strategic planning. This is appropriate and we would welcome such additional scrutiny as the Speaker's Committee saw fit to take into account government and other views on the priorities and performance of the Commission, in determining that the Corporate Plan and work of the Commission is focussed and delivers on its statutory obligations. This would meet the Government's stated objective of more effective and full accountability to Parliament, while maintaining a cross party setting. We therefore urge the Government to think again about these measures, to remove the provisions, and to work with the Commission and Speaker's Committee to ensure that suitable accountability arrangements are in place to ensure confidence across the political spectrum. Strong accountability is essential for this, but so too is demonstrable independence. The Commission's independent role in the electoral system must be clear for voters and campaigners to see, and preserved in electoral law.

Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23 | Electoral Commission Search

Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23 You are in the Our plans and priorities section Home Our plans and priorities In this section Performance analysis

Objective: Accessible registration and voting Objective: Transparent political campaigning and compliant political finance Objective: Resilient local electoral services Objective: Fair and effective electoral law Objective: A modern and sustainable electoral system Enabling activity: Independence and integrity Enabling activity: A skilled organisation where diversity is valued Enabling activity: A learning organisation where improvement is continuous and resources are used efficiently Using our resources to support the delivery of our goals Powers and sanctions report Northern Ireland annual report Wales annual report Scotland annual report Overview This section provides an overview of the Electoral Commission, our purpose, our performance during the last year and the key risks to achieving our goals. We have included summary financial information within the performance report. This is consistent with the financial statements, where more detail is available. The Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) established the Electoral Commission. We are independent of governments and political parties and directly accountable to the UK, Scottish and Welsh Parliaments. We have prepared our 2022/23 Annual Report and Accounts in accordance with an accounts direction, set out on page 166, issued by HM Treasury under paragraph 17 (2) of Schedule 1 PPERA. We have prepared the powers and sanctions report on page 51 in accordance with paragraph 15 Schedule 19(b) and paragraph 27 Schedule 19(c) PPERA. Preface Foreword It has been a very busy year for the Electoral Commission in its work to support stakeholders in every part of the UK. I would like to thank all the staff of the Commission for their dedication, professionalism and expertise in providing independent and impartial advice and guidance to voters, administrators, and the regulated community. A particular focus this year has been preparing for the implementation of the UK Elections Act alongside the distinct electoral agendas in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The Commission works flexibly as one cohesive unit across these geographies, challenges and opportunities. We are committed to putting the voter first. We know that public awareness of the electoral system is hugely important to voter engagement and confidence. We have invested in ensuring people can understand what the changes mean for them and how to take part in elections. More widely, we have made efforts to support newly enfranchised and young voters to get involved in the democratic process. This work is coupled with support for electoral administrators, responsible for delivering the changes on the ground. Our guidance is designed to help them fulfil their responsibilities, against the challenging backdrop of resource constraints and legal complexity. Their work and dedication have been paramount to ensuring the changes were implemented well. Those in England and Northern Ireland with elections in May 2023 have been particularly busy, but administrators in Scotland and Wales have also been preparing for new measures at future polls. There have also been changes for campaigners to get to grips with. We continue to invest in the regulatory support and advice on offer to help parties and campaigners understand and meet their legal obligations and achieve compliance. I am pleased with the level of take up from the parties and the quality of engagement we've had with them. I have enjoyed the opportunity to meet a broad spectrum of our stakeholders and those involved in democratic and political systems across the UK. During the year, the Commission Board travelled to Belfast and Chorley for engaging meetings with local organisations, youth groups, candidates, councillors and administrators. Other similar visits are planned in the coming year to support us in

hearing direct from stakeholders. We were delighted to be joined by Mr Speaker in his home constituency to discuss our constructive engagement with the Speaker's Committee, through which we are accountable to UK Parliament. Hearing a range of voices and views is so important to understanding how the Commission can continue to improve and be ready for future demands. It goes hand in hand with ongoing research into modernising elections which, together, will be used to support recommendations to the UK's governments about how the electoral system can continue to support participation in the democratic process. In October, the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee of the UK Parliament published its report on our work. We welcomed its findings on the urgent need for consolidation, updating and improvement of electoral law. The report also made recommendations to ensure the Commission remains capable of responding to the challenges the electoral system faces, and recognised that operational independence is a fundamental aspect. In responding to the UK Government's consultation on its proposed Strategy and Policy Statement for the Electoral Commission, we shared our view that such a statement – by which the government can guide our work – is inconsistent with our role. Both the Speaker's Committee and Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee highlighted the importance of maintaining the Commission's independence and the risks posed by such a statement. We await the next stage in this process, but the Board remains firmly committed to independent decision-making, acting according to the needs and interests of the whole electoral community, including voters. Finally, I'd like to acknowledge that this year we have been responding to a cyber-attack by a hostile actor. This has been a major challenge and important learnings have been taken forward. I apologise to all those, including staff of the Commission, whose personal data has been put at risk. The Commission puts independence and impartiality at the heart of all its does, and that focus will continue in all our work in the year ahead. John Pullinger CB, Chair A message from our Chief Executive The Commission has, rightly, set itself ambitious objectives in its Corporate Plan, and work to deliver on those goals has been happening at pace. Our teams in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales have worked tirelessly to provide high-quality and efficient services to all those we support. A great deal of effort and expertise has been dedicated to ensuring that the May 2023 elections could be delivered in a way that maintained voter confidence. This was a particular challenge this year, with new changes brought in by the Elections Act layered onto an already complex system. The Commission's awareness campaign about the new requirement to show voter ID was the most publicly visible illustration of the work that went into ensuring everyone could take part; this was a truly integrated campaign combining paid advertising and partnership engagement, with press, social media and voter information activity. But voter ID is not the only change from the Elections Act. Throughout the year, the Commission also held consultations on a Code of Practice for non-party campaigners, the introduction of digital imprints, and new accessibility measures at polling stations. Engagement with parties, campaigners, electoral administrators and partners allowed us to improve the usefulness of our guidance and enhance our evidence base about how the law is applied in practice. We continue to invest and focus on how we can best support our regulated community to understand the law and achieve compliance. The laws around political finance play a big part in providing transparency and maintaining voter confidence in the fairness of the system. Our database now provides information on over £1bn of donations reported by parties and campaigners since the Commission was established in 2000. This is a noteworthy milestone and one that demonstrates the level of information that we make available

for everyone to see. We will continue to highlight areas where the UK's political finance system could be reformed to increase confidence in the system. We are also committed to supporting and championing the voice of young and future voters. In January, over 220 schools across the UK signed up to take part in Welcome to Your Vote Week. This is a focal point of our learning work, which aims to promote greater consistency in political literacy education, and increase political knowledge and understanding amongst young people. This is an important and growing area of our work, and it's been great to see it go from strength to strength. Within the Commission we also continue to make positive changes. In response to a cyber-attack on the organisation, considerable improvements have been made to the organisation's digital infrastructure, which recognises the potential risks from cyber-attacks, and helps to protect our systems from such incidents in the future. Work continues on replacing the current online system for registering political parties and reporting financial information, and we regret that the project was not completed in this financial year as hoped. We have developed a new People Strategy for 2022-25, which sets out planned improvements to improve HR systems, learning and development, recruitment, and performance management. A new development programme was also launched this year, which aims to strengthen the personal leadership skills of our people and to improve and strengthen the Commission's overall culture. It has been rewarding to see these positive changes over the last year. The executive team and I remain committed to ensuring the Commission is in the best possible position to maximise our performance and support our people and stakeholders.

Shaun McNally CBE, Chief Executive

Our role We work to promote public confidence in the electoral system and ensure its integrity. Our strategic objectives

- Accessible registration and voting
- Transparent political campaigning and compliant political finance
- Resilient local electoral services
- Fair and effective electoral law
- A modern and sustainable electoral system

Our vision is to ensure people trust, value, and take part in elections and referendums. We aim to achieve this vision by delivering the strategic objectives set out in our Corporate Plan 2022/23 – 2026/27, which we laid in the UK Parliament and Scottish Parliament in April 2022, at the same time as the related Corporate Plan for Wales was sent to the Senedd. These strategic objectives are the basis on which we evaluate the Commission's performance for the year.

Enabling factors To ensure we are equipped as an organisation to meet these objectives, we have identified three key enabling activities.

We demonstrate independence and integrity

- We continue to demonstrate our independence and integrity by taking decisions on the evidence and being transparent about the reasons for them; basing our policy positions and recommendations on analysis of evidence; effectively communicating our work and views; providing responsive services to those we support; and maintaining effective governance arrangements.

We are a skilled organisation where diversity is valued

- We implement refreshed working practices to reflect wider changes in our work environment and culture; attract, retain and develop the people we need; maintain and improve high standards of management, with a focus on developing our people; and further embed equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of our work.

We are a learning organisation where improvement is continuous and resources are used effectively

- We procure and implement value for money technology that improves service delivery as appropriate; maintain a sound prudent financial strategy; continue to develop techniques to learn from experience, seek continuous improvement and become more efficient and effective; develop a corporate environmental strategy that meets policy and legislative requirements.

Our role across the UK We deliver for voters across all parts of the UK, with Electoral

Commission offices in Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh and London. We work closely with the UK, Scottish and Welsh governments. We are accountable to the UK Parliament, the Scottish Parliament and the Senedd, and are funded by each of these for the work undertaken on elections under their devolved or reserved powers. Electoral law is not devolved in Northern Ireland and remains reserved to Westminster. UK-wide organisation The Commission is a UK-wide organisation, and the Board takes decisions with that approach in mind. Due to legislation, this Annual Report must only focus on the work done in relation to our role and accountabilities to the UK Parliament.

Separate information is available for Scotland and Wales and our accountabilities to those parliaments. Our year at a glance Quarter one The UK government's Elections Act received Royal Assent We published our report on the 2021 canvass and electoral registers in Great Britain Shaun McNally was appointed Chief Executive The May 2022 elections were delivered We launched our consultation on new Returning Officer performance standards Quarter two We published parties' annual statements of accounts The Commission held a Board meeting in Belfast The UK government launched its consultation on a Strategy and Policy statement for the Commission We published our reports on the May 2022 elections in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland We launched our consultation on updated accessibility guidance for Returning Officers Quarter three We published new guidance for Electoral Registration Officers on managing the process for free voter ID the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee reported on the work of the electoral Commission We gave evidence to the Levelling Up Housing and Communities Select Committee on the draft Strategy and Policy Statement We published campaign spending from the Northern Ireland Assembly election We launched our consultation on the draft Code of Practice for non-party campaigners Quarter four We launched our voter ID public awareness campaign for the May 2023 elections We published our consulttaion on the revised Enforcement Policy We ran Welcome to Your Vote week with educational bodies and youth groups We published updated guidance for Returning Officers ahead of May elections, including on new accessibility requirements We launched our voter registration public awareness campaign for the May 2023 elections Our year in numbers 280,498 voter registration (2021-22: 660,000) 100% of election reports published in a timely manner (2021-22: 100%) 66% employee engagement score achieved (2021-22: 67%) 11,829 public enquiry responses (2021-22: 24,643) 14,800 social media responses (2021-22: 1,259) 387 donation reports from parties published (2021-22: 412) 82% of party registrations processed within target time (2021-22: 93%) 91% of investigations closed within target time (2021-22: 68%) 797 annual statements of accounts published (2021-22: 724) 100% of electoral administration guidance published on time (2021-22: 100%) 99% of advice requests from local authorities met within 3 days (2021-22: 99%) £16,000 civil sanctions issues as a regulator (2021-22: £58,000) Performance Analysis Jump to Performance Analysis Objective: Accessible registration and voting Objective: Transparent political campaigning and compliant political finance Objective: Resilient local electoral services Objective: Fair and effective electoral law Objective: A modern and sustainable electoral system Enabling factors: Independence and integrity Enabling factors: Skilled organisation where diversity is valued Enabling factors: Improvement is continuous and resources are used effectively Using our resources to support the delivery of our goals Powers and sanctions report Northern Ireland annual report Wales annual report Scotland annual report Download our full Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23 2022-23 Annual Report and Accounts

Report: How the 2011 National Assembly for Wales elections were run | Electoral Commission Search Report: How the 2011 National Assembly for Wales elections were run You are in the Senedd elections section Home Senedd elections On this page About this report Facts and figures Did people feel informed People's experience of voting Lessons learnt: what we should change Costs of the election Download our full report First published: 9 July 2019 Last updated: 7 August 2019 About this report Our report is about the administration of the National Assembly for Wales general election, held on 5 May 2011. It identifies and comments on key issues that emerged and on voters' experience of the election. It also reviews the impact of combining the election with the referendum on the UK Parliamentary voting system. Facts and figures Our report focuses particularly on the experience of voters, based on public opinion research and other research data. In total 2,289,735 people were registered to vote in Wales and 41.8% of them did so. Overall 17% of electors asked for a postal vote and a high proportion of those, 71%, used their postal vote. Postal votes accounted for 28% of all votes cast at the election. Our report reviews people's experience of voting in polling stations or by post. A total of 176 constituency candidates campaigned to be elected and 13 political parties nominated lists of regional candidates. This was 21 fewer constituency candidates and three fewer political parties than in the Assembly elections in 2007. Our report gives more detail on campaigning in the election. Did people feel informed We undertook a public information campaign to increase people's awareness of the Assembly elections and the UK-wide referendum. We sent an information booklet to all households in Wales and used television, radio and online advertising to inform people about the elections. We evaluated levels of people's awareness by conducting public opinion research before and after our campaign. Of those surveyed, 78% recognised at least one element of our campaign. After polling day, when asked if they had been aware of the Assembly elections, 82% of people said they were. Seven in 10 people surveyed said they had enough information to make an informed decision on how to vote in the election, with 79% of those aged 55 or over feeling informed compared with 60% of those under 35. In terms of people feeling informed, the prominence of the Assembly elections in the media continues to be an issue. Our public opinion research found a difference in Wales, compared with Scotland and Northern Ireland, in people's views of the amount of media coverage of the elections. Over half of people surveyed in Wales thought there was a lot of media coverage of the Assembly election, whereas 72% of people surveyed in Scotland and 70% of people in Northern Ireland thought there was a lot of media coverage of the elections being held there. People's experience of voting People in Wales continue to have very high levels of satisfaction with the voting process. Of those who voted in polling stations, 97% said they were satisfied with the process of voting and 98% of those who voted by post were satisfied. Full details of our research findings are contained in the report. A key priority for the Commission is that voters are able to vote easily and confidently, knowing that their vote will be counted in the way they intended. The Assembly election ballot papers, prescribed in legislation by the Secretary of State for Wales, were designed according to our good practice guidance on accessibility. In public opinion research, nearly all voters (96%) said they found their ballot papers easy to complete. Of those who voted in both the Assembly election and the UK-wide referendum held on the same day, meaning they completed three ballot papers, 96% said they found it easy to fill in more than one ballot paper. Lessons learnt: what we should change Timing of elections The timing of the Assembly election count became a controversial issue at the end of March, when it

became publicly known that Returning Officers in the North Wales electoral region had decided to count votes the day after the close of poll rather than overnight. Our report explains the background and reviews the issue, as well as containing data on when results for each constituency and electoral region were announced. By the end of November 2011, we will circulate an Issues Paper on the timing of election counts, identifying issues that have arisen at elections across the UK in recent years. We will seek views from those with an interest in the timing of election counts, including governments, political parties, Returning Officers, broadcasters and voters. Following analysis of views received, we will seek to make recommendations in early 2012 on the timing of election counts and the way in which they are organised, taking account of the type of elections and a range of relevant circumstances.

Disqualification of two candidates returned as elected Two weeks after the election, an issue of significant public interest arose. Two candidates who were returned as Assembly Members in regional elections were found not to have been validly elected because of offices they held, meaning that they were 'disqualified'. This became the subject of investigation by the police and, after the Crown Prosecution Service concluded that no criminal offences had been committed, by the National Assembly for Wales. The Commission's own actions came under public scrutiny as a result of an error in the Welsh language version of our guidance to candidates and agents, which had a bearing in one of the cases. We apologised to the Assembly and to the person concerned. Our report covers this issue in detail. We have been working with the Welsh Language Board since this incident and are glad to implement a series of recommendations they made to us in September 2011. These include improving our processes for dealing with documents and guidance in Welsh, in order to avoid any future difficulties. In particular, we have thoroughly revised our processes for publishing information in Welsh and online on our website.

The format of the regional ballot paper had been revised for the 2011 election, so that it contained the names of political parties who had nominated candidates, together with any independent regional candidates who were standing, but not the names of party regional candidates. However, the names of candidates were required to be displayed in polling stations so that voters could see them. Early on polling day, there were complaints that regional candidates' names were not displayed or were displayed inadequately by some Returning Officers. There were also a small number of complaints from postal voters that they did not have access to the names of regional list candidates other than by consulting notices in public places or local authority websites. Our report explains the background and the actions that were taken on polling day to resolve this issue. We conclude that, following the experience at the elections, the question of whether candidates' names are included on the regional list ballot paper should be reconsidered. However, before certain relevant matters are resolved (which our report explains), it would be premature to make decisions on the regional ballot paper. We will revisit this issue no later than December 2014. We will seek further views and make any necessary recommendations to the Secretary of State for Wales in sufficient time for a decision not later than one year before the Assembly election in 2016. That would allow any change to the ballot paper to be prescribed in legislation at least six months before the 2016 election.

Invalid postal votes In common with trends at previous elections, just under 5% of returned postal votes had to be rejected as invalid by Returning Officers, for one of the following reasons: the postal vote statement which must accompany the ballot paper was missing; the ballot paper was missing; or because the signature or date of birth supplied by postal voters could not be matched with their postal vote application.

Our report contains more information and data about invalid postal votes. Allowing Returning Officers to request a refreshed identifying signature, and also to provide electors with feedback if their postal vote has been rejected would help address this problem. We first made this recommendation to the UK Government in 2007 and have since reiterated it. In September 2011, the UK Government said that it would work with the Commission and electoral administrators to avoid the problems we have highlighted with the current postal voting system, while taking into consideration the need to ensure it remains secure against fraudulent applications for postal votes. We will work with the UK Government to ensure the right changes are in place by the next UK Parliamentary general election.

Collecting postal votes Part of ensuring that every postal vote is counted involves ensuring that all postal votes are collected from mail centres by the time polls close. Individual Returning Officers are responsible for arranging and paying for Royal Mail 'sweeps', where any remaining postal votes are collected from mail centres so that they can be included in the election count. In May 2011, the Commission took responsibility for arranging and paying for the cost of the 'sweeps' in respect of the UK-wide referendum. Royal Mail delivered all postal votes resulting from the sweeps directly to referendum counting areas, rather than Counting Officers having to collect them. This meant that, for the Assembly election, the same service was available and used by all Returning Officers. Feedback from referendum Counting Officers and election Returning Officers about the sweep has been broadly positive, but there remains scepticism about its value, with only a small number of postal votes being returned as a result. We aim to develop a better model for working with the postal service. Campaigning in the election Returning Officers offered and held briefing meetings with candidates and agents to iron out any difficulties in advance of nomination, and police representatives often attended to provide advice on electoral integrity issues. However, Returning Officers and the police have told us of poor attendance, with election staff and the police sometimes outnumbering candidates and agents or meetings being cancelled. We continue to encourage candidates, agents and parties to attend briefing meetings offered by Returning Officers to ensure they are fully informed about the nomination process and the requirements of law. We will consider further with Returning Officers and political parties what more could be done to improve the attendance of face to face local briefing for candidates and agents. The new format of our candidates and agents guidance was welcomed in the feedback we received, but party officials that deal with compliance issues felt they would like in addition a comprehensive, 'one-stop' volume containing all of our guidance, with legislative references. We will consider how we can meet that request for future elections. We received feedback from certain political parties and some candidates who indicated that they were unclear about whether their election leaflets, delivered under freepost arrangements with Royal Mail, could include messages calling on people to vote for party candidates in both constituency and regional elections. We have referred these issues to Royal Mail, who agreed to look at their guidance again. We will follow this up with Royal Mail and seek to ensure that the parties in Wales are consulted on any revisions to the guidance in good time before the next Assembly elections in 2016. Our materials and resources for Returning Officers We received positive feedback from Returning Officers about the materials and resources and the direct support we provided to them, but there was also negative feedback. Some felt that the Commission 'micro-managed' the UK referendum, with consequent impact on the combined elements of the election. There was also some negative feedback about presentational issues, with some electoral administrators saying they found our

website difficult to navigate, preferring to have the guidance in one printed volume and not to receive updates by email, in case these were missed. We have taken account of the feedback we received on the planning of our guidance and resources for elections in 2012 and how we present that information on our website. Costs of the election Our report gives detail on how much the election cost. The Welsh Government meets the costs of local Returning Officers in delivering the election. Although the actual costs of Returning Officers are not yet known, since the Welsh Government has set a deadline of 5 January 2012 for the submission of accounts, the maximum recoverable amount for all 40 constituencies and 5 electoral regions is £4.7 million. The Welsh Government also met the costs of Royal Mail, almost £3.4 million, in delivering over 16.5 million freepost election communications from candidates and political parties. Download our full report Related content Results and turnout at the 2011 National Assembly for Wales election View the results and turnout at the 2011 National Assembly for Wales election Report on the May 2021 elections in Wales Read our report about how the 2021 elections in Wales were run Results and turnout at the 2016 National Assembly for Wales election View the results and turnout at the 2016 National Assembly for Wales election Report: How the 2011 National Assembly for Wales elections were run Read our report about how the 2011 National Assembly for Wales elections were run

Board minutes: 22 January 2020 | Electoral Commission Search

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Wednesday 22 January 2020 Time: 9:30am to 12:35pm Location: Boothroyd Room, 3 Bunhill Row, London Date of next scheduled meeting: Wednesday 26 February Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Holmes, Chair Alasdair Morgan Alastair Ross Anna Carragher Elan Closs Stephens Joan Walley Rob Vincent Sarah Chambers Stephen Gilbert Sue Bruce (Videoconference) Bob Posner, Chief Executive Craig Westwood, Director, Communications, Policy and Research Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Amanda Kelly, General Counsel David Bailey, Head of Strategic Planning and Performance David Meek, Senior Adviser, Governance Petra Cress, Head of Planning, Performance and Governance Shumina Faruk, Project Support Officer Tom Hawthorn, Head of Policy (for items 5 and 6) Charlene Hannon, Head of Guidance (for items 5, 6 and 7) Katy Knock, Policy Manager (for items 5 and 6) Phil Thompson, Head of Research (for items 5 and 6) Kate Engels, Policy Manager (for items 5 and 6) Carol Sweetenham, Head of Projects (for item 7) Niki Nixon, Head of External Communications (for items 5, 6 and 7) Apologies and introductions No apologies.

Declarations of interest No new declarations of interest. Annual declaration of interests (EC 1/20) Action: Two members of the Board to consider, with the Chair, which of their more peripheral interests might need to be declared. Resolved: That the paper be agreed. Minutes of the Commission Board meeting of 4 December 2019 (EC 2/20) Action: The Board requested that the minutes be amended to reflect the discussion at the previous meeting regarding observing on election day. Resolved: That the minutes of the Commission Board meeting on 4 December 2019, subject to amendment above, be agreed. Reflections on 2019 United Kingdom Parliamentary General Election and related matters (oral update) The Director of Electoral Administration and Guidance updated the Board on the work undertaken following the December election. The Commission was still collecting data from a range of sources, including a survey of candidates, a public opinion survey, and a survey of electoral administrators. Early dialogue with a range of stakeholders from across the electoral community had highlighted a good deal of consistency between what the Commission found from its review of the data and their reflections on the polls. The Board considered the challenges that arose from a high number of registration applications being made close to the deadline. The number of duplicate applications was reported anecdotally as being at similar levels to the 2017 UK General Parliamentary Election, although the data on this was not yet clear. The pressure of managing these registration applications was a significant risk to the successful administration of the polls, with the potential to impact on voters' experience. The Head of Policy outlined the initial findings of the Commission's post-poll research. The public view was that the election was well run overall, despite significant pressures on those running the polls. There were risks to the successful delivery of the election, and evidence that small numbers of voters did not receive the quality of service they had

a right to expect. There were for example some localised errors with poll cards, some of which could be largely attributed to pressures with supplier capacity. Concerns had been expressed in Northern Ireland, following claims by whistleblowers. These were being fully looked into. The Commission had received a number of contacts from overseas electors who were unable to return their postal votes in time for them to be counted. Our research found some public concerns in relation to whether some campaign materials were truthful and accurate. This included labelling of material and social media accounts, candidate material looking like local news, and transparency of third-party campaigning, given the significantly increased numbers of third party campaigners at this election. This was the first General Election where there were greater transparency measures in place on social media platforms, but these were still not at the level we would like. There was also inconsistency in the levels of transparency of different social media companies. The Director of Regulation noted that the work of the election was far from over from the regulatory point of view.

Spending returns would not be submitted for some time yet but in the meantime we had already spoken to some parties and third-party campaigners, and would continue to take proactive steps to assist them in their preparation of these reports. We had found the data provided by social media companies regarding spending on their platforms useful with this work. The Director of Regulation described the work of the Election Cell, set up by the Cabinet Office, in which the Commission participated during the election period. This cell included organisations from Whitehall, the police, and other regulators. We had found our participation had been positive for the election and for stakeholder engagement. We had provided feedback to the Cabinet Office on suggested improvements to enhance the effectiveness of any such election cell around future electoral events. The Head of Policy noted the information so far received regarding intimidation of candidates. The Board considered the evidence about intimidation and recognised that establishing an effective baseline for data was difficult. Research suggested that the vast majority of intimidation was online. Intimidation was not widespread across the country, but where it did occur, it was quite serious. The Board sought to understand how far instances of intimidation were concentrated on particular social media platforms; there was not clear data on this at this stage, but as this becomes clearer the Board encouraged the Commission to share these findings. The Board discussed some specific instances in Northern Ireland. The Board reflected on its decision not to observe at polling stations on election day, which had been a pity. The Chief Executive noted that in the context of the then prevalent high security risks, the fact that nothing happened to cause concern was a good outcome. However, it was to be hoped that more normal conditions would return for future elections. The Board discussed the pressures on electoral administrators, and whether, and if so how, these pressures could be addressed. The Board sought clarity, for example, on whether the election timetable could be adjusted to reflect changes in the demands placed on administrators since the introduction of online electoral registration. The Head of Policy confirmed that any such changes would require changes to primary legislation. The Chair suggested that we should also focus on promoting improvements to the underlying system, such as progress on a look-up tool and wider registration modernisation. The Board noted the UK government's anticipated changes to the Fixed Term Parliament Act. One consequence might in fact be a shorter administration period prior to elections, as had been the case before the act. The nature of post-poll reporting this time was being considered. Reports needed to be published before the May polls. There were opportunities to bring out important messages about future polls, as well as the

statutory duty to fulfil. The Board noted that the Commission had prepared well for the polls, the election had been seen as well run overall, and the outcome was trusted and had not been called into question. The Director of Electoral Administration and Guidance noted the different challenges that arose when there were combined polls, as in May 2020, rather than a stand-alone election. Government policy priorities following the UK Parliamentary General Election (EC 3/20) The Director of Communications, Policy, and Research advised the Board of the areas where the UK government had announced its priorities for policy and regulatory changes that would affect the work of the Commission. There was still uncertainty about the level of ambition and timetabling in some areas. Nevertheless, it was clear that the volume of proposed changes had significant implications for the Commission's work over the term of the Parliament, although much of this was already reflected in our existing planning. The Board considered some of the specific government policy priorities, including changes to the frequency of reapplying for postal votes, and the implications of the proposed Constitution, Democracy and Rights Commission. The Board reflected on how these would be addressed in our corporate plan. The Director of Communications, Policy, and Research confirmed that the Commission would continue to make the case for its policy priorities even when these were not currently priorities for the UK's governments. The Board considered other areas where the UK government might make policy changes, such as on overseas voters. We should be ready to press for innovative solutions in such circumstances. The Board reflected on the impending final report from the Law Commission regarding electoral law reform, which would require a response from the government. Resolved: That the paper be agreed. Corporate plan and budget 2020/25 (EC 4/20 and 5/20) The Chief Executive outlined the approach that we had taken to meet our obligation to produce a corporate plan for consideration by the Speaker's Committee following a UK Parliamentary General Election. Due to time constraints, we would prepare a holding interim corporate plan for the Speaker's Committee, and request permission to prepare a more comprehensively considered corporate plan for 2021. This paper reflected the discussion from the December 2019 Commission Board meeting. The main estimate included a proposed increase in our core budget, which was in line with the increase to the Cabinet Office. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services went through the proposed budget figures in detail. More than half of the proposed increase was due to accounting changes around leasing of office accommodation which were not adjustable. The number and importance of scheduled electoral events in 2020 and 2021 impacted the proposed events budget. There was also ongoing regulatory work from the European Parliamentary Election and UK Parliamentary General Election, together with the need to work with governments on their declared electoral priorities. The Board emphasised the need for the cover letter to the Speaker's Committee in support of the corporate plan to set out clearly the reasons behind the request for a modest increase to the core budget, including the extent to which this was driven by work in support of the programmes of governments. We should also emphasise the discipline and rigour we brought to our budget management and planning, and avoid any impression of self-congratulation. Resolved: That the interim Corporate Plan 2020/2025 and budget as set out in the Annex to this item be approved That the attached Main Estimate 2020/2021 (with Parliamentary Control Totals set out in Table 4 of the document), that embodies those budgets, and the Corporate Plan 2020/2025 for submission to Speaker's Committee be agreed That delegate authority for the Chief Executive as Accounting Officer, working with the Chair, to amend the Corporate Plan and Main Estimate in non-major ways to reflect unforeseen developments between approval by the Board and submission

to the Speaker's Committee be agreed Corporate plan 2021/26 The Chief Executive reminded the Board that this corporate plan would be the first time we would be reporting to three parliaments: Westminster, the Scottish Parliament, and the Senedd. Their different budget cycles needed to be taken into account. The Head of Planning, Performance and Governance explained the timetable for the production of a comprehensive corporate plan. To develop the 2021/26 corporate plan, the Commission would create a strategy map that shows how all elements of the plan interconnect in a logical way, and relate performance reporting closely to that. The narrative plan would then be written from the strategy map, which translates the strategy map into a story everyone can readily understand. There would also be early and close engagement with key stakeholders. The Head of Strategic Planning and Performance confirmed the deadlines for the preparation of this plan. Although Speaker's Committee would not look at the corporate plan until February/March 2021, we had to work to a September 2020 deadline to meet the timeline set by the devolved administrations. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services noted that the Scottish and Welsh parliaments would contribute proportional funding to the Commission, and would expect visibility on what they had funded. The Board supported early discussions with stakeholders about the strategy, considered the merits of using focus groups to complement the research knowledge base, and encouraged engagement with groups, including young people, with whom we usually had less contact. Resolved: That the paper be agreed. Forward plan of Board business (EC 6/20) Resolved: That the paper be noted. Action tracker (EC 7/20) Resolved: That the paper be noted. Chair and Chief Executive's meetings and meetings of note in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland (EC 8/20) Resolved: That the paper be noted.

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Northern Ireland Assembly Election Update from the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) 2022

Financial Reporting dates for political parties Modernising voting project Report on

the canvass Upcoming meetings dates for 2022 Any other business First published: 15

February 2023 Last updated: 11 May 2023 Meeting overview Date: 7 June 2022 Time:

10:00am Date of next scheduled meeting: Tuesday 25 October Who was at the meeting Who

was at the meeting The Electoral Commission: Dr Katy Radford, Electoral Commissioner

for Northern Ireland (KR) Cahir Hughes Head of Electoral Commission, Northern Ireland

(CH) Jonathan Mitchell, Manager of Electoral Commission, Northern Ireland (JM) Roisin

McDaid, Senior Office (Political Parties Liaison) (RM) Hannah Greenfield, Digital

Comms Officer Electoral Office for Northern Ireland: Virginia McVea, Chief Electoral

Officer (VM) Political Parties: Alliance Party - Peter McCully (PM) DUP - George

Dorrian (GD) and Ashleigh Perry SDLP (Social Democratic & Labour Party) – Catherine

Matthews (CM) Sinn Féin - Gary Fleming (GF) Ulster Unionist Party – Stephen Nichol

(SN) Apologies: Alliance Party of Northern Ireland – Sharon Lowry Minutes from NIAPP

meeting Tuesday 8 March and any matters arising The minutes of the previous meeting

were agreed. Issues raised by political parties in advance of the meeting No specific

issues raised by political parties in advance of the meeting. May 2022 post-election

review – 5 May Northern Ireland Assembly KR invited feedback from the Panel.

CH advised that feedback would inform the statutory Electoral Commission (EC) report

on the election. Absent voting CM raised that electors didn't know they needed to

keep their digital registration number (DRN) to obtain an absent vote. CH noted that

it was difficult to reach electors that needed to be aware of the number. The EC ran

a highly targeted digital advertising campaign aimed at groups likely to apply for an

absent vote, however JM raised that more digital and particularly partnership work

was required to reach the target audience. VM raised concerns that it was difficult

for people to obtain an absent vote and that the Secretary of State wouldn't allow

her to move the absent vote deadline. The difficulty for EONI was the short time

period between electors realising they needed their DRN and the deadline for sending

in their absent vote applications. EONI attempted to get press coverage on the issue

but this had low take-up due to the complicated nature of the issue. GF thanked EONI,

EC, and the Royal Mail for their working relationships throughout the election

period. GF reiterated the DRN was a major problem for the reasons outlined by VM,

adding that the public aren't focused on the election until they receive their poll

cards, which left a very tight window for receiving their DRN. CM restated that

whilst party reps and candidates try to encourage engagement, it doesn't happen early

enough. PM asked VM what the response time was for EONI sending out DRN

notifications. VM stated there was no backlog on this during the election so letters

were sent the same day (unless there was no post that day). VM advised that as there

are no plans to amend legislation, more work will be required in future. Nominations

GD raised a problem with a nomination paper that passed a pre-check but a subscriber

moved house (before the papers were formally submitted) causing an issue in the final

nomination process. VM advised that without advance notice from candidates it is not

possible for EONI to foresee this type of issue. VM outlined the work EONI did to

improve the nominations process such as using an online booking system and setting up

pop-ups in council offices. Campaigning CH highlighted the unsavoury nature of some

campaigning at the election and requested views. GD raised that there had been damage to election posters and that some election posters had been stolen. This was more common in rural areas. CM stated that campaigning had been particularly difficult during this election with posters stolen and burnt and candidate subject to online abuse. CH stated that it is important that people do not feel intimidated when running as a candidate. VM advised she received complaints about the behaviour of some candidates on and around polling day. GD reiterated that there was more online abuse for both men and women. PM stated that for the Alliance Party there was more intimidation when entering certain communities, particularly towards younger candidates. KR highlighted that we would engage with campaigners to tackle this cross-cutting issue and highlighted the Assembly Women's Caucus as a potential group to work with on this issue. Candidate mailing (Royal Mail) CC stated there had been no major issues for the Royal Mail. CM thanked CC for the service provided however, in some areas, electors stated they hadn't received the addressed mail and others hadn't received the unaddressed mail. There were also three different postings to be sent at different times but some households received all three together. CM also questioned why all mail had to go to Mallusk. CC advised that for the Assembly Election the mailing is handled centrally, however she would raise this internally. SN also thanked CC for their help during the election. They commented that a small number of unaddressed mail had bleed-over from one constituency to another. They also raised an issue with artwork checking as some candidate mailings included information on joining a party which was not approved by Royal Mail. Public awareness JM outlined the Electoral Commission's six-week voter registration campaign in the run up to the election and the targeted DRN campaign. CH updated the panel on the learning resources created by the Commission to support young people's political literacy which will be built on at future elections. Polling stations CM raised concerns about the behaviour of some campaigners and polling agents at some polling places and that she thought that some polling staff were not confident challenging it. VM stated parties needed to ensure campaigners behaved within the rules and within the voluntary code of conduct and asked that parties let her know of issues on polling day so she could send out polling station inspectors. VM thanked parties for complying with Covid-19 guidelines but acknowledged the circulation of polling agents could have been an issue. GD advised they had noticed more campaign literature left in polling booths. He mentioned a particular polling place where restrictions on vehicle access close to the entrance had caused accessibility issues. VM advised she would look into this. GF stated they didn't have many issues, however early on polling day, some polling agents weren't allowed access to the polling station. VM advised this had been an administrative error and apologised. CH invited VM to raise any issues she had found. VM outlined difficulties with staffing as many had dropped out last minute citing Covid-19 as a reason. Another issue was that some schools did not want their grounds used as a polling place. The count CH invited feedback on the count. Participants acknowledged that the count took a long time. GD raised some issues with facilities given the length of the count. GF acknowledged the improvements to the Meadowbank count centre, however noted that a queue outside prevented access to the start of the count. He stated there were also issues with counts moving at different speeds. He suggested the use of a digital calculator to improve this. VM advised the slower pace was also due to the voting patterns of electors, but she would work with statisticians to examine where efficiencies in the count can be found. VM apologised about the issues with amenities and suggested that in future EONI may subsidise caterers. It was also raised that the layout of the

Jordanstown count centre had impeded a disabled attendee. CM reiterated the problem with the queue at Meadowbank, and also suggested count centres have a facility, such as a screen for privacy in case of medical issues. CM also highlighted that she had requested more chairs as people were on their feet for a long time at the count. VM advised EONI would review the efficiency of the count and look at what improvements can be made. Spending and reporting RM reminded the parties that returns were due in August. The guidance had been significantly updated this year and there were two briefings before the election for the candidates, and one for the parties. RM requested feedback on this. CM advised that candidates found the forms complicated and that the virtual seminars were appropriate but that they were not as helpful as in-person meetings. RM acknowledged that candidates had difficulties completing forms, but as they were prescribed in law she said the EC could look at how to make the explanatory notes link better to various parts of the form. GD stated there was a new generation of people taking on agent roles and acknowledged the party's role developing the knowledge of agents, but that any additional guidance would be welcomed. CH acknowledged that more guidance would be useful. RM asked the parties if earlier seminars would be useful. CM advised that the issue is more with ensuring the right people are taking on agent roles.

Update from the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO)

VM advised that statistics from the election were available on the EONI website. VM acknowledged points raised earlier regarding the DRN and its impact on people applying for absent votes. VM reiterated she was keen to speak to parties' regarding the efficiency of the latter stages of the count and that work had already begun to examine where improvements could be made. EONI were looking into ways of improving accessibility and asked for any feedback or ideas on this. KR thanked VM and advised the EC were committed to helping EONI with this.

2022 Financial Reporting dates for political parties

RM advised the parties of the following dates:

- Donation and loan reports for the period 1 April – 30 June 2022 had to be submitted by 30 July 2022
- Audited statement of accounts for the year ending 31 December 2022 for parties with income or expenditure over £250,000 had to be submitted (with the auditor's certificate) by 7 July 2022
- Parties should renew their annual confirmation of registered details at the same time as submitting their accounts by completing form RP8
- Parties with campaign expenditure of £250,000 or less had to submit their report of campaign spending on or before 5 August 2022.

Modernising voting project

JM updated the panel on the modernising voting project that was being undertaken by the EC. The EC was gathering views on potential future improvements to voting in the UK. The work aimed to ensure that voting fits the needs and expectations of voters in 2022 and beyond. Last year the EC carried out research with public focus groups and published a summary of the findings on our website. JM stated they wanted to hear from parties to further develop the evidence base and to inform future policy debates about improving voting processes and information about elections.

JM advised the panel that if they would like to be contacted and interviewed as part of this work to get in contact with the Northern Ireland team. He advised the panel would be sent more information on this by email after the meeting.

Report on the canvass

JM advised the panel that the report on how the 2021 Northern Ireland canvass was run was published in March 2022. The report welcomed the largest ever electoral register, with over 1.36 million people registered to vote. However it recommended that the UK Government reform the canvass and wider electoral registration process in Northern Ireland. Specifically it recommended the Government reform the canvass to allow a pre-canvass match between the electoral register and available datasets. As a result people could be accurately retained on the register and would not be required to re-register

unless their details had changed. The report also recommended integrating electoral registration into other public service transactions and exploring options for introducing automatic or automated registration. These changes would allow people who have recently moved to complete an electoral registration application simultaneously as part of, or alongside, accessing other public services and could be used to automatically register young people when they are given their National Insurance number. JM advised the EC continued to work in partnership with the CEO, government, data providers and the wider electoral community to develop and deliver these recommendations. He requested the panel get in touch with any questions. VM reminded the panel that due to the roll-over some electors would be coming off the register in December 2024. EONI had contacted these people but have received low levels of engagement. SN raised that the evidence required to register was inaccessible for young people. VM responded that this is due to legislation. CH advised that regular assessments take place of the register and the EC will be undertaking a comprehensive study of the register in December with findings published in 2023. Upcoming meetings dates for 2022 The next NIAPP meeting is due to take place on Tuesday 25 October. Any other business JM reminded the panel that the EC had sent an online survey to all candidates asking them to share their views of the election. There has been a good response so far but the EC wanted to make sure candidates from all parties had the opportunity to respond before the survey closes.

Investigation into payments made to Better for the Country and Leave.EU | Electoral Commission Search Investigation into payments made to Better for the Country and Leave.EU You are in the Investigations section Home Investigations On this page Summary Our investigation Potential criminal offences Referral to the National Crime Agency First published: 1 November 2018 Last updated: 29 April 2020 Overview We have completed our current investigation into certain payments made to Better for the Country Limited (BFTC) and Leave.EU Group Limited (Leave.EU). These payments were for the purposes of meeting expenses incurred by BFTC (including on behalf of Leave.EU) in the 2016 EU Referendum. The Commission has reasonable grounds to suspect a number of criminal offences and have referred the matter to the National Crime Agency (NCA). Update – 29 April 2020 The National Crime Agency, after its own investigation, has (i) concluded that there is no evidence that any criminal offences have been committed under PPERA or company law by any of the individuals or organisations referred to it by the Electoral Commission; and (ii) has stated that it has not received any evidence to suggest that Mr Banks and his companies received funding from any third party to fund the loans subject to the investigation, or that Mr Banks acted as an agent on behalf of a third party. The Electoral Commission accepts these conclusions. Read the NCA's decision . Summary A total of £8m in funding was provided to BFTC and Leave.EU to be available for paying expenses incurred by one or other of them in the EU Referendum. This included £6m provided to Leave.EU (paid on its behalf to BFTC to use for Leave.EU's referendum spending), and £2m provided to BFTC. BFTC used this money to spend at least £2.9m in the regulated campaign period for the 2016 EU Referendum, either by making donations to other campaigners, or by other spending. Leave.EU told us that Arron Banks was the only other party to the £6m loans, and that the moneys were loans from him. BFTC told us it was funded by Mr Banks and his group of insurance companies and that Mr Banks was the source for the other £2m. Following an investigation we launched on 1 November 2017, we have reasonable grounds to suspect that: Mr Banks was not the true source of the £8m reported as loans The parties to the financial transactions that led to the £8m being paid into BFTC's bank account included a non-qualifying or impermissible company, Rock Holding Limited, which was incorporated in the Isle of Man Leave.EU, Elizabeth Bilney (the responsible person for Leave.EU), BFTC, Mr Banks, and possibly others, concealed the true details of these financial transactions, including from us, and also did so by knowingly making statutory returns/reports which were incomplete and inaccurate, or false Various criminal offences may have been committed We have referred this matter to the NCA, for it to take forward. We will liaise with the NCA to provide whatever assistance it may require. This report outlines the basis our referral to the NCA. As this is now a criminal investigation, only limited information can, at this stage, be made public about the evidence we hold, our analysis and the potential offences that may have been committed. Our investigation BFTC was set up in May 2015. It was not a registered campaigner in the EU referendum, but it ran Leave.EU's campaign on its behalf, received £6m on behalf of Leave.EU, and paid Leave.EU's referendum expenses. It also received £2m to use for referendum spending. This funding, a total of £8m, was provided to Leave.EU and BFTC in late 2015 and early 2016. Leave.EU reported Arron Banks as the only source of its £6m. BFTC told us that Mr Banks and his insurance companies had made a loan to it of £2m for the referendum. BFTC gave some £2.2m to other campaigners, which were reported as donations. It spent at least £750,000 on campaign payments on behalf of Leave.EU. As a result of ongoing regulatory work we announced an investigation into BFTC and Mr Banks on 1 November 2017. This looked at whether Mr Banks was the true

source of the loans and whether BFTC was the true source of the donations made by it to others. The law is that loans and donations to registered campaigners can only come from certain permissible sources, which essentially excludes overseas or foreign funding from any consequent impermissible influence on the outcome of the EU Referendum. Further investigation information The entities we looked at During the investigation we looked at a number of companies, including the following: Better for the Country Limited (company number 0969018): BFTC was incorporated in the UK in May 2015, and registered at Lysander House in Bristol. Mr Arron Banks is listed at Companies House as a person with significant control of the company. Both Mr Banks and Ms Bilney were at the relevant time directors of BFTC, and were under a duty to ensure that it complied with the law. Leave.EU Group Limited (company number 09763501): Leave.EU was incorporated in the UK in September 2015, and registered at Lysander House in Bristol. Mr Arron Banks is listed at Companies House as a person with significant control of the company. Leave.EU registered as a permitted participant (registered campaigner) for the 2016 EU Referendum in February 2016. Its registered responsible person for the EU Referendum was Ms Bilney, and was under a duty to ensure that Leave.EU complied with the law. Rock Services Limited (company number 05960676): Rock Services was incorporated in the UK in October 2006, and registered at Lysander House in Bristol. Mr Arron Banks is listed at Companies House as a person with significant control of the company. Rock Holdings Limited: Rock Holdings is a company incorporated in the Isle of Man and is the parent company of Rock Services. Mr Banks is a majority shareholder of Rock Holdings. As it is not a UK entity, and does not carry on business here, Rock Holdings could not lawfully make any donation or be a party to any loan to Leave.EU. We also obtained information for our investigation from Mr Banks. As part of its required financial reporting for the EU Referendum, Leave.EU reported that Mr Banks had loaned it £6m. In our recent investigation into Leave.EU [link] we concluded that Leave.EU was wrong to report Mr Banks as the only party to those loans. We also received information from five registered campaigners for the EU Referendum. These five campaigners each reported receiving donations from BFTC during the referendum campaign. These were: Grassroots Out Limited, which reported a donation from BFTC of £1,952,375 Trades Unionists Against the EU, which reported donations from BFTC of £54,000 UK Independence Party, which reported donations from BFTC of £99,468 Veterans for Britain, which reported a donation from BFTC of £50,000 WAG TV, which reported a donation from BFTC of £50,000 What our investigation looked at We looked at whether Mr Banks was the true source of loans reported by Leave.EU and BFTC as coming from him, and whether there were any individuals or entities involved in those loan arrangements who/which were non-qualifying or not permitted under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPEREA) as amended by the European Union Referendum Act 2015 (EURAA). We also looked at whether BFTC was the true source of donations reported by referendum campaigners as coming from it, and what steps the recipients took to verify the donor was permissible. PPEREA sets out the law on donations and loans (referred to in the Act as 'regulated transactions') made to registered campaigners for the EU Referendum. The relevant legal provisions include the following: A donation means any gift of money to a registered campaigner, or the provision to it of a credit facility, or other property (or any sponsorship, payment of subscriptions or fees, or money spent on paying any expenses of a campaigner or the provision of property, services or facilities other than on commercial terms). Only amounts above £500 are viewed as donations under PPEREA Broadly speaking, permissible donors for the EU Referendum had to be either an individual on the electoral register in the UK, or a

company or other entity from within the UK or Gibraltar (and carrying on business there) A loan is any amount over £500, and which is an arrangement between a registered campaigner and another person by which the other person makes a loan of money to the registered campaigner for the use or benefit of meeting referendum expenses incurred by that campaigner. Registered campaigners cannot be a party to, or gain any benefit from, a loan if a person or entity who is 'non-qualifying' is also a party to that loan. Qualifying persons for the EU Referendum were, broadly, an individual on the electoral register or a company or other entity from within the UK or Gibraltar. PPERA sets out a number of offences about where a registered campaigner does not comply with the law on donations and loans. These include offences of:

Facilitating (or being a party to) a loan arrangement involving a non-qualifying person as a party to the arrangement Failing to return impermissible donations within 30 days of receipt Evading the statutory restrictions on donations Making a return to us (including disclosing details of any relevant financial transactions) which is not complete and accurate, or is false Where you can find more information You can find the register of permitted participants (registered campaigners) for the EU Referendum, by looking at our online database of political parties, campaigners and political finance . Using the same database you can find details of all loans, donations and spending reported by those campaigners. You can find PPERA and EURA on the government's legislation website . The provisions governing donations are in Parts IV and VII, and Schedules 15 and 15A of PPERA, and in Schedule 1 of EURA. The provisions governing loans are in Schedule 15A of PPERA. Potential criminal offences From the evidence we gathered, we have reasonable grounds to suspect that a number of offences may have been committed. These relate to the financial transactions which led to the £8m being paid into BFTC's bank account. Mr Banks and Ms Bilney (and through them BFTC and Leave.EU) gave us unsatisfactory explanations about these transactions, and we have reasonable grounds to suspect that they knowingly concealed and sought to conceal the true circumstances. We also have reasonable grounds to suspect that a non-qualifying or impermissible person or body, Rock Holdings (incorporated in the Isle of Man), was a party to the relevant transactions. Further information about potential criminal offences Overview of our concerns The source of the £8m funding for BFTC We looked at the financial transactions that led to £8m being paid into BFTC's bank account, including analysing information concerning the various bank accounts involved. While Mr Banks was originally reported as the source of the funds, in responding to our investigation both he and Ms Bilney told us that the money came from the UK-generated funds of Rock Services. Ms Bilney also said that no undisclosed third party or foreign entity had provided funding to Mr Banks, BFTC or Leave.EU. However, she later told us that although Mr Banks was the source of the £8m, the money was in turn provided to Mr Banks by a shareholder loan. This loan, Ms Bilney said, was made to Mr Banks by Rock Services in the amount of £8m, but was not recorded in Rock Services' company accounts, and was instead recorded in Rock Holdings' company accounts even though Rock Holdings had nothing to do with the loan of £8m. In our analysis, Rock Services' then and historic profits were not sufficient to enable it to have funded the £8m. We have reasonable grounds to suspect that: Rock Services did not fund the payments of £8m it is said it made to BFTC from its UK-generated income Rock Holdings was a party to the relevant financial agreements and transactions, and to the loans For the purposes of PPERA, Rock Holdings, as a company registered in the Isle of Man, was a non-qualifying person. Registered campaigners in the EU Referendum were prohibited from accepting any loans from it, and from entering into any relevant financial transaction with it which did not comply with the

relevant legislation. Concealment of other parties to the transactions BFTC and Leave.EU each provided us with various documents associated with the four loans they said were received from Mr Banks (one direct to BFTC and three to BFTC on behalf of Leave.EU). This material included loan agreements and deeds of variations. All the documentation reported Mr Banks as the only party to the transactions with, respectively, Leave.EU and BFTC. Leave.EU reported its three loans to us during the EU Referendum campaign as being from Mr Banks. In a previous investigation into Leave.EU, we concluded that this was not accurate, as at least Rock Services was also a party to the loans. During the present investigation, Ms Bilney told us that the parties to these loans were Mr Banks, Rock Services, BFTC and Leave.EU. We have reasonable grounds to suspect that the transactions, and the returns/reports made to us (and required) under the legislation, were designed to conceal the use of prohibited funds for campaigning in the EU Referendum. The evidence we looked at We asked BFTC, Rock Services, Mr Banks and Leave.EU for information, and had exchanges of letters and emails with them to obtain more information, and to clarify responses. We asked those campaigners who reported donations from BFTC for information, and received information from them all. We obtained information from Companies House in the UK and in Gibraltar. By using our legal powers under Schedule 19 paragraph 3 of PPERA, we obtained copies of bank account statements for various accounts held by Mr Banks, BFTC, Rock Services and Leave.EU. Referral to the National Crime Agency We have reasonable grounds to suspect a number of offences under electoral law may have been committed. Further offences are not within the regulatory remit of the Commission. For those offences where we may impose civil sanctions, our sanctions are limited at £20,000. The sums of money involved in these matters are significant. The relevant funding amounted to £8m, which included loans of £6m to Leave.EU, a registered campaigner in the EU Referendum. BFTC was loaned £2m, and put at least £2.9m into the referendum campaign. The financial transactions we have investigated include companies incorporated in Gibraltar and the Isle of Man. These jurisdictions are beyond the reach of the Electoral Commission for the purpose of obtaining information for use in criminal investigations or proceedings. Having considered these and other factors, the Commission, having completed its current investigation, has referred this matter to the NCA. Roles and responsibilities Related content about our enforcement work Electoral law is out of date. Find out where we want to see improvements Political parties, campaigners and other groups have to report their finances to us. Find out about campaign spending, donations and loans and annual accounts.

Using our resources to support the delivery of our goals 2021/22 | Electoral Commission Search Using our resources to support the delivery of our goals 2021/22 You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 On this page Our people Our environmental impact Using our financial resources efficiently Freedom of Information, complaints and parliamentary questions First published: 1 August 2022 Last updated: 1 August 2022 Our people Staff relations and engagement The expertise, hard work and high level of commitment of our workforce enable successful performance and delivery of our Corporate Plan. We value the positive and constructive relationship we have with colleagues and work hard to maintain it. Our staff engagement group meets on a regular basis to seek input from colleagues on emerging issues and help to maintain good relations with staff. We also actively encourage staff involvement as part of the day-to-day process of line management, and we share information on current and prospective developments widely and regularly. To support this, we have a recognition agreement with the Public and Commercial Services Union. We completed our latest staff survey in December 2021 and 89% of employees responded. Our employee engagement score was 67% (down from 72% in 2020). Our scores compared most positively to the Civil Service benchmark in areas such as our people agreeing that: we took action after the previous survey they have an opportunity to contribute their views before decisions are made that affect them they would recommend the Electoral Commission as a place to work The areas where we compared least positively to the Civil Service benchmark and we need to improve on include people agreeing that: there are opportunities for them to progress in their careers at the Electoral Commission they have the IT systems and equipment they need to do their jobs effectively Change is managed well at the Commission Occupational health and safety We review our health and safety policy annually. We also have procedures, guidance and risk assessments in place to cover our core activities. A health and safety group oversees our arrangements. They meet regularly and report to our senior leadership group. However, primary responsibility for health and safety sits with people managers. We initiate independent health and safety audits of our premises each year, which involves inspecting working environments and reviewing safety management systems. These audits tell us if our arrangements are suitable and highlight any improvements we need to make. In 2021/22 we carried out specific risk assessments to ensure our sites were Covid secure prior to re-opening; routine assessments will restart once travel across the UK is permitted and our sites are fully back in use. Our environmental impact We recognise that delivering our activities has an impact on the environment and we continue to work towards minimising this impact. We lease office space in four cities from a combination of public and private sector property owners. We do not have direct control of utility supplier and waste disposal targets and management at our premises. For a number of our offices, the property owner manages energy and water consumption as well as waste disposal and recovers costs through a consolidated service charge. Offices in Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast have relocated to smaller, more environmentally efficient premises in the last 10 years. We completed the renewal of the lease for our London office in 2020. Initiatives are in place to help minimise environmental impact: reduced printed resources provided to electoral administrators and other groups, focusing on electronic provision wherever possible encouraged the use of video and teleconferencing to avoid unnecessary travel with consequential CO₂ emissions operated recycling facilities in all our offices upgraded to more energy efficient information communication technology equipment Summary (London office)

Performance commentary on emissions We aim to decrease our fossil fuel consumption year on year, an ongoing effect of the property owner's introduction of measures to reduce levels of electricity consumption, including lower 'out of hours' operation of plant and machinery and the introduction of energy-efficient lighting. Due to being in rented accommodation, we are restricted in our plans to cut emissions as these are primarily driven by our landlord. Emissions Report Greenhouse Gas emissions Emission 2021-22 2050 Target 2017-18 (Baseline) Non-financial indictors (CO₂e in tonnes) Total gross emissions 110 175 235 Non-financial indictors (CO₂e in tonnes) Gross emissions – Fossil fuel consumption 105 149 198 Non-financial indictors (CO₂e in tonnes) Gross emissions - Travel 5 26 37 Related energy consumption (Kwh) Electricity 384,376 365,708 487,611 Related energy consumption (Kwh) Gas 216,786 158,993 211,990 Financial indicators Expenditure on Energy Not available Not available Not available Financial indicators Expenditure on travel £23,965 £51,233 £113,852 Coronavirus meant that the offices were not fully open during 2020-21 therefore our performance was not available from the landlord. We have reduced its out of hours working since 2017-18 to help cut our emissions. Since the introduction of hybrid working we have reduced our travel and energy consumption within the office. Waste report (London office) General waste and recycling figures are based on a proportion of total building waste and are not directly controllable by us. Confidential waste disposal for the organisation is handled separately from that for other building occupants. We shred the confidential waste we generate on-site before it is recycled into low-grade paper. The general and recycled waste is based on a proportion of total building waste. All general waste produced in the building, including that generated by us, is sent to a nearby energy from waste plant, instead of landfill sites. We have reduced our use of paper since 2017-18 to help cut our waste, since the introduction of hybrid working; we have further reduced our paper use significantly. Non-financial indicators 2021-22 2017-18 (baseline) Non-hazardous waste: confidential 0.00 tonnes 2.81 tonnes Non hazardous waste: General waste (incl. recycled) 2.84 tonnes 7.26 tonnes Total waste 2.84 tonnes 10.01 tonnes Quantity of paper purchased 150 reams 650 reams Total disposal cost Financial indicators 2021-22 2017-18 (baseline) Confidential £0 £1,134 General waste (incl. recycled) Not available Not available Total disposal cost Not available Not available Coronavirus meant that the office was not fully open during 2020-21 therefore our performance were not available. Using our financial resources efficiently In 2021/22, our funding arrangements changed. Our funding is received from 3 Parliaments – UK, Scottish and Senedd. The combined resource initially made available to us was £22.5m voted activity. We also received non-voted funding of £200k to pay Commissioners' fees. This can be broken down by Parliaments: Parliament £m UK Parliament £18.3 Scottish Parliament £2.6 Senedd £1.8 Total Budget £22.7 In January 2022, we had our Supplementary Estimate Approved (HC1135). This changed our resource to capital mix, which increased our total budget by £0.3m. Our final budget breakdown: Department Expenditure Limit Voted £m Non-Voted £m Total £m Resource £17.3 £0.2 £17.5 Capital £0.9 - £0.9 Annually Managed Expenditure Voted £m Non-voted £m Total £m Resource £0.2 - £17.7 Total Net Budget Voted £m Non-voted £m Total £m Resource £17.5 £0.2 £17.7 Capital £0.9 - £0.9 Net cash requirement £17.5 - - The £2.6m from Scottish Parliament and £1.7m from Senedd, is shown as income throughout the accounts and Statements of Parliamentary Supply (SoPS). The remainder of the budget drawn down and not spent is included as deferred income in the Statement of Financial Position. In achieving our objectives, we have used £16.7m worth of resources for the whole year. This was out of the available sum of £17.7m approved by the UK Parliament in our Supplementary Estimate for the net

resource voted requirement, net of income received from the devolved authorities. The graphic below summarises our financial performance on the ‘voted’ element of our budget. Financial performance 2021/22 Our financial performance follows our strategic performance, being dominated by a shifting electoral timetable. For the year 2021/22: our staff costs represented 65% of our resource expenditure, which is an increase from 2020/21 due to additional staff for the Elections Act and a lower overall budget from 2020/21 . our capital expenditure decreased by £0.6m from 2020-21 due to the refurbishment works within the London office during 2020/21. Overall Expenditure 2021/22 Expenditure Type Expenditure (£m) Staff costs £10.8 Public awareness £3.9 Other operation costs £3.6 Policy development grants £2 Depreciation and other non-cash items £0.7 Capital £0.5 The figures in the table above include costs funded by the Scottish Parliament and Senedd. We report our underspend to reflect in-year operational decisions, using HM Treasury’s preferred measure of current public spending (R-DEL excluding depreciation) and excluding Policy Development Grant which is distributed by formula set by government. In 2021/22 the underspend on this measure was £0.8m against the voted budget of £14.8m (5%). This was predominantly due to unused contingency, savings in campaigning for the May 2022 elections and staffing. The operating underspend is comprised of: £320k of unused contingency £159k reduced spend within the May elections £120k of underspends within staffing costs arising from delays filling vacancies, partly due to post-Covid labour-market conditions £116k within the digital transparency campaign and related expenditure 43k unspent Policy Development Grant from political parties Other underspend: £42k in depreciation £214k in provisions (Resource AME) due to less than expected pension and dilapidation movement £228k in capital projects due to shifts towards current investment in IT and delays to projects Our income in the accounts relates to charges for registering political parties. We also report and are accountable to the Senedd and Scottish Parliament Corporate Body. The income recognised in the accounts is predominately for devolved elections and referendum work. All income is recognised in note 4 of the accounts. We collect fines raised against political parties and individuals for failure to comply with the rules on party and election finance and then surrender these to the Consolidated Fund as required by law. The penalties due was £58k in 2021/22 received by 31 March 2022 and surrendered to the Consolidated Fund. In addition to monitoring performance against budgets, we also managed within our cash limits set by the UK Parliament. We required cash amounting to £16.3m in 2021/22 to finance our voted activities, which was £1.2m less than the sum of £17.5m approved by the UK Parliament in our Supplementary Estimate. The reconciliation of net resources outturn to net cash requirement provides a reconciliation from our outturn to the net cash we required in-year. The Statement of Cash Flows shows that the cash balance as at 31 March 2022 was £0.6m. The Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2022 shows positive taxpayers’ equity. Supplier Payments Although we are independent of government, we aim to comply with the Prompt Payment Code that operates across the public sector. The target is to pay undisputed invoices within 30 days. In 2021/22, we paid 100% of invoices (85% in 2020/21) within 30 days. Freedom of Information, complaints and parliamentary questions We are committed to the principles of openness and transparency in public life and acknowledge the duty to provide information to the public. In 2021/22, we received 140 Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. We responded to 130 (93.1%) of these within the 20 working days statutory timeframe (target: 90%). There were 12 FOI internal review requests received in the financial year, 11 of these were due and responded to in the financial year. Process and training improvements have had a positive impact on our

response rate across this financial year. We have gone up from 91.9% in 2020-21 to 93.1% in 2021-22. We received 10 subject access requests and three requests for erasure under the UKGDPR, all responded to within the statutory response time frame of one calendar month. We handled 96 complaints compared to 51 in 2020/21. Of the 96 complaints handled; 95 have been completed and one is still active. Of the 95 that were completed; 86 were not upheld, three were partially upheld, two were upheld, two were closed due to no clarification being received from the complainant and two were withdrawn. The learnings gleaned from the investigations of these complaints were fed back to the relevant teams to support our commitment to continuous improvement. These complaints spanned a range of topics. Three complaints focussed on concerns regarding a media statement we released announcing our investigation into a party. These complaints were not upheld. 30 complaints focussed on alleged delays in assessing applications to register two new parties. These complaints were not upheld. 34 complaints focussed on concerns that we made mistakes carrying out our work when assessing an application to change the emblem of a party. Specifically when considering whether it may have misled voters. One of these complaints raised concerns about whether we had specifically considered whether voters with disabilities were more likely to be misled by the emblem. This specific complaint was partially upheld due to a lack of evidence but the other 33 were not upheld. We received three requests for review by the Chief Executive. While these reviews did not change the original outcome of the complaint, they did enable further explanation and assistance. In addition, we received correspondence from 668 members of the public that did not constitute complaints under our policy. Where possible the complaints team responded directly to the individual or alternatively forwarded the correspondence to the appropriate team to provide a response if technical expertise was required. Via our dedicated public information service, we responded to 4,463 public enquiries, received by phone and email. Through this service, we answered questions about how to register and vote in the May 2021 elections across Great Britain. We explained the public safety measures in place at polling stations, and how people can use absent voting methods to have their say without attending a polling station. We responded to 27 parliamentary questions during 2021/22, including questions about digital campaigning, electoral fraud, the accuracy and completeness of the electoral registers and the effectiveness of electoral law. Chris Matheson MP, a member of the Speaker's Committee, was our spokesperson in the UK Parliament and answered questions on our behalf. Supply estimate for 2022-23 Our Main Supply Estimate for 2022/23 (HC1241) provides for a net resource requirement of £25.3m. This is a 44.6% increase from 2021/22 mainly due to the implementation of the Elections Bill. Our Main Estimate is broken down as follows:

	Departmental Expenditure Limit	Resource Voted £m	Non-voted £m	Total £m	Electoral Commission expenditure	£18.2	£0.2
£18.4	The Elections Bill	£5 - £5	Policy Development Grants	£2 - £2	Capital	£1.4 -	
£1.4	Annually Managed Expenditure	Voted £m	Non-voted £m	Total £m	Resource	£0.1 - £0.1	
Capital	£0.1 - £0.1	Total Net Budget	Voted £m	Non-voted £m	Total £m	Resource	£35.3
£0.2	£25.5	Capital	£1.5 - £1.5	Net cash requirement	£26.1m	The Speaker's Committee	
approved this on 25 April 2022 and it was laid before House of Commons on 25 April 2022. The Commission is established by legislation and following the principles of the FReM there is an assumption of continued provision of service, there is nothing to suggest services provided by the Commission will cease or future funding will not be provided.	Navigation Previous	Looking ahead to 2022/23					

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published: 10 September 2020 Last updated: 18 June 2023 Introduction The Electoral
Commission is an independent body set up by the UK Parliament, and its main functions
are set out in the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) as
amended. Its aim is integrity and public confidence in the democratic process.
Commissioners, and the Commission as a body, are accountable to Parliament. Within
the Commission, Commissioners are accountable to the Chair. Commissioners are
expected to act at all times to further the Commission's aims and objectives, and
uphold its impartiality. The purpose of this code is to provide clear guidance on the
standard of behavior expected of you as an Electoral Commissioner, on the importance
of collective responsibility, and on maintaining the highest standards of integrity,
honesty, impartiality and objectivity which are integral to your role as
Commissioner. These are the standards set out in the Nolan Principles (Appendix 6).
The onus is on Commissioners to declare any of the matters referred to in the Code,
or report any change in their circumstances which might affect their position.
Electoral Commissioners should read the code, sign and date the declaration at the
end of the document and return it to the Secretary to the Commission Board. When
there are significant updates to the Code, Commissioners will be invited to sign the
updated Code. Please keep a copy of the code for your information. Conflicts of
interest The work of the Commission must be carried out free from any suggestion of
improper influence, whether financial, personal, or political. This is crucial to
maintaining public confidence in the Commission generally, and especially in its role
as a regulator. We must be able to assure people that conflicts of interest are
identified and managed promptly, transparently and securely; and that the information
we hold is properly handled. At all times the key question to ask when assessing
whether to record an interest, gift, form of hospitality or meeting is: does it
impact on the work of the Electoral Commission or reasonable public perception of my
role as an Electoral Commissioner? Every Commissioner is expected to act by drawing
on their experience and knowledge for the benefit of the Commission's work. However,
it is important that actual and potential conflicts of interest (real or that could
be reasonably perceived) are disclosed to ensure that they can be recorded and that
any potential reputational damage to either yourself or the Commission can be
managed. The failure to declare an interest and then act appropriately can affect the
validity of a decision. The test in all matters is - would a fair-minded and informed
observer conclude that there is a real possibility of bias? The issue is not just
whether there is bias, but instead could there be a reasonable suspicion of bias?
Decisions must be made in an impartial way without any opinions being formed

beforehand (or the perception that they have been) if views and evidence have not been heard yet. You are required to declare all interests which may represent a conflict with your role at the Commission, for example paid and unpaid external appointments, consultancy, trusteeships, directorships, advisory and voluntary roles. You may wish to consult Commission colleagues, and in particular the Chair, before accepting other appointments which might affect your role either directly or indirectly, or in any way conflict with the interests of the Commission. If you have been asked to provide advice or to decide on issues relating to the work of the Commission, and which could be perceived as affecting the Commission's impartiality, you should consider carefully whether to accept the request. You are asked particularly to bear this in mind in relation to requests by: members of political parties, their officers or members a group or individual campaigning at an election or referendum (or where they could be perceived to have an association with the above). In other cases, if you are meeting someone who could be viewed as influential or significant (e.g. a minister or MP) in the Electoral Commission's sphere of activity, or if something comes up in conversation which relates to the Commission's activities, you should, within reason, consider reporting such meetings to the Chair.

There are certain political activities that you are prohibited from undertaking according to PPERA. See Appendix 1 for further details. A Commissioner ceases to hold office under PPERA on the occurrence of certain events. Removal from office may occur if the Speaker's Committee is satisfied that one or more grounds have been breached. It is your responsibility to bring actual or potential conflicts of interest, real or that could be reasonably perceived, to the attention of the Chair, the Chief Executive or the Secretary to the Commission Board as soon as you become aware of them. If you disclose an interest during a Board meeting, it will be recorded in the minutes, and you may be required to withdraw from the discussion or the decision in question. If you are aware in advance of the meeting of a conflict of interests, you may be excluded from distribution of related documents. If the conflict of interest does require you to withdraw from consideration of the matter, you should not seek to discuss the matter with or influence the decision-makers. More detailed guidance on identifying actual or potential conflicts of interest and on how the Board will manage the legal and reputational risks is at Appendix 8 . You must complete a 'Declaration of interests' form on appointment, and update it as your circumstances change. You will be sent reminders periodically asking you to update it. A register of interests is maintained by the Secretariat and published on the Commission's website. It may be found on this page. There are some grounds on which a Commissioner may cease or be removed from office. The grounds are set out in full in Schedule 1, paragraphs 3(3)-(5) of PPERA. These include being convicted of a criminal offence; being an undischarged bankrupt (or the Commissioner's estate having been sequestrated in Scotland and the Commissioner has not been discharged); there being a moratorium period under a debt relief order applying in relation to the Commissioner (under Part 7A of the Insolvency Act 1986); or having made an arrangement or composition contract with, or having granted a trust deed for, the Commissioner's creditors. . The grounds also include a Commissioner being listed by a registered non-party campaigner in its financial return to the Commission as a donor of £7,500 or more. A separate note on this exists at Appendix 1A By signing the Code of Conduct declaration, you are stating that none of these grounds apply to you. If there is a change in your circumstances which involves any of these grounds, you must report them to the Secretary to the Commission Board, or the Chair or the Chief Executive. Guidance on declaring interests is in Appendix 2 to the code. Gifts and hospitality In the course

of your role as an Electoral Commissioner you may be offered gifts and hospitality, and indeed it can form an aspect of networking. However, Commissioners are expected to observe exceptionally high standards of personal honesty and integrity, and to avoid any accusations of having been unduly influenced. There is always a risk that accepting gifts or hospitality may attract criticism and leave you and the Commission open to a suspicion of undue influence. The principles underlying declarations to bear in mind include the following:

- Consideration of situations where an interest may be interpreted as a conflict
- The responsibility to declare interests rests with individual Electoral Commissioners
- Decisions of the Commission Board are taken under the principle of collective responsibility and Commissioners should ensure this is upheld

The registration of both gifts and hospitality, and interests, helps ensure public confidence in the Commission, and maintains accountability and transparency of decision-making. This helps to avoid any actual or perceived bias or influence. You are required to record all gifts and hospitality offered or received in your capacity as an Electoral Commissioner, including any which are refused. You are urged to decline where practicable any gifts you are offered, but sometimes to do so would cause offence, including when a gift is of nominal value. Completed declarations of gifts and hospitality are to be sent to the Secretary to the Commission Board, countersigned by the Chair, and reported periodically to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. The register of gifts and hospitality is published after each Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, to this page of the Commission's website. You are also asked to disclose gifts and hospitality received in any non- Commission roles (as opposed to those of a private or family nature), for the sake of transparency and consistency, particularly if from a person or organisation which could be linked to the work of the Commission (such as a politician, campaign organisation, or lobbyist), or contacts with firms supplying goods or services the Commission is likely to use (IT, research, audit, consultancy), and these are recorded but not published. The detailed guidance on gifts and hospitality is attached in Appendix 3 to the code.

Confidentiality and personal liability

You have a general duty of confidentiality in common law to the Commission, requiring you to protect Commission information held in confidence (see also Section 5 below on information handling). You should not without authority disclose official information which has been communicated in confidence within the Commission or received in confidence from others. This applies both during and after your appointment as a Commissioner, and to information both oral and written. After your period as a Commissioner, you should avoid making any public statements which refer to your having been a Commissioner in such a way that would lead people to think that what you say represents current Commission policy or carries the implicit approval of the Commission. (If necessary, you should make an explicit disclaimer to ensure that no-one could be in any doubt on this point.) If you are minded to make a public statement about the Commission when you are no longer a Commissioner, you may conclude, depending on the context, that it is appropriate first to alert the current Chair of the Commission. In addition, there is specific legislation which applies to information held by the Commission. This includes: The Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001 (and the corresponding regulations in Scotland and Northern Ireland) make it an offence to disclose to an unauthorised person details contained in the registers of electors to which Commissioners and Commission staff have access. The penalty for doing so is currently an unlimited fine in England and Wales, or a fine of up to £5,000 in Scotland and Northern Ireland. PPERA places a requirement on Commissioners and staff not to disclose the contents of certain

donation or transaction (e.g. loan) reports from regulated recipients and participants in Northern Ireland. If you unlawfully disclose this information and are found guilty of an offence you may face an unlimited fine or be imprisoned for up to 51 weeks . You may be asked to comment on matters to the press or to answer questions. If you are approached, please direct your comments to the Media Relations Team who are responsible for helping to manage and co-ordinate the Commission's responses (the media team is on 020 7271 0704 during office hours, or out of hours on 07789 920414). Meanwhile it is advisable neither to comment nor to answer questions unless you have been authorised to do so. (See also paragraph 3.6 of the Corporate Governance Framework, on collective responsibility). Please see note on considerations to be taken into account should legal action be taken by a third party against a Commissioner in a personal capacity (as distinct from action against the Commission). Other – information handling and security whistle-blowing, bribery, resources Information handling, security and IT use The Commission's Standing Orders state, at paragraph A57, that: 'no Commissioner shall use information gained in the course of their duty for personal gain nor seek to use the opportunity of such public service to promote their own or other parties' private interests. Commissioners should at all times avoid behaving in a manner which might bring the Commission into disrepute.' The Electoral Commission has a number of policies governing the use of IT equipment and appropriate handling of information, which are available on the Commission's intranet. These include the Acceptable Use Policy, Social Media Policy and the Information Security Policy. Summarised guidance on information management and security is attached at Appendix 5 to this Code. Some key points are summarised below:

- The increasing use of e-communications for both business and personal use demands a heightened awareness of issues of security, confidentiality and what information may be placed in the public domain.
- You should be aware that anything posted to external social media sites could reflect on the Commission and its work and you should carefully consider what is posted in a personal capacity on, for example: - Twitter - YouTube - Facebook - LinkedIn - Google plus - Pinterest This list is not exhaustive and you can always contact the Commission's press team if you have any questions about this using the contact details above. Please ensure that any use of social media does not:
 - Call into question the political impartiality of the Commission
 - Present a conflict of interest with the activities of the Commission
 - Breach the confidentiality of the people and information connected to the CommissionYou should log into your virtual PC using the Commission's home working solution to access Commission information. The IT Help Desk staff will help you set this up. Access from Windows PCs and Apple Macs is currently supported. Using the home working solution means that all data remains within the Commission's network and is therefore secure. It also means that you have access to all the software systems that are available. Commissioners may, from time to time, be asked to search their email accounts for information that may be relevant to requests under the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts. This may include searching your personal email accounts if the account has been used to generate emails as part of your Commission role in the past. The Commission's FOI internal procedure gives further details. If the scope of a request includes communications that could be held in Commissioner personal accounts, you will be asked to conduct a search within your personal email accounts using appropriate keywords. Personal email accounts should not be used for Commission business and any difficulties encountered by Commissioners in using Commission email accounts or Commission IT facilities should be referred to the IT Helpdesk. Whistle-blowing If

you believe that you are being required to act in a way which:

- is illegal, discriminatory, improper or unethical
- is in breach of this Code
- may involve possible maladministration, fraud or misuse of public funds;
- is otherwise inconsistent with the Code or if:

- you believe there is evidence of irregular or improper behavior in the organisation but where you have not been personally involved
- there is evidence of criminal or unlawful activity by others
- you are required to act in a way which, for you, raises a fundamental issue of conscience then you should immediately refer your concerns to the Chief Executive, the Chair of the Commission, or the Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

Bribery (a criminal offence) will occur in circumstances involving:

- The offering, giving, solicitation or the acceptance of any inducement or reward (whether financial or otherwise);
- To or from a person or company, wherever they are situated and whether they are a public official or body or private person or company;
- By any individual employee, Board Member / Commissioner, acting on the Commission's behalf; where such action is intended to amount to or bring about improper performance of a relevant function or activity of the Commission, person or company.

If you discover or suspect bribery involving any Commissioner, member of staff, person or company, you should immediately report your concerns to the Chief Executive, the Chair of the Commission, or the Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

The combined anti fraud and anti-bribery policy is at Appendix 7. The policy also applies to Commission staff.

Safeguarding public resources You have a duty to safeguard public resources and to use responsibly any public resources at your disposal as an Electoral Commissioner. The Commission's travel and subsistence policy (which applies both to Commissioners and to staff) can be found on the intranet. The guidance for claiming fees and travel and subsistence, which sets out how to complete claims, is in Appendix 4.

The Code of Conduct was reviewed and approved by the Board on 22 March 2023

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Report: 2018 recall petition in North Antrim | Electoral Commission Search Report: 2018 recall petition in North Antrim You are in the Recall petitions section Home Recall petitions On this page Summary How the recall petition was run Transparency and secrecy Further recommendations for change First published: 5 November 2018 Last updated: 29 July 2019 Overview From 8 August to 19 September 2018, electors in the constituency of North Antrim were able to take part in the first ever recall petition in the UK. This report covers how the petition was run and makes some recommendations for future recall petitions. Summary The North Antrim recall petition was the first to take place across the UK since the Recall of MPs Act was introduced in 2015. It was the first time the legislation was tested and has provided an opportunity to look at lessons to be learnt and improvements that could be made for any future recall petition in the UK. Our report is based on feedback from those who administered the petition and those who campaigned during the petition period, as well as our own observations. This highlighted a number of issues which would merit further consideration by the UK Government. However, it should be acknowledged that these are based on the experience of running only one recall petition, and different issues could arise if a recall petition were to take place in any other constituency in the UK. Findings and recommendations Overall we found that the Petition Officer successfully delivered all of her duties as required under the Act. There were no significant problems in the delivery of the recall petition which affected voters or any individuals or organisations wishing to campaign. We recognise that the decision to use only three signing places was the subject of much debate and criticism. However, we have found no evidence that an increased number of signing places would have contributed to a different result at the end of the recall petition. Feedback from those who worked and campaigned at the recall petition was that the six week signing period was too long. Concerns were also raised as to whether there was enough awareness amongst electors on how they could participate. In light of this we have recommended that the UK Government should: Consider whether a signing period of six weeks is appropriate and whether this should be changed for future recall petitions. Consider how electors can get information about the recall petition and how they can take part in it if they so wish. We have also asked the Government to explore what more can be done to improve transparency in the delivery of recall petitions whilst also ensuring that electors can have confidence in the integrity and secrecy of a petition How the recall petition was run Background On 26 July MPs voted to suspend Ian Paisley MP for North Antrim for 30 sitting days. This was in response to a report by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, which found that Mr Paisley had committed multiple breaches of the Code of Conduct for MPs in relation to two family holidays paid for by the Sri Lankan government. The Recall of MPs Act 2015 introduced a process where a sitting MP can lose their seat in the House of Commons if there is a successful petition to recall them. One of the conditions to trigger a recall petition is if an MP is barred from sitting in the House for 10 or more sitting days. As required under the Act, the Speaker of the House of Commons wrote to the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland, in her role as Petition Officer, to notify her that a recall petition should be opened in the constituency of North Antrim for a period of six weeks. The report We are required to publish a report on any recall petition after the end of the recall petition period. For this report we have gathered information from the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland; Electoral Commission representatives who observed at the signing places, verification and count; staff who worked at the signing places; and political parties and campaigners. Although we did not carry out research with the public we have taken into account any

comments made by electors to the Electoral Office, staff at the signing places and ourselves about their experience of signing the petition. The North Antrim recall petition was the first to take place across the UK and the first time the legislation was tested. It has provided an opportunity to look at lessons to be learnt and improvements that could be made for any future recall petition in the UK. However, it is important to bear in mind the unique political circumstances that can exist in any one constituency when considering what a recall petition might look like elsewhere in the UK. How the recall petition was run Roles and responsibilities The Petition Officer is the same person as the Returning Officer in a constituency. As the constituency where the petition took place was in Northern Ireland the Petition Officer was the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland. Her role was to: open a recall petition oversee the administration of the petition, including publishing a register of electors who can sign the petition and notifying those electors of the petition declare the result, including notifying the Speaker of the House of Commons receive donation and spending returns and make them available for public inspection We also has a number of roles in the recall petition process. This includes providing advice and guidance to help people running and taking part in the petition understand the rules. We can also seek forfeiture of impermissible donations, if necessary by court order. The police also have a role in recall petitions to investigate breaches of the rules set out in the Recall Act and to enforce compliance with the law.

Setting up the recall petition Notification of the recall petition Under the Recall Act the Petition Officer is required to designate a day for the petition to open no later than 10 days, or as soon as reasonably practical, after notification from the Speaker of the House of Commons. Within this time the Petition Officer was required to publish a register of electors who could sign the petition and notify them that the petition was taking place. The notification letter gave the elector information about: why the petition was taking place what would happen if the petition was successful and unsuccessful - either that a by-election would be held, or Ian Paisley MP would continue in his role how someone could sign the petition the address and a map of their designated signing place (including opening times) how to apply to sign by post or proxy the need to bring electoral ID (as required in Northern Ireland). A total of 75,428 electors were eligible to sign the petition at their allocated signing venue, or by applying to sign by post or proxy. There was little opportunity to allow for any new applications to register to be made given the requirement for a petition to be opened within 10 days of the notification being received from the Speaker. All of these requirements placed a considerable administrative burden on the Petition Officer and the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland, particularly as many senior staff were absent in the normally quieter summer months. Despite this, the Petition Officer successfully met all her statutory requirements within the required timeframes. The register was published on 3 August, notifications were sent to all electors on 6 and 7 August and the petition opened on 8 August. Signing places Under the Recall Act, the Petition Officer can designate up to 10 signing places where people can sign the petition. Signing places must be open for the six weeks of the recall petition on Monday to Friday between the hours of 9am and 5pm. However, the Petition Officer has discretion to extend these hours. The Petition Officer decided to use three places located in the main towns of the constituency – Ballymena, Ballymoney and Ballycastle. This meant that no elector would have to travel more than 15 minutes to get to their designated signing venue. Unlike elections in Northern Ireland, applications to vote by post or proxy could be made without having to provide a valid reason. This offered greater flexibility in how someone could sign

the petition. The decision to only use three signing places was met with opposition by a number of political parties. They highlighted that there were 53 polling places used in the constituency during the last election and that the decision to use only three places greatly reduced accessibility for electors, particularly for those living outside of the main towns. The Petition Officer did receive some complaints from electors about the choice of places, but we received no complaints from electors about their allocated signing place. It is difficult to judge what impact using more than three places for the recall petition would have had on electors in the constituency. We have seen no evidence that an increased number of signing places would have contributed to a different result at the end of the recall petition. The use of more places would have required additional staff and put extra pressure on the Petition Officer and her staff throughout the duration of the recall petition. We have no evidence that an increased number of signing places would have contributed to a different result at the end of the recall petition, but this needs to be considered in the context of an individual constituency, and balanced against the length of the signing period and the hours in which the signing places are open. Electors had six weeks in which to sign the petition at their designated venue and could also sign by post or appoint a proxy on demand. This is a significant factor to consider when compared to all other electoral events in Northern Ireland where electors are required to give a valid reason as to why they cannot attend their polling station in person. Opening hours of the recall petition Signing places were open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, for a period of six weeks. There was criticism from some political parties that the signing hours were a barrier for people working traditional full time working hours and therefore unable to sign the petition at their designated signing place. Comparisons were made with polling stations which are open from 7am to 10pm at elections and therefore recognise and facilitate the work and life commitments of many voters. To address this concern, the Petition Officer extended the opening hours of the signing places to 9pm on two evenings. However, this decision was only confirmed after electors were notified of their signing venue and opening hours of 9am to 5pm. The Petition Officer used media and social media in the constituency to highlight the extended hours and the deadline for postal and proxy applications but it is hard to assess what impact, if any, this may have had. However, the feedback from the Petition Officer suggests there was a small increase in the number of electors who signed on these days compared to other days. The six week signing period Commission representatives observed proceedings on 11 days during the six week period, including the two evenings when signing hours were extended. Our representatives spoke to petition staff at each of the signing places and watched as electors signed the petition. Overall, the feedback was that the signing places were quiet during most days of the recall petition. Overall feedback received from petition staff and those who campaigned at the recall petition was that the six week period was too long. The Petition Officer told us that at the start and the end of the six week period turnout was considerably higher than on some other days in the middle weeks, and on some days it was very low. On the first day of the recall petition there was significant media interest and queues at some of the signing places but it became quieter after that at each of the signing places. A number of alternative suggestions were proposed by petition staff and campaigners on how long a recall petition should last. These ranged from two to four weeks with longer opening hours and the availability of weekend signings. It was also suggested that the petition could be signed on one day as is the case with elections and referendums. It was suggested that reducing the length of the recall petition period would increase

accessibility to the overall process for electors. While there may be merit in some of these suggestions, further consideration would be needed on the wider implications of any such change. For example, longer opening hours could make the petition more accessible to people wanting to sign in person, but would have an impact for those running the petition, particularly in terms of staffing and resourcing. The UK Government should consider whether a signing period of six weeks is appropriate and whether this should be changed for future recall petitions.

Absent votes In total 3,233 postal signing papers were issued at the recall petition. Approximately 1,000 postal signing papers were not returned. A total of 10 electors chose to appoint a proxy. At the 2017 UK parliamentary general election, where electors were not allowed to have a postal vote on demand, 1,163 postal votes were issued in North Antrim, and 1,048 were returned. Overall the postal and proxy application process worked well and no significant issues emerged. The Petition Officer also asked Royal Mail to do a sweep of their sorting offices as the deadline approached to ensure that any postal signing papers could be included in the final count. A total of 12 signing papers were found during this sweep. As previously outlined, the fact that electors could apply for a postal signing paper 'on demand' during the six week period increased the accessibility of the recall petition as it offered electors choice via an alternative way to sign the petition if they were working, away from home, or were unable or who did not want to go to their designated signing place.

Verification of signing papers There is a requirement, under the Recall Act, for daily verification of signing papers to take place during a recall petition. This required the breaking of the seal of each ballot box and verifying the number of each signing paper within it. This process could be carried out by the Petition Officer or the Petition Clerk in each of the signing places. To maintain the security and integrity of the recall petition, the Petition Officer decided to complete the daily verification of the ballot boxes at the Belfast headquarters of the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland. This meant that the boxes were collected, delivered and returned each day between Belfast and the three signing places. The boxes were stored securely in Belfast each night.

Although this process worked well in practice, we think it lacked transparency. This is because the Recall Act makes no provision for observers and/or campaigners to observe this part of proceedings. The Petition Officer shared our concerns about the lack of transparency and therefore requested that Commission representatives attend every daily verification of the signing papers. We take a risk based approach to observing electoral events and did not believe attending every verification was necessary as we were satisfied with how the process was being conducted by the Petition Officer. However, Commission representatives were able to observe and attended verification on 15 evenings and were content with the processes put in place to manage the daily verification and how it was completed. Although we were satisfied with the processes put in place to manage the verification of signing papers at this recall petition, it is clear that more access to independent observation of this process would be beneficial to ensure confidence in its integrity. The UK Government should give careful consideration to how access to the recall petition proceedings can be enhanced so as to improve transparency.

The count The counting of signing papers commenced at 00:01 on Thursday 20 September. Although signing places closed at 5pm the previous day there was no provision within the Recall Act for when the count should start. The law was also unclear about the deadline for the receipt of postal signing papers. For this reason, the Petition Officer decided to commence the count after midnight to allow for any additional postal signing papers to be received. Commission staff attended the count and saw that, overall, the count process worked

well. Sufficient count staff were put in place and the overall management of the count was professional. The count was completed in approximately one hour and the Petition Officer notified the Speaker of the House of Commons of the result immediately. It was unclear from the provisions of the Act as to how the Speaker should be notified, but the Petition Officer had agreed in advance to email his office and await a reply. Once this was received the Petition Officer published the result and notified the media. In total, 9.4% of eligible electors signed the petition. This meant that the petition was unsuccessful and no by-election was triggered. Ian Paisley MP therefore kept his seat. Overall awareness of the recall petition In the absence of public opinion research or direct contact with electors it is difficult to gauge public opinion on the administration of the recall petition. Given the time constraints, and that this was a local issue within one constituency, we did not conduct any public opinion research as we would at major electoral events. However, the evidence available to us from our observations and feedback from campaigners and petition staff suggests that there may not have been a strong awareness amongst electors of the recall petition throughout the whole six week period. As expected, there was significant and intense interest in the run-up to and start of the petition by the media. However, this quickly diminished within a few days. Campaigning by the two registered campaigners was relatively low key and the sitting MP, Ian Paisley, did not actively campaign in the petition. A number of political parties told us that they felt there was an overall lack of public awareness of the recall petition. They argued that, as this was different from an election, many of those who could sign the petition were unaware of how the process was run or how they could participate. It was suggested to us by one political party that some electors only realised the petition was over when the result was announced in the media. One political party also highlighted to us that, although much was made of the increased availability of postal and proxy signing, many electors did not know what 'on demand' applications meant or how they could apply for one. It is not possible to know if this had any impact at the North Antrim recall petition, and there is no evidence available to suggest it would have changed the result. However, it is important to emphasise that a recall petition is different from an election. At an election promoting awareness and encouraging participation are possible without appearing to favour any particular candidate or party. This is not the case with a recall petition where there is a significant risk that actively encouraging participation could be seen as taking a side and could therefore potentially undermine the integrity of the recall petition. It may be the case that when the Recall Act was introduced there was an expectation that campaigners themselves would raise awareness of the recall petition and how electors could take part. However the general lack of campaigning in North Antrim may have contributed to a lack of awareness of a new process being run for the first time. Government and Petition Officers at future recall petitions should consider further ways of how electors can get information about the recall petition and how they can take part in it if they so wish. Any changes to how a recall petition is promoted should be clearly set out in legislation with clearly defined instructions on the actions a Petition Officer should take. Transparency and secrecy Concerns were raised at an early stage of the recall petition by some campaigners about a 'lack of secrecy' which may have stopped some electors from signing the petition. This was because when an elector entered a room at a signing place it was clear that their intention was to sign the petition to unseat their MP and trigger a by-election. The feedback we received from petition staff was that this seemed odd when compared to an electoral event where the

elector's decision remains secret throughout. The Petition Officer was aware of this issue and made efforts to ensure there was a balance between privacy and ease of access for electors at the signing places. During the recall petition period the rooms used within some of the signing places did change to address this, but this was often met with further criticism around accessibility and privacy. In our view, the rooms used were suitable for the recall petition but we recognise that some concerns were raised about the room used in the Ballymena signing place as it was clearly visible from the reception area and close to the front door of the leisure centre. We received no complaints from electors around secrecy or intimidation at any of the signing places. Anyone who had concerns about signing at a signing place had the option to sign by post or appointing a proxy, which would offer greater secrecy.

Petition Officers at future recall petitions should take into account the need for privacy when allocating signing places within their constituency. Transparency and Secrecy Access to the marked register The wording on the official petition notice sent to electors stated that the marked register would be available for public inspection after the petition if there was suspected fraud. However, there is no actual provision in the legislation that would have allowed the marked register in North Antrim to be made available for public inspection, or for it to be supplied to the police, the Electoral Commission or anyone who requested it. The Petition Officer made clear that her intention was that the marked register would not be available at all for public inspection. This is different from Great Britain, where there is provision in the legislation for the marked register to be made available for inspection after a recall petition in the event of potential fraud. It is not clear whether this was a deliberate policy difference or an accidental omission in the legislation, but it does raise questions about the secrecy of the recall petition. At elections the marked register is made available to political parties to assist in campaigning at future elections. Although it indicates that an elector did vote, it in no way shows how the elector voted. This is not the case with the marked register at a recall petition which would show that someone had signed the petition with the intention of unseating their MP. We recommend that the UK Government review the purpose and workings of the provision to access the marked register ahead of any future recall petition in order to ensure the appropriate balance is struck between maintaining secrecy and challenging fraud. Observing the recall petition Independent observation is an important part of any democratic process. For over a decade we have accredited hundreds of electoral observers who have attended and observed the electoral process in action. However, under the current legislation, the opportunity to observe proceedings at a recall petition is limited only to Commission representatives: Electoral Commissioners and staff of the Electoral Commission. Individuals and organisations accredited as electoral observers are not entitled to observe any proceedings within a signing place, the issue and receipt of postal signing papers, or verification of the signing papers. Accredited individual electoral observers can attend the counting of signatures, but those nominated by an accredited organisation cannot. It may be the case that this was a deliberate policy decision to ensure the secrecy of the recall petition and to prevent individuals or organisations from working out if the 10% threshold had been reached before the end of the petition period. We received no queries from accredited observers who wished to attend proceedings at the recall petition and only one accredited individual observer attended the count. It would be helpful for future recall petitions for the UK Government to clarify its rationale for limiting observation of the process and to consider if anything further can be done to enhance transparency and confidence in

the recall petition process. Integrity of the recall petition Despite concerns around transparency, we are satisfied that the integrity of this recall petition was maintained throughout. We received no complaints regarding allegations of fraud and saw no evidence of fraud during the six week signing period. Further recommendations for change Throughout the duration of the recall petition, the Commission and the Petition Officer identified a number of inconsistencies and omissions in the legislation. This may be expected given that this is the first time that the legislation has been tested. While many of these are minor, they can create an additional administrative burden and a lack of clarity that could impact on the successful delivery of a recall petition. The UK Government should consider opportunities that are available to make amendments ahead of any future recall petition. We have addressed some of these changes in our report, including access to the marked register and observation of proceedings, but draw particular attention to the following: Further recommendations for change Close of the recall petition Although the legislation states that signing places must be open at least from 9am to 5pm, there is no clear provision for what time the recall petition should close on the final day. This needs to be addressed as currently postal signing papers can still be returned on the final day up until 11.59 as there is no deadline for the receipt of postal signing papers. The lack of certainty around timing meant that the count did not commence until 00:01 on Thursday 20 September when the Petition Officer was satisfied the petition was closed. Notifying the speaker The Petition Officer must notify the Speaker of the House of Commons of the result before an announcement is made. However, there is no provision in law as to how this should happen and in what form the notification should be made. There is an expectation for instant news amongst the public, and clarity on this process would assist the Petition Officer in their planning process. There is also no provision to notify the MP who is subject to the recall petition of the result. Consideration should be given to addressing this issue ahead of any future recall petition. Appointing a Deputy Petition Officer There is currently no provision to allow for the Petition Officer to appoint a Deputy to act on their behalf. During daily verification of ballot boxes only the Petition Officer or Petition Clerk at a signing venue can break the seal. At the North Antrim recall petition this meant that the Petition Officer was required to be present every evening for the daily verification for the entire six week period. This created an unnecessary burden on the Petition Officer and the UK Government should consider enabling the Petition Officer to appoint a Deputy to assist them in delivering their duties. Prohibition on the publication of exit polls Under the current rules for a recall petition, it is forbidden to publish a statement that could indicate if an individual has signed the petition or not. It also prohibits publication of any forecasts on the result of the petition. This provision caused concern and confusion among campaigners, the media and the public. As currently drafted it appears that anyone who makes any statement on turnout or about individuals who sign the petition would be guilty of an offence. This could be punishable by a fine or imprisonment of up to six months. For example, two elected representatives were spoken to by the Police for making remarks online that gave some suggestion as to what turnout may have been at points during the recall petition process. Although the original intention may have been to maintain secrecy of the recall petition it is not clearly defined as to how this should be done in practice. As such it would be beneficial if more clarity and guidance on this provision was put in place ahead of any future recall petitions. Related content The process to challenge a sitting MP: review of the 2019 recall petitions Read our review of the 2019 recall petitions Past elections

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Using public data sources to improve electoral registration in the UK | Electoral Commission Search Using public data sources to improve electoral registration in the UK You are in the Modernising electoral registration: feasibility studies section Home A modern electoral register Modernising electoral registration: feasibility studies First published: 26 July 2019 Last updated: 8 June 2021 Summary We conducted feasibility studies to explore the potential for giving EROs access to reliable and trusted information from other public sources to maintain accurate and complete electoral registers. Public data sources included the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency, HM Passport Office, HM Revenue and Customs, Department for Work and Pensions, Department for Education and the Education and Skills Funding Agency. Policy options included: Policy options included: allowing EROs to access recent transactional data to identify potentially eligible electors and invite them to register; enabling EROs to use data sources to target specific groups of under-registered electors; and more automatic or direct forms of electoral registration, whereby eligible individuals could be added to the electoral register, or have their details updated without their intervention. The implementation scenarios we tested assumed that the Individual Electoral Registration Digital Service could be further developed to act as a conduit, receiving recent transactional data from new data sources and passing this on to EROs, who could download the information into their EMS systems and then target potential electors.

We also considered whether these reforms could be taken further to support increased levels of automation within the electoral registration system. We found that digital data sharing, including more automated forms of registration, could be implemented by building on the existing IER infrastructure and without fundamentally changing the structure of the electoral registration system in the UK

Data sources and infrastructures

Public data sources

We began by identifying potentially useful national data sources. We were interested in finding out the types of information recorded in the data sources that could potentially help identify different social groups; the geographical scope of each database; and current uses of the data.

Public data sources

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) databases These contain information about drivers and registered keepers of vehicles in the UK. They can provide transactional data of all new applications for driving licences or vehicle registered keepers. With approximately four million driving licence applications and three million driving licence changes per year, DVLA data could potentially be a very useful source to identify potentially eligible electors. This data source could be useful in identifying movers as drivers are meant to update their address data every time they move (although of course some do not).

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) databases

HMRC hold data on tax payers and citizens claiming child benefit. Several organisations use HMRC data for statistics or to verify datasets against. Their data could be useful to identify eligible electors within a geographical area who have not yet been identified by an ERO.

HM Passport Office databases

The Passport Office receives an estimated seven million UK passport applications annually, information which could potentially be used by EROs. An advantage of passport data compared to other public data sources is that it includes information about a person's nationality, which is one of the current criteria for determining a person's eligibility to register.

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) databases

Electoral registration applications are already verified against DWP data, using full name, date of birth and National Insurance number (NINO). Since only citizens applying for benefits will regularly be in contact with the DWP, there may be limits on the accuracy and currency of other address data held by the DWP.

Education databases

There are a number of potentially useful databases in the education sector that could help EROs to identify attainers and other young people. These include databases held by the Education and Skills Funding Agency, including the Learning Records Service, which collects data relating to learners registering for relevant post-14 qualifications. Each learner has a unique learner number (ULN). There is an estimated 1.1 million new ULN applications annually, as well as 1.8 million apprenticeship applications that could be used to identify attainers and potentially eligible 18-25 year olds. In addition, the Department for Education keeps a record of pupils in England attending state schools and colleges and higher education (although not pupils in private education) in the National Pupil Database, while the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland's Department of Education administer and collate data for their respective Annual School Censuses.

Data infrastructures

We also wanted to understand the infrastructure requirements needed to support more data-driven approaches to electoral registration. An obvious starting point was the IER Digital Service. This is because it already links all local authorities with a central service capable of verifying people against the DWP system as part of the registration application process. The IER Digital Service was implemented in 2014 and incorporates an "IER hub", which acts as 'link' and coordinator between the website (online application), DWP (application verification) and the EROs' EMS systems (372 registers). We felt that there might be scope to enhance the IER Digital Service by building APIs (Application Programming Interfaces) that would link new data sources with the IER hub. EROs could then download transactional data relating to citizens living locally who had recently accessed a particular government service (for example, DVLA, HM Passport Office) through their EMS system and use this data to identify potential electors who could then be invited to register, or registered automatically. We discussed data infrastructures with representatives from a number of Data Source Organisations (DSOs) in order to examine the scope for linking their systems to the existing IER architecture, and also had conversations with several EMS suppliers to explore potential compatibility with their systems.

Making better use of public data: implementation scenarios

Based on our understanding of national data sources and infrastructures we developed and tested two implementation scenarios. The scenarios assumed (an assumption tested by the feasibility study) that the IER hub could be further developed to act as a conduit, receiving datasets from a data source and passing it on to EROs who could download it via their EMS systems. The feasibility study showed that both data sharing scenarios could be implemented by building on the existing IER infrastructure and without fundamentally changing the structure of the electoral registration system. Electoral registers would still be compiled and maintained locally, but with EROs being given access to transactional data from DSOs through further development of the IER hub.

Issues and challenges in public data sharing

While the feasibility studies showed that digital data sharing using national data sources is feasible technically, there are a number of outstanding issues and challenges. Issues and challenges in public data sharing

Legal Data cannot be shared by a DSO without legislation, e.g. the Commissioners for Revenue and Customs Act 2005 does not allow the HMRC to share data without a legal gateway. However, we believe that a suitable legal gateway could be created by the Secretary of State making regulations giving EROs power to inspect the records held by specific public authorities. An alternative route based on an individual consenting to the sharing of their data with another public authority could also be pursued.

Operational The success of any data sharing arrangements would depend upon the availability of adequate resources with the

necessary skillsets available on both sides of the data sharing link to implement and manage the data sharing process. For example: The DSO would need resources to set up the required infrastructure on their side to share data, e.g. an automated trigger to create and/or send recent transactional datasets to EROs or the IER hub. The DSO and Government Digital Service (GDS) would have to work together to set up an interface between the data source and IER hub, e.g. an API. GDS technical staff would need to be available for further IER hub developments and support the DSOs and EROs to develop the interfaces. The ERO and/or EMS supplier would need technical staff to work with the DSO or GDS to set up the interfaces between the EMS system and the IER hub or directly with the data source systems, e.g. APIs, as well as any other necessary developments or enhancements, e.g. automated processes in the EMS system. DSO and ERO staff would have to be trained to ensure they have the right skillset to follow the data sharing process.

Scheduling Any initiative to introduce digital data sharing using national data sources would require effective coordination to ensure that development and implementation schedules were agreed and all required stakeholders worked together and were committed to delivering the reforms. Any scheduling conflicts between stakeholders would need to be assessed carefully and resolved before any work was commenced.

Economic A detailed cost-benefit analysis would need to be completed on the data sharing options to further explore the cost-effectiveness of the proposed reforms. This would require access to public data sources, enabling detailed testing to be undertaken (which would require a legal gateway and incur a cost). One option would be to conduct a pilot scheme matching transactional data from national public databases against electoral registers in a number of areas (covering different demographics) to produce a list of potential unregistered electors for EROs to contact. The transactional data would need to be recent (e.g. the record currency could be restricted to the previous month) and matched against the most recently updated version of the full electoral register in the selected local authority areas. The aim of such a pilot scheme would be to provide a reliable assessment of the proportion of transactional data returned to EROs containing potential new electors. The pilot could also include an assessment of the added value to EROs of allowing access to national data, as compared to local data which they already have access to. In this way, it might be possible to estimate the cost-benefit of national digital data sharing – e.g. by calculating the cost per new elector registered. This could be calculated by dividing the total cost of implementing high-level digital data sharing (i.e. set-up and ongoing costs) by the number of potential new electors identified within the transactional data that resulted in a new registration. It would then be possible to assess whether the initiative was a cost-effective way of getting people onto the electoral register. Other potential cost implications that would need to be explored relate to the commercial arrangements between the DSOs, GDS and EROs, and would need to cover:

- Set-up costs, including APIs, IER hub development, automation of tasks e.g. triggers to send datasets or letters to citizens
- Cost per transaction i.e. cost of sending transactional data from a DSO

Any charges for accessing an organisation's data

- Additional staff and non-staff resources to set up and maintain the solution
- Maintenance cost of software and hardware
- Cost of data matching tools

Further development and maintenance of the IER hub

- Automated and automatic registration

We considered whether the models of digital data sharing between DSOs and EROs could be taken further and support the implementation of automated or automatic systems of electoral registration. To recap: Automated registration would see reliable data being used as the basis of an individual's electoral registration application, but the individual would still be required to take some further,

affirmative steps before being added to the register. Automatic registration would see citizens added to the electoral register, or their address updated, without them being required to take any further steps at all. We developed and tested two implementation scenarios – one for a system of automated registration, the other for a system of automatic registration. In developing the scenarios, we also considered models from other countries. For example, in Australia, a Federal Direct Enrolment & Update process has been introduced to enrol or update a citizen's details on the electoral roll using information provided to the Australian Electoral Commission from other government agencies, without the person having to complete an enrolment form. The feasibility studies concluded that both automated and automatic registration could be implemented in technical terms, in theory by utilising the same data sources and infrastructures explored in the better use of data feasibility study. The operational requirements of both reforms would also be similar. However, we identified several important issues unique to automatic registration. Automated and automatic registration Data quality The higher the level of automaticity in the electoral registration process, the greater the requirement for public data sources used by EROs to be trustworthy, current and complete. Clearly, recent transactional data from reliable data sources would offer the most potential in these respects. But the data would ideally need to be complete too, insofar as it would need to contain all of the fields necessary (i.e. name, address, date of birth, National Insurance number and nationality) to initiate an automatic registration. In practice, automatic registration may require EROs to combine information from different datasets, which would make implementation more complex. Automatic registration and individual choice Current legislation requires the individual to make an application to register to vote. There are statutory questions that form part of the electoral registration application process that can only be answered by an individual and cannot be extracted from any other source, e.g. whether the elector would want to opt out of the open register or apply to vote by post. Any move towards automatic registration would need to consider the implications of removing these additional choices that citizens have when registering to vote. More fundamentally, automatic registration would represent a shift away from the current default position that an individual must always take proactive steps to be registered or update their details; it would represent an in principle acceptance of the idea that the state may in certain circumstances proactively register citizens without their consent. Related content Reforming electoral law Find out about electoral law and the changes we want to see A modern electoral register Find out about the changes we want to see to the electoral registration system in the UK Transparent digital campaigning Find out about digital campaigning and the changes we want to see of elections Find out about the accessibility of elections and the changes we want to see

Report: Political finance regulation at the May 2015 UK general election | Electoral Commission Search Report: Political finance regulation at the May 2015 UK general election You are in the UK general elections section Home UK general elections On this page Recommendations for improving the regulatory framework Download our full report Download the candidate spending data First published: 20 June 2019 Last updated: 6 April 2020 About this report On 7 May 2015, a UK Parliamentary general election (UKPGE) was held to elect 650 members to the United Kingdom Parliament. This report focuses on spending and donations reported by campaigners in relation to these elections. 1 This is the Commission's second report on the UKPGE held in 2015. We have a statutory duty to report on the administration of certain major electoral events, including UK Parliamentary general elections. We also have a duty to keep under review and report on the law relating to elections, including the registration of political parties and the regulation of their income and expenditure. This report forms part of our work under those duties.

Recommendations for improving the regulatory framework The Electoral Commission's statutory role as the regulator of party and election finance in the UK includes a duty to keep the legal framework under review, and report on our conclusions. Some of these recommendations will require the UK Government and Parliament to implement changes. Following the implementation of the Smith Commission and St David's Day Agreement, most of the matters covered in these recommendations will also be within the remit of the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly in relation to elections to the Scottish Parliament and National Assembly for Wales and local government elections.

Recommendation 1: Investigation and sanctioning powers for noncompliance with candidate spending and donation rules

We continue to recommend that the Electoral Commission should be provided with investigative powers and sanctions for offences relating to candidate spending and donations at specified elections. We think these tools should initially be available at elections where, from our experience, unsanctioned breaches of those rules are likely to have the most impact.

These are elections to the following legislatures: UK Parliament Scottish Parliament National Assembly for Wales Northern Ireland Assembly Any proposed changes would need to consider the costs of setting up a new regulatory framework together with the potential regulatory benefits. We would then consider whether these powers should be extended to other elections in due course.

Recommendation 2: Spending in constituencies

We recommend that the relationship between the definitions of regulated candidate spending and regulated political party spending that has been in place since 2000* should be reviewed by Governments, Parliaments and others, with a particular focus on spending in constituencies. We intend to contribute to this consideration by undertaking further analysis of spending reported at recent elections.

Recommendation 3: Campaigning using social media

We will give further consideration to how campaigners should report spend on social media at future elections. As spend in this area grows, there is the potential for less transparency if expenditure on social media is not easily identifiable within the spending returns because social media is not a specific reporting category*. This will need to be considered as part of reviewing all of the expenditure reporting categories to ensure that they remain proportionate and relevant to future trends in campaigning. We recommend that Governments and Parliaments should consider the timing needed for implementing changes before the next major elections expected in 2019, 2020 and 2021**. (*The reporting categories for the spending returns are set out in legislation.) (** European Parliament Elections in 2019, UK Parliamentary General Election in 2020 and elections to the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly and

Northern Ireland Assembly in 2021.) Recommendation 4: Regulation of spending on staff time dedicated to election campaigning We continue to recommend that, in principle, staff costs associated with regulated campaign spending should be included within the regulatory controls for all types of campaigners: candidates, political parties and nonparty campaigners. The solutions outlined in our Regulatory Review provide a solid foundation for introducing changes and addressing the anomaly that means that the spending controls for political parties do not cover a potentially large strand of their election campaign spending. The Government should give further consideration to this issue when proposals for wider changes to the rules are developed. We have developed two options that could form the basis for further testing and consultation with political parties and other campaigners. Recommendation 5: Sanctions for non-compliance with obligations placed on political parties and other campaigners under PPERA We think there is a case for reviewing and increasing the present cap of £20,000 on our power to issue sanctions. It is important to keep the cap under review, particularly in light of experience from the initial 5 years of the civil sanctions regime and comparisons with other regulatory and sanctioning systems. As the cap is set in legislation, any increase would need to be implemented by Government and/or Parliament. Recommendation 6: Joint campaigning by registered non-party campaigners We continue to recommend that the UK Government amend the recently introduced legal provisions for lead and minor non-party campaigners working in a joint campaign, to require minor campaigners to provide accurate spending information to the appointed registered lead campaigner. We also recommend that a campaigner in a joint campaign should be required to report the total spending of itself and its partners, not just its own spending, for transparency purposes and for verifying compliance with the spending limits. Recommendation 7: Targeted spending by registered non-party campaigners For future elections, we recommend that the UK Government introduce a specific mandatory reporting category for targeted expenditure that non-party campaigners have incurred and spent in relation to an authorisation given by a political party. Without this requirement, the recently introduced targeted spending provision only provides limited transparency and it is difficult to identify in the spending returns how much targeted spend has been incurred.

Recommendation 8: Expected changes to UK parliamentary constituency boundaries and impact on campaigner spending limits It will be important to consider the implications of the UK Parliamentary constituency boundary review in relation to spending limits for candidates, political parties and non-party campaigners before the next UKPGE expected in 2020* to ensure that spending limits reflect any changes to the size and number of constituencies and to also ensure that campaigners can adequately communicate messages to voters. We recommend that the UK Government take this into account when planning for the implementation of the boundary review.

Recommendation 9: Publication of candidate spending returns To improve transparency and accessibility of candidate spending returns, we continue to recommend that Returning Officers should be required to publish spending returns online as well as through the existing methods of public inspection. We support recommendation 12-5 of the Law Commissions' review of Electoral Law which proposes a method for implementing this change through legislation. Recommendation 10: Clearer candidate spending limits To reduce the risk of candidates spending over the limit, and of unintended non-compliance with the rules, we continue to recommend that the spending limits should be made clearer for candidates and their agents. We support the method proposed in recommendation 12-313 from the Law Commissions' review of Electoral Law that, when based on formulas set out in legislation, the limits for candidates at elections

should be published by the Returning Officer along with the notice of election. This change would need to be implemented through legislation. Recommendation 11: Simplifying the rules on pre-candidacy spending and donations At the 2010 and 2015 UKPGE we have observed that having two separate candidate regulated periods and two separate spending limits causes administrative burdens on candidates and agents and adds to the risk of noncompliance with the rules. We provide more details on this in our 2013 regulatory review. We continue to recommend that the UK Government consult campaigners on this matter as part of its next review of candidate regulation.

Recommendation 12: Pre-election reporting of donations for UK general elections:

Political parties and non-party campaigners We continue to recommend that the UK Government implement our proposals to replace weekly pre-election donation reporting for political parties and nonparty campaigners with a single report that would cover most of the period between the dissolution of Parliament and polling day. The report should only be required from political parties that are standing candidates in that election and receive a reportable donation or loan during the relevant period. Making these changes would reduce the regulatory burden upon these campaigners while retaining the same level of pre poll transparency as under the current rules.

Download our full report Our report on campaign spending for the 2015 UK general election Download the candidate spending data Candidate spending at the 2015 UK Parliamentary election (XLS) Candidate spending at the 2015 UK Parliamentary election (CSV) 1. The UKPGE was combined with other polls across England, including local government elections, Mayoral elections parish council elections and some local referendums. This report does not cover spending or donations relating to these elections. ■ Back to content at footnote 1 Related content Report: How the May 2015 elections were run Read our report about how the May 2015 elections were run Results and turnout at the 2015 UK general election Gweld y canlyniadau a'r nifer a bleidleisiodd yn etholiad cyffredinol Senedd y DU 2015 Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run Report overview: 2019 UK Parliamentary general election Read our full report on the 2019 UK Parliamentary general election. Find out how it was run, voters' experience, candidates' experience, challenges faced, and how they'll be addressed

Investigation: Conservative and Unionist Party campaign spending returns for the 2014 European Parliamentary Election, 2015 UK Parliamentary General Election, and the 2014 parliamentary by-elections in Clacton, Newark and Rochester and Strood | Electoral Commission Search Investigation: Conservative and Unionist Party campaign spending returns for the 2014 European Parliamentary Election, 2015 UK Parliamentary General Election, and the 2014 parliamentary by-elections in Clacton, Newark and Rochester and Strood You are in the Investigations section Home Investigations On this page Issues under investigation The investigation Our findings: 2014 by-elections and accounting records Our findings: the Party's 2015 UKPGE spending return Our findings: omitted invoices and/or receipts Our actions: the declaration issue Representations made by the Party Final determinations First published: 16 March 2017 Last updated: 16 March 2017 The Conservative and Unionist Party (GB) The Conservative and Unionist Party ("the Party") is a registered political party in Great Britain. Prior to 11 April 2016, when the events under investigation occurred, it was registered as the Conservative Party. The 2015 United Kingdom Parliamentary General Election ("the 2015 UKPGE") took place on 7 May 2015. Under PPERA and given that the Party's campaign spending exceeded £250,000, the registered treasurer of the Party, Mr Simon Day 1 , was required to deliver to us a financial return of all campaign spending incurred by the Party during the 2015 UKPGE campaign period, by 7 November 2015. Mr Day delivered this return in advance of the statutory deadline. We published this return on 20 January 2016. During the preparation for, and following, publication, we engaged in its routine scrutiny of all the returns for the 2015 UKPGE, looking at their completeness and accuracy. Whilst carrying out this work, it noted reports, most notably by Channel 4 News in January and February 2016, that raised concerns that the Party's spending return for the 2015 UKPGE may have been incomplete. We were concerned that the Party's 2015 UKPGE return may have been missing items of Party campaign spending and may have included items that were not Party campaign spending. These reports also indicated that the Party's spending return for the 2014 European Parliamentary Election ("the 2014 EPE") may not have been complete. Following enquiries with the Party, we opened an investigation on 15 February 2016. This is a report of that investigation. It is being published alongside the publication of the outcome of the investigation and the sanctions imposed. Summary of findings In summary, we found that: there was no evidence that the Party's spending return for the 2014 EPE was incomplete it is likely that expense returns delivered by Party candidates at three by-elections during 2014 understated the value of the Party's spending on their campaigns on three instances in 2014, relating to the said three by-elections, Mr Day as registered treasurer failed to ensure that the Party's accounting records were sufficient to adequately show and explain the Party's transactions with the candidates and/or their agents, as required by section 41 of PPERA the Party's 2015 UKPGE spending return was not a complete statement of its campaign spending payments, as required by section 80(3) of PPERA. Mr Day had included payments that were not Party campaign spending and omitted other Party campaign payments the Party's 2015 UKPGE spending return also failed to include all the required invoices and receipts associated with the Party's campaign spending that were required by section 80(3) of PPERA Summary of findings Accordingly we determined that Mr Day committed three contraventions under section 41 of PPERA and two offences under section 82(4)(b) of PPERA. The Party has been fined £70,000 in total as a result of these contraventions and offences. In addition, we identified information which raised doubt about whether Mr Day took reasonable steps to ensure that he could make a proper declaration that the Party's 2015 UKPGE

spending return was complete. Knowingly or recklessly making a false declaration would be an offence under section 83(3) of PPERA. We do not have the power to sanction this offence and therefore, having identified it during its investigation, it referred Mr Day to the Metropolitan Police Service.

Issues under investigation

The scope of the investigation

In January 2016 our attention was drawn to broadcast reports in which Channel 4 News made a number of allegations about spending by the Party and/or its candidates in the South Thanet constituency during the 2015 UKPGE campaign. Channel 4 News subsequently ran other broadcast reports concerning the way the Party had reported party and candidate campaign spending during 2014 and 2015. After assessing the evidence provided by the reports, and having had discussions with the Party, we opened an investigation on 15 February 2016.

The scope of the investigation extended as further evidence came to light. In total this investigation considered the following matters:

- Whether the Party's campaign spending return for the 2014 EPE was a complete statement of all campaign payments made. The investigation looked at campaign spending by or on behalf of the Party and/or its candidates in three by-elections in Clacton, Newark and Rochester and Strood in 2014. The first of those by-elections took place during the regulated period for the 2014 EPE, and any party campaign spending in relation to the EPE during that by-election was required to be included in the spending return for the EPE. Failures in relation to this may constitute offences under section 82(4) of PPERA. In this report these are referred to as the 'by-election issues'.
- Whether the Party's campaign spending return for the 2015 UKPGE was a complete statement of all campaign payments made, again in relation to spending by the Party during the 2014 by-elections, all of which took place during the regulated period for the 2015 UKPGE. Failures in relation to this may constitute offences under section 82(4) of PPERA. In this report, these again are referred to as the 'by-election issues'.
- Whether the then registered treasurer of the Party, Mr Day, ensured that accounting records were kept which were sufficient to show and explain the Party's transactions. This concerned the Party's accounting records in relation to campaign activity carried out by the Party on behalf of the candidates in the three aforementioned by-elections, and reported by the candidates. Failing to keep sufficient accounting records constitutes a contravention of a prescribed requirement under section 41 of PPERA. These are the 'accounting records issues'.
- Whether the Party's 2015 UKPGE campaign spending return was a complete statement of all campaign payments made by the Party during the 2015 UKPGE campaign, in respect of payments incurred by the Party in the South Thanet constituency. This concerned whether the Party's return included spending that was for the purpose of electing its candidate in South Thanet, and was not therefore Party campaigning and whether it failed to include all Party campaign payments relating to this constituency. Failures in relation to the campaign spending return such as this may constitute an offence under section 82(4) of PPERA. These are the 'UKPGE spending return - South Thanet issues'.
- Whether the Party's 2015 UKPGE campaign spending return was a complete statement of all payments made in respect of spending on transporting Party activists to a number of constituencies across the UK to carry out campaign activity. This concerned whether the Party's return included spending associated with this activity which was not Party campaign spending, and whether it failed to include all Party campaign payments relating to this activity. Failures in relation to the campaign spending return such as this may constitute an offence under section 82(4) of PPERA. These are the 'UKPGE spending return – Battlebus2015 issues'.
- Whether further payments were omitted from the Party's 2015 UKPGE campaign spending return. Failures in relation to the campaign spending return

such as this may constitute an offence under section 82(4) of PPERA. These are the 'UKPGE spending return – omitted payments issues'. Whether there were any invoices or receipts missing from the Party's 2015 UKPGE return. Failures in relation to this may constitute an offence under section 82(4) of PPERA. This is the ' UKPGE spending return - omitted invoices/receipts issue '. Whether there was evidence to suggest that the then registered treasurer of the Party, Mr Day, may have knowingly or recklessly made a statutory declaration in respect of one or both returns that those returns were complete and accurate when they were not. Failures in relation to this may constitute an offence under section 83(3) of PPERA. This is the ' declaration issue '. Under its section 145 of PPERA duty to monitor and take all reasonable steps to secure compliance with election spending under the Representation of the People Act 1983 (RPA), we also considered the accuracy or otherwise of a number of campaign expense returns made by Party candidates and their agents, following the 2014 EPE and the 2015 UKPGE. We have no powers to make findings of offences in respect of these returns, and have not sought to do so. However, we have made observations in respect of these returns under its section 145 duty, which are included in this report.

Legal framework

The legal framework set out in PPERA Section 41(1) of PPERA requires the registered treasurer of a party to ensure that accounting records are kept with respect to the party which are sufficient to show and explain the party's transactions. Under section 41(4) these records must be kept for at least six years from the end of the financial year of the party in which they are made. Party campaign spending is defined in section 72 of PPERA as expenses incurred by or on behalf of a party which (a) fall within paragraph 1 of Schedule 8, and are (b) incurred for election purposes. 'Election purposes' is defined as being in connection with promoting or procuring success for the party and its candidates generally.

Section 72(7) excludes anything which falls to be included in a candidate's own election expenses return, namely expenses incurred in connection with promoting or procuring that specific candidate's election. Section 80(2) of PPERA requires the treasurer to prepare a campaign spending return at the conclusion of an EPE or UKPGE campaign period. Section 80(3) requires that the return contains: a statement of all payments made in respect of campaign spending incurred during the campaign period a statement of all disputed claims (where the treasurer refuses to pay the claim) of which the treasurer is aware a statement of all unpaid claims (if any) of which the treasurer is aware Section 80(4) requires that the return contains: all invoices or receipts related to the payments (of a value greater than £200) a declaration of all notional spending Section 82(1) of PPERA requires the treasurer of a party which incurred more than £250,000 of campaign spending to deliver the campaign spending return within six months of the end of the relevant campaign period. Under section 82(4)(b) of PPERA, the treasurer commits an offence if, without reasonable excuse, he or she delivers a return which does not comply with the requirements of section 80(3) or (4) of PPERA. This may occur where information required under those sections is omitted, or where the return includes payments that in fact relate to candidate campaign expenses, and so are excluded from the definition of 'campaign expenditure' under section 72(7) of PPERA, or includes spending unrelated to campaigning at all.

In determining that any of the offences under PPERA have been committed, the Commission must be satisfied beyond reasonable doubt. Section 83 of PPERA requires a spending return to be accompanied by a declaration made by the treasurer. That declaration must state that the treasurer has examined the return in question, and that to the best of his or her knowledge or belief it is a complete and correct return and all expenses shown in it as paid have been paid by the treasurer, the

deputy treasurer or a person authorised under PPERA to pay party campaign expenses. Section 83(3) states that a person commits an offence if he or she knowingly or recklessly makes a false declaration. Party campaign spending and candidate campaign expenses The RPA imposes restrictions and requirements on candidates and their agents who incur spending in relation to their election campaigns. This includes a limit on the value of campaign expenses a candidate may incur, and a requirement to deliver a return of candidate campaign expenses to the relevant returning officer after the election. The restrictions and requirements imposed by the RPA are distinct from those on registered political parties. The Commission has no specific investigation powers it can use to enquire into potential breaches of the RPA rules, and enforcement of those rules falls to the police and prosecution authorities. The investigation This section summarises the conduct of the investigation and the key actions taken by us. The Party did not cooperate fully with our enquiries. While at times answers were forthcoming, and in particular cooperation was given when arranging interviews with certain Party officials, at other times the Party hindered and caused delay to the investigation. During the investigation we had contact not only with the Party but with a number of other individuals and organisations. Those other individuals and organisations cooperated with our enquiries throughout 2 . The opening and scope of the investigation In January 2016 Channel 4 News made a number of allegations about Party spending in South Thanet during the 2015 UKPGE campaign. Its broadcast reports alleged that: The Party had included spending in its 2015 UKPGE campaign spending return which was not party campaign spending. The spending related to hotel bills at the Royal Harbour Hotel in Ramsgate. According to the reports, this spending should instead have been included as part of candidate expenses in the South Thanet constituency, for the Party candidate Mr Craig Mackinlay. Spending incurred by the Party in the neighbouring constituency of North Thanet, at the Premier Inn Hotel in Margate, had not been included in the Party's 2015 UKPGE spending return. The cost of advertising in a local Thanet newspaper had been included in the Party's return, but was in fact candidate campaign expenses since the newspaper had only been distributed in the North and South Thanet constituencies. It should, the report alleged, have been split between the returns for the two candidates in those constituencies. We raised these allegations with the Party, which explained that South Thanet had been its base for its 'anti-UKIP' campaign. We then opened an assessment to determine whether or not it had reasonable grounds to suspect offences under PPERA in relation to the Party's 2015 UKPGE spending return. The assessment concluded that an investigation should be opened. The Party was notified accordingly and evidence sought in order to progress the investigation, both from the Party and from the UK Independence Party (UKIP). In a report broadcast on 8 February 2016, Channel 4 News made further allegations, this time about Party spending during three by-elections in 2014. These by-elections were held in the constituencies of Newark (on 5 June 2014), Clacton (on 9 October 2014) and Rochester and Strood (on 20 November 2014). The report alleged that the Party had incurred spending on accommodating employees and activists at hotels in those constituencies during the by-election campaigns, and that those employees and activists were working on the by-election campaigns. However, the spending was not reported on the candidate returns for those by-elections. The dates of the spending at these hotels fell within the regulated periods for the 2014 EPE and 2015 UKPGE. Any Party campaign spending during those periods should have been included in the Party's campaign spending returns for those elections. However, none of the spending identified in the report appeared to have been declared in the Party's spending returns. We assessed these further

allegations and concluded that they should be investigated to determine whether the Party's 2014 EPE, and 2015 UKPGE, returns were complete and accurate. We told the Party that the scope of the investigation had widened and again sought relevant evidence. In April 2016, while the investigation was progressing, the Party told us that it had identified omissions in the Party's campaign spending return for the 2015 UKPGE. It said that Channel 4 News had raised new concerns with it about a national tour by Party activists that took place during the election campaign, under the name 'Battlebus2015'. The Party had reviewed its reporting of spending on Battlebus2015 and uncovered £39,511.90 of spending that it considered it should have reported in the Party's spending return, but which had been missed. The review was ongoing at the time but completed during the investigation. Shortly afterwards, Channel 4 News broadcast its report about the Party's spending on the Battlebus2015 tour. It alleged that the Party had paid for an operation to transport activists to over 20 marginal seats across England, known as Battlebus2015, and that it had evidence those activists campaigned for individual candidates as well as the Party. It stated that none of the costs associated with this were included in the relevant candidate returns, and referred to the Party's acknowledgement that some costs had not been included in the Party's spending return. The Party's acknowledgement gave us further reasonable grounds to suspect that the Party's spending return was incomplete. However, we did not accept at face value the Party's assertion that all the missing spending should have been reported in the Party's spending return. Instead, we explained to the Party that it would be whether the Party had, over 2014 and 2015, been improperly reporting spending by the Party on its and its candidates' campaigns.

Engagement with the Party From February to May 2016 we sought to obtain relevant documents and information from the Party by way of three statutory notices. These notices were issued under Schedule 19B paragraph 3 of PPERA. They covered, in turn, the South Thanet issues (issued on 18 February), the by-election issues (issued on 23 March) and the Battlebus2015 issues (issued on 9 May). The Party responded in part to the first and second notices by the deadlines given. Following that, however, it caused delay by incorrectly asserting that we did not have the power to request some of the material, and by citing administrative reasons for taking additional time to respond. We granted extensions, both by amending the first notice and through voluntary agreement with the Party. Despite this, by May 2016 we still had not received full disclosure from the Party of the required material. Consequently, we were no longer willing to agree to the Party's continuing requests for further periods of time to provide the material and, given the Party's limited disclosure up to that point, did not have confidence that the Party would provide all the material. In May 2016 we lodged an application with the High Court for a documents and an information disclosure order. Later that day the Party provided the remaining material from the first two notices. After reviewing this material we withdrew our application to the High Court. The Party complied with the third notice by the deadline given. During October 2016 we interviewed four former or current Party officials. These were: Lord Stephen Gilbert of Panteg, who was the Campaigns Director at the Party during the 2015 UKPGE campaign. Lord Gilbert was interviewed in lieu of a Senior Campaigns Officer at the Party who had been based in South Thanet during the 2015 UKPGE campaign period. The officer declined an invitation to be interviewed on the grounds of ill health. Mr Alan Mabbutt, who was interviewed in his capacity as Chief Legal Officer of the Party, which he held during 2014-15. A Senior Press Advisor who had been employed by the Party as a consultant media advisor, and was based in the South Thanet constituency during the election campaign. Mr Simon Day,

who was interviewed under caution on behalf of the Party and as its registered treasurer during the events under investigation. We also interviewed a number of individuals who were involved in the decisions and/or conduct of the Party's campaign activity during 2014-15. They were all interviewed in their personal capacity. These individuals were: the Right Honourable Mr Grant Shapps MP, Co-Chairman of the Party in 2014-15; the Chief of Staff to Mr Shapps during 2014-15; and the Director of Roadtrip2015 and Battlebus2015. We also spoke to three volunteers for the Party who acted as 'team leaders' on the buses used to visit constituencies as part of the Battlebus2015 campaign. Further, we issued a notice under Schedule 19B paragraph 3 of PPERA to one of these team leaders who had chosen not to provide information voluntarily. We had ongoing correspondence with the Party from May 2016 to the conclusion of the investigation. This correspondence covered the issues under investigation, set out our developing views on these and contained further information and explanation from the Party. During this correspondence two further notices under Schedule 19B paragraph 3 of PPERA were issued by us on 15 September 2016 and 12 October 2016 to obtain material required to progress the investigation. In both cases notices were issued after the Party did not provide the material on initial request. The Party responded to both notices by the deadline given by us. In February 2017 we issued three initial notices to the Party under Schedule 19C of PPERA. These set out our initial determinations in respect of contraventions and offences committed by Mr Day, and, in accordance with Schedule 19C, invited the Party to make representations. Under Schedule 19C the Party had 28 days from receipt of the notice to make any representations, and this deadline expired on 7 March 2017. We copied the initial notices to Mr Day and explained we would accept representations from him also. Mr Day did not make representations on the notices. The Party made their representations on the deadline of 7 March 2017. These were considered by us and a final determination made in respect of the contraventions and offences, and the sanctions resulting from them. This final determination was issued to the Party on 13 March 2017. Engagement with other individuals and organisations During the course of the investigation we issued three notices under Schedule 19B paragraph 3 of PPERA to Channel 4 News, to obtain the evidence underpinning its broadcast reports and allegations. Channel 4 News complied with these notices. In addition, we issued a notice under Schedule 19B paragraph 3 of PPERA to UKIP. This followed an assertion by the Party that it based a number of officials and volunteers in South Thanet during the 2015 UKPGE campaign as a direct result of UKIP running its national campaign from the area. The notice required the provision of information relating to the location of UKIP's national campaign. UKIP provided the information, which was analysed as part of the investigation. Finally, a number of emails and letters were received from members of the public, concerned about whether campaign spending in their constituency had been properly reported by the Party. Many of these supplied examples of campaign activity by the Party. Each one was carefully considered and, where relevant, analysed as part of the investigation. Engagement with the Police and Crown Prosecution Service When opening the investigation in February 2016, we noted that the evidence disclosed potential offences in relation to candidate returns under the RPA. If candidate spending had been improperly included in the Party's spending returns then it was possible that, in addition to the issues with the Party's return, the candidate returns were inaccurate. As mentioned above, we do not have investigation or enforcement powers in respect of offences under the RPA. These can only be investigated by the police and, if appropriate, prosecuted by the Crown Prosecution Service (the CPS). However, as noted above, we have a duty under section

145 of PPERA to monitor and take all reasonable steps to secure compliance with the RPA candidate spending rules. We recognised that any potential RPA offences relating to the 2014 by-elections were out of time for police investigation as more than a year had passed since the alleged offences. However, those relating to the 2015 UKPGE were, at that point, less than a year old. In February 2016 we discussed the matters relating to South Thanet with Kent Police, who decided that, at that time, the evidence to hand was insufficient for it to investigate. In April 2016, following the identification of the Battlebus2015 issues, we wrote to the Director of Public Prosecutions. We expressed our view that these issues raised reasonable suspicion of a course of conduct by the Party that may involve offences under the RPA. We drew attention to the fact that it was approaching a year since any such RPA offences may have been committed. In its view, the evidence and the seriousness of the issues warranted applications to the court to extend the time available to the police and the CPS to investigate. At the request of the CPS we hosted a meeting with the CPS and relevant police forces. Consequentially, a number of forces made applications to the court and were granted an extension to undertake their investigations. This included Kent Police, which decided that it would take the matter forward. Our investigation was entirely separate from any police investigation. In order to assist the police, we agreed to meet with its representatives and with the CPS on a number of occasions. We provided information to the Police under request to further their investigations and did so in accordance with our information-sharing powers. Our findings in respect of the 2014 by-elections and accounting records

The by-election issues

The by-election issues looked at three by-elections held during 2014. These were in Newark (June 2014), Clacton (October 2014) and Rochester and Strood (November 2014). In February 2016, Channel 4 News published an allegation that the three Party candidates in these by-elections had failed to declare hotel payments incurred by the Party for Party staff and activists working on the by-election campaigns. Invoices and documents obtained by Channel 4 News, and subsequently provided to us, indicated that the Party booked the following accommodation for employees and volunteers during those by-elections:

- Newark by-election: Kelham House: 54 nights between 1 May and 6 June 2014 at a cost of £4,519.95
- Premier Inn: 125 nights between 19 May and 6 June 2014, cost unknown
- Clacton by-election: Lifehouse Spa: 290 nights between 4 September and 11 October 2014, cost unknown
- Premier Inn: 71 nights between 9 September and 1 October 2014 at a cost of £6,582.86
- Rochester and Strood by-election: Bridgewood Manor: 597 nights between 6 October and 22 November 2014 at a cost of £51,191.16
- Premier Inn: 246 nights between 17 October and 22 November at a cost of £20,985.91

All three by-elections took place during campaign periods for national elections. In particular, the spending associated with the Newark by-election took place during the campaign period for the 2014 EPE, and also during the beginning of the campaign period for the 2015 UKPGE. The spending associated with the Clacton and the Rochester and Strood by-elections took place during the campaign period for the 2015 UKPGE. We do not have specific powers to investigate and enforce incomplete candidate returns. But we were concerned about whether the Party employees and volunteers based in the constituencies where the by-elections were being held may have also been carrying out campaigning for the Party for the purpose of the EPE and UKPGE campaigns. If this was the case, then a proportion of the hotel accommodation costs incurred in locating them in those constituencies may have been reportable in the Party's spending returns for the 2014 EPE and 2015 UKPGE. However, the spending detailed above was not included in either of these returns. In response to our enquiries, including the notice issued to it on 23 March 2016, the Party provided us with information

concerning the individuals located in the hotels and their roles. This included evidence of the work the individuals undertook whilst located at the hotels, such as electronic diaries, campaign material and letters. The Party explained that while they were located in those constituencies its employees both campaigned for the Party candidates and continued with their routine work for the Party. We also considered the information published by, and obtained under notice from, Channel 4 News, including the accommodation invoices and receipts. By-election issues outcome Having considered the role the individuals based in the by-election constituencies had and the evidence of their work during that time, we are satisfied that they were not campaigning on behalf of the Party in respect of the 2014 EPE or the 2015 UKPGE. Consequently, the Party's spending returns for those elections were not incomplete in this regard. The accounting records issue The accounting records issues As explained above, at each of the three 2014 by-elections contested by the Party's candidates, the Party located staff and volunteers in those constituencies. Its employees both campaigned for the Party candidates and continued with their routine work for the Party. The Party therefore incurred spending on these activities by way of accommodation costs and volunteer expenses, and by allocating staff time to these campaigns. In each case the Party provided its candidate with an invoice of an amount it calculated to be its spending on these campaigns. The candidate then reported this as a donation from the Party and as notional spending in his or her candidate return. This is an acceptable way to report Party spending in candidate returns. The amounts reported by the candidates were as follows 3 : In Newark the Conservative candidate declared a total election spend of £96,190.98. Of this £23,596 relates to spending on agent and other staff costs and was invoiced by the Party. In Clacton the Conservative candidate declared a total election spend of £84,049.22. Of this £12,314 relates to spending on agent and other staff costs and was invoiced by the Party. Of this, £3,894.39 relates to spending on accommodation and administration. In Rochester and Strood the Conservative candidate declared total election spending of £96,793.08. Of this £23,724 relates to spending on agent and other staff costs and was invoiced by the Party. Of this, £17,873.08 relates to spending on accommodation and administration. In this manner the Party entered into a specific transaction with each of the three candidates and agents; it incurred spending on behalf of each candidate, and then provided an invoice to each candidate and agent. Whilst investigating the by-election issues set out above, we asked the Party to explain how the transactions were calculated. The Party explained that it applied a formula to calculate the value of the costs it incurred on election expenses for its candidates. This formula was, according to the Party, used for each of the three 2014 by-elections. The Party explained that the formula was based on the full costs of locating volunteers in the constituencies, and a proportion of the salary and accommodation costs incurred by its employees while based in the constituencies. Having considered the role those employees had and the evidence of their work during that time, we are satisfied that it was reasonable for the Party to invoice only a proportion of the staffing costs of those employees based in the by-election constituencies to the candidates' campaigns. However, it was unclear how the proportion was calculated. Further, in relation to the costs of accommodating those staff, the only credible purpose for which the individuals were located to the relevant constituencies was to facilitate their campaign work in the by-elections. Consequently, we were not satisfied that only a proportion of these costs being invoiced to the candidates alone were a true reflection of the spending incurred by the Party on the candidates' behalves. Under section 41(1) of PPERA, Mr Day was

required to ensure that records were kept sufficient to both show and explain the transactions. However, the Party could provide no record of how those proportions were determined for any of the by-elections. It did not have any written record of the formula at all, either generally or in relation to any of the three by elections, other than the outline provided in its correspondence of the three elements used. The Party argued that: “The notional invoice supplied by the Party to a candidate or his agent is for notional expenditure. It does not show actual expenditure and therefore does not show transactions as defined by PPERA.” The Party explained that it did not “...keep records of the estimated time spent by party staff or volunteers which are included in the notional invoice”, and that records were not required because “...no money is received from the agent or his candidate...” This is not the position under PPERA. In each of the by-elections the Party entered into a transaction with its candidate and agent to provide services. It incurred spending on accommodation and volunteer expenses and on staff salaries where it allocated time from those staff members to the by-election campaigns. Those services cost the Party money and resources and thereby affected its financial position by depleting its resources. Mr Day was under an obligation to keep appropriate accounting records to explain each of the transactions entered into with the candidates and agents in the three by-elections. He was required by PPERA to be able to show the financial position of the Party taking them into account. In an interview we asked Mr Day why there were no records of the formula for calculating the amounts included in the invoices for the three 2014 by-elections. Mr Day did not offer an explanation, saying: “It’s not something that I was involved in.” Outcome Accordingly, the Commission has found that Mr Day committed three contraventions of section 41(1) of PPERA during 2014. These contraventions relate to the three transactions entered into between the Party and the candidates and agents in the Newark, Clacton and Rochester and Strood by-elections in 2014, for which Mr Day failed to ensure that the Party maintained accounting records to explain them. In furtherance In furtherance of our duty under section 145 of PPERA, we note that the absence of records of this formula make it impossible to establish how the amounts invoiced by the Party to each of the three candidates and agents were calculated. From the general terms in which the Party described the calculations, we consider that the invoices were likely to be inaccurate. The Party told us in general terms the elements of the formula 20 used to calculate the value stated in each notional invoice, including a proportion of the cost of accommodation for staff based in each constituency. We can understand why staff time would be apportioned between that spent on the by-election campaign and that spent on routine Party work, but the lack of records means the Party cannot explain how it determined that the apportionment in these instances was correct. Furthermore, there is no reason why we can see as to why only an unspecified proportion of the accommodation costs for staff was included in the invoices to candidates. We are satisfied that the entire accommodation costs, for staff and volunteers, were incurred for the purpose of basing individuals in Newark, Clacton and Rochester and Strood, to facilitate those individuals’ work on the respective by-election campaigns. This money would not have been spent otherwise. Our findings in respect of the Party’s 2015 UKPGE spending return The UKPGE spending return South Thanet issues Mr Craig Mackinlay was the Party candidate for the South Thanet constituency during the 2015 UKPGE. Under the RPA, Mr Mackinlay and his agent were required to deliver an election expenses return including all expenses relating to his campaign. In this return Mr Mackinlay reported the following amounts: For the Long Campaign, from 19 December 2014 to 6 April 2015 which was the day before Mr

Mackinlay became a candidate, Mr Mackinlay reported expenses totalling £32,661.26. His spending limit was £37,016.38. For the Short Campaign, from 7 April 2015 when Mr Mackinlay became a candidate to 7 May 2015 which was polling day, Mr Mackinlay reported expenses totalling £14,837.77. His spending limit was £15,016.38. The team based in South Thanet The Party advised us that it had chosen to base a small team in the South Thanet constituency. It said that the constituency was of particular importance during the campaign because the candidate for UKIP in that constituency was its then leader Mr Nigel Farage. The Party stated: As part of its broader general election campaign, [Conservative Campaign HQ] had set up a series of national rebuttal and attack teams for Labour, the Liberal Democrats and for UKIP. To address the unusual method adopted by UKIP, CCHQ decided to base its national UKIP campaign team in Kent ("CCHQ UKIP team"), mirroring the fact that the UKIP national campaign operation was, uniquely, in Kent, and not in Westminster. The Labour Party also focused substantial national anti-UKIP activity in Kent. Each of CCHQ's party-focused teams researched and created political material to deploy nationally as part of the national campaign literature. They also had a role in ensuring that any local literature was consistent with national campaign messages. Further, the Party said that the team researched and created national campaign material and "...also had a role in ensuring that any local literature was consistent with national campaign messages." This team stayed in hotels in the Thanet area, notably the Royal Harbour Hotel and the Premier Inn Margate. Mr Mackinlay's spending return does not include any entries in relation to these two hotels. Nor does it include any spending associated with the people who stayed at the hotels, such as salary or subsistence costs. The Party's 2015 UKPGE spending return contained four entries, with associated invoices, totalling £15,640.65 in relation to spending at the Royal Harbour Hotel. The invoices relate to hotel rooms booked at the Royal Harbour Hotel between 23 and 29 March, 8 and 15 April and 20 April and 7 May 2015. The Party's spending return did not include any expenditure in relation to the Premier Inn Margate. However, invoices seen by us indicated that the Party had booked rooms at the Premier Inn Margate between 14 April and 9 May 2015. We obtained and reviewed significant evidence from the Party and under interview about the activities of the team based in South Thanet. From our analysis, we are satisfied that several of them were, for a proportion of their time during the campaign, working to procure the electoral success of Mr Mackinlay rather than of the Party and its candidates generally. In particular, we looked into the role and activities of the following members of the team based in South Thanet: A Senior Campaigns Officer, who the Party said was tasked with taking a lead role in the CCHQ UKIP team, liaising with Mr Mackinlay's campaign team where necessary. This Officer was based in the Royal Harbour Hotel during part of the election campaign. The Commission concluded that she took an active organisational role in Mr Mackinlay's campaign. She had oversight of his activities and took an active role in coordinating his campaign. She also contributed to drafting campaign material promoting Mr Mackinlay's electoral success. This role in Mr Mackinlay's campaign was evident in many of the emails sent by her during the election campaign. By way of examples from these emails the Commission noted the Officer commenting in correspondence to another of the individuals based in South Thanet that Mr Mackinlay had not been writing his own literature and that she had spent her "...first couple of weeks here getting stuff re drafted..." In another correspondence, Mr Mackinlay refers to her as "the Campaign coordinator", whilst in further correspondence she advised a volunteer that "...we are running Craig's campaign". A Senior Press Advisor, who was, according to the Party, responsible for managing national and international media

outlets, and liaising with the press with regards to the UKIP national campaign. Again, he was based in the Royal Harbour Hotel for part of the election campaign. We concluded that he was, for at least a proportion of his time, acting as a press liaison on behalf of Mr Mackinlay in particular rather than the Party generally. This included handling queries from local and national press on behalf of Mr Mackinlay, and advising him on his personal media handling approach and messages. For example, the Senior Press Advisor explains in correspondence during the campaign that he has "...been drafted in to help Craig Mackinlay with media issues during the election campaign..." and in separate correspondence explains that he is "...working full-time for our candidate in South Thanet..." Two Political Advisors, who according to the Party were providing research support on UKIP and literature sign off in relation to UKIP target seats, to ensure it was in accordance with the Party's national campaign messages. The Political Advisors, who were also based in the Royal Harbour Hotel, in fact played key roles in determining Mr Mackinlay's campaign messages and in drafting campaign material promoting Mr Mackinlay's electoral success. There were a number examples of them commenting or advising on the wording of Mr Mackinlay's campaign message and digital content. For example, one comments on a video the other has created for YouTube on behalf of Mr Mackinlay, stating: Thanks... This is ok as far as it goes BUT why are we not trying to convey the messages better? Anybody can stand in sandwich saying traffic is bad. The point is that [C]raig brings cabinet ministers here and can get things done.... Every time we communicate without the messages we are at best wasting our time and at worse losing votes. The Party also listed several other individuals as being part of this team, including volunteers providing further support, such as assisting with national tours and events held in Kent, attending UKIP rallies and events and monitoring the activities of Mr Farage. Some of the emails involving or referring to the other volunteers show they also played a role in Mr Mackinlay's campaign; for example, by updating Mr Mackinlay's 'digital output', issuing instructions in respect of the budget on social media messaging for Mr Mackinlay, and drafting campaign material promoting Mr Mackinlay's electoral success. As a result of its analysis of the evidence, we are satisfied that the Party did not distinguish adequately between (a) campaigning that opposed UKIP as a party and (b) campaigning that opposed Mr Farage as a candidate and/or promoted Mr Mackinlay as a candidate in the South Thanet constituency. While evidence shows that the Party may have made the political judgement that to oppose Mr Farage was in essence the same as opposing UKIP, the regulatory framework of PPERA required spending on the Party campaign to be reported separately from any spending it undertook on behalf of its candidate. The evidence shows that, to a significant extent, the team based in South Thanet went about their 'anti-UKIP' work by promoting and supporting Mr Farage's rival for the constituency, the Party candidate Craig Mackinlay. There was no evidence to indicate that Mr Day or the Party made the necessary distinction between the team's work campaigning against UKIP as a party, and work opposing Mr Farage as a candidate and/or promoting Mr Mackinlay as a candidate. Lord Gilbert, for example, stated that it "...never occurred to [the Party] that this was... constituency spending." Further, the evidence the Party provided in respect of the submission of candidate campaign material for factual accuracy and policy checks, showed that this was unrelated to the work that was undertaken by the individuals based in South Thanet as described above. The correspondence, invoices and general election campaign packs seen by us indicated that this was a separate package of services provided by the Party. Premier Inn Margate The Party advised us that in error no spending in relation to the Premier Inn Margate had been included in its spending return. The value of the

spending incurred in relation to the Premier Inn Margate was provided by the Party and, after omitting non-relevant spending, totalled £3,809.03. In correspondence and in interview the Party ultimately advised that the explanation for the missing accommodation spending from the Party's 2015 UKPGE spending return was "simple human error". We are satisfied that this does not constitute a reasonable excuse. It does not represent evidence of unforeseen or exceptional circumstances beyond Mr Day's or the Party's control that prevented it from reporting this spending. Reporting staff accommodation costs During the investigation the Party said that it considers that hotel costs for employed staff members are not reportable in its spending return pursuant to Schedule 8, paragraph 2(1)(d) of PPERA, which exempts remuneration and allowances for employed staff. It therefore has argued that the hotel spending should not be included in the Party's 2015 UKPGE spending return at all and so it has not omitted spending in that regard. Having sought and obtained from the Party details of the employment terms and conditions for the individuals concerned, we are satisfied that Schedule 8, paragraph 2(1)(d) does not apply. Spending on an employee's remuneration and allowances is not reportable; spending on expenses incurred by staff while campaigning for the Party are reportable. Conclusions in respect of the UKPGE spending return South Thanet issues It is acceptable for a party to apportion spending between the Party's campaign and that of a particular candidate or candidates. However, we concluded that it was not accurate for all of the Party's spending on the team in South Thanet to be considered Party campaign spending. Some should have been apportioned to Mr Mackinlay's candidate expenses. Outcome Accordingly we are satisfied that a proportion of the costs included in the Party's campaign spending return associated with the team based in South Thanet did not relate to Party campaign spending and should not have been included in the Party's spending return. In particular, a proportion of the £15,641 included in the Party's 2015 UKPGE spending return in relation to the Royal Harbour Hotel constituted candidate campaign expenses and should not have been included in the return. Additionally, we are satisfied that a proportion of the £3,809 spent by the Party on accommodating its staff in the Premier Inn Margate was Party campaign spending. This proportion should have been included in the Party's return, and was not. Summary We cannot determine precisely what proportion of spending on the Party's team in South Thanet should have been apportioned to Mr Mackinlay's campaign. This is largely as a result of the Party failing to keep records sufficient to establish the appropriate apportionment. However, we note that as a consequence of the Party reporting these costs, they were missing from Mr Mackinlay's candidate campaign expenses return. Consequently it appears that the Party understated the spending it incurred on Mr Mackinlay's campaign, and as a result there is doubt as to the accuracy and completeness of his election expenses return. Other spending in relation to South Thanet During the course of the investigation, we reviewed examples of advertising, including advertising placed in a local Thanet newspaper. We assessed the material in order to decide whether spending on them had been properly included in the Party's return, or was in fact candidate campaign expenses. After careful consideration, we were satisfied that the spending on the advertisements it considered was Party campaign spending. The advertisements promoted the Party on a national level, referring to national policies, the national political landscape, and making no reference to local issues or local candidates. They had been properly reported in the Party's 2015 UKPGE spending return. The UKPGE spending return battlebus issues Battlebus2015 was a Conservative Party campaign which involved transporting activists by coach to campaign or canvass in target seats across England. It took place in the

last two weeks of the 2015 UKPGE campaign period, and comprised coach tours to three geographical areas in England – the North, the Midlands and the South West. Each of the three tours included the coach transport of around 50 activists to approximately 10 constituencies in the area over a period of between six and 10 days, with hotel accommodation provided for the activists. The Party funded the campaign's costs, including the volunteers' accommodation, the coach travel and subsistence. The total spending associated with Battlebus2015 reported in the Party's return was £38,996.06.

Reporting in the Party spending return We investigated whether some or all of the Battlebus2015 spending reported by the Party was in fact incurred in promoting the electoral success of Party candidates for the constituencies visited by the tour. Other parties operated similar activities during the UKPGE campaign period and had already been the subject of consideration by us, but the scale of Battlebus2015 and the potential for candidate campaigning was significantly larger than these.

According to the Party, the decision to incur spending on this activity was made by its Executive Senior Management Team (ESMT). It said that this activity was part of its national campaign, focussing on marginal seats as a strategy to procure the electoral success of the Party overall. From its analysis of the evidence obtained during its investigation, we noted the following: There were extensive social media posts from the time of the Battlebus2015 campaign activity that show activists from the coaches holding campaign material promoting individual candidates as opposed to the Party. Whilst the social media posts cannot show the true scale of the candidate campaigning that was taking place on the Battlebus2015 activity, viewed as a body of evidence they are consistent with candidate campaigning having been taking place across a number of constituencies. The Party kept no records of ESMT meetings or decisions relating to the Battlebus2015 campaign activity. Despite this, from voluntary interviews with members of the ESMT, it is clear that the risk of activists campaigning to promote or procure the electoral success of individual candidates while participating in the Battlebus2015 campaign activity was not identified or considered, and little or no monitoring or supervision was put in place to mitigate the risk. This risk, as shown by the social media posts, clearly materialised. We have found no evidence to suggest that the Party had funded the Battlebus2015 campaign with the intention that it would promote or procure the electoral success of candidates. Nevertheless, coaches of activists were transported to marginal constituencies to campaign alongside or in close proximity to local campaigners. In our view, there was a clear and inherent risk that activists might engage in candidate campaigning. Further, it is apparent that candidate campaigning did take place during the Battlebus2015 campaign. There is no evidence to show that either during the campaign or during the compilation of the spending return consideration was given to whether this had occurred. Instead, the Party stated that it was "assumed, but not expressly discussed," that spending on the activity would be reported in the Party's campaign spending return. Consequently an inaccurate assumption was made that the full spending should be reported by the Party. We cannot determine from the available evidence what proportion of spending on the Battlebus2015 campaign activity was properly Party spending and what was candidate campaign expenditure. This is in large part because no records were kept to show how spending was apportioned, despite the fact that PPERA required spending on the Party campaign to be reported separately from any spending the Party undertook on behalf of its candidate. Nonetheless we are satisfied that a proportion of the reported spending was candidate campaign spending and should not have been included in the Party's return. That proportion was also, as a result of this, not included in any

relevant candidate's campaign expenses return, casting doubt on the accuracy of those returns. Mr Day was under a duty under PPERA to provide us with the Party's campaign spending return which included a statement of all payments made in respect of the Party's campaign. An offence may occur where this statement includes payments not related to Party campaign spending. Mr Day has provided no excuse for candidate campaign expenses being included. Rather, their inclusion appears a consequence of a lack of consideration given to Battlebus2015 and whether candidate campaigning might take place. We have not sought to identify the extent to which any affected candidates may have underreported their campaign spending, which is an RPA matter and therefore a matter for the police. Omitted spending in respect of the Battlebus2015 campaign activity During the investigation the Party identified further spending of £63,487 on Battlebus2015 campaign activity that had not been reported in its campaign spending return. Mr Day and the Party explained that the omission happened because, during the compilation of the return, spending on a particular budget code was not coded properly and not properly reviewed in accordance with the Party's financial systems. Consequently, they stated, as a result of human error the Party did not identify this spending as campaign spending and did not include it in the return. This does not represent evidence of unforeseen or exceptional circumstances beyond the Party's control that prevented it from reporting this spending. Consequently it is not a reasonable excuse for the omissions. Conclusions in respect of the UKPGE spending return Battlebus2015 issues The Party reported spending of £38,996 incurred in relation to Battlebus2015. In addition, during the investigation the Party identified spending of £63,486.83 on the Battlebus2015 campaign activity that was not reported in its return due to human error. In total, we therefore understand that the Party spent approximately £102,483 on this activity. For the reasons given above, we do not consider that the full cost of the Battlebus2015 campaign activity constituted Party campaign spending. A proportion constituted candidate campaign expenditure incurred on behalf of those candidates who benefitted from the activity. Outcome Consequently, we are satisfied that a proportion of the reported £38,996 was not in fact Party campaign spending and should not have been included in the Party's spending return. Further, we are satisfied that a proportion of the missing £63,486.83 spent on the Battlebus2015 campaign was Party campaign spending. This proportion should have been included in the Party's return and was not. UKPGE spending return UKPGE spending return – further omitted payments issue During the investigation a further five items of spending to the value of £104,765 were identified that were omitted from the return, as follows: Two payments to St Ives Management Services Ltd that were apportioned between the Party and candidates. The Party's apportionment of the first payment was £69,012 and of the second payment was £32,693. A payment of £2,400 to Coach Miles. A payment of £555 in respect of accommodation booked at the Alpha Hostel Margate. A payment of £105 in respect of accommodation booked at the Premier Inn Ramsgate (Marsden Airport). The Party accepted that these payments should have been included within the return and attributed their omissions to administrative failures. We are satisfied that the explanations do not constitute a reasonable excuse; however, given the low value of the two accommodation payments, we chose to accept the Party's statement that they were omitted from the return and not undertake further enquiry in relation to them. Outcome Accordingly, we are satisfied that five campaign spending payments to the value of £104,764 should have been included in the Party's return and were not. Offence under section 82(4)(b) of PPERA Offence under section 82(4)(b) of PPERA We are satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that the then registered treasurer of the

Party, Mr Simon Day, in respect of the Party's campaign spending return for the 2015 UKPGE and without reasonable excuse: failed to include all payments, and associated invoices and receipts, made in respect of Party campaign spending relating to accommodation costs at the Premier Inn in Margate; included payments in the Party's campaign spending return that were candidate campaign expenses incurred in respect of the Party's candidate in South Thanet; failed to include all payments, and associated invoices and receipts, made in respect of Party campaign spending relating to the Battlebus2015 campaign activity; included payments in the Party's campaign spending return that were candidate campaign expenses incurred in respect of the Battlebus2015 campaign activity; and failed to include five further payments, and associated invoices and receipts, to the value of £104,765; Outcome Accordingly, Mr Day committed an offence in that he failed to deliver, without reasonable excuse, a spending return that was a complete statement of campaign spending payments as required under section 82(4)(b) of PPERA. Our findings in respect of omitted invoices and/or receipts Under section 82(4)(b) it is an offence for a treasurer, without reasonable excuse, to submit a campaign spending return that is not accompanied by all the required invoices or receipts relating to the payments in the return. Section 76(2) specifies that an invoice or a receipt is required for all payments with a value of over £200. We identified 81 payments of over £200 included in the return which were not accompanied by the required invoices or receipts. These payments had a total value of £52,924. These payments were identified from credit card statements provided with the return. A credit card statement does not meet the requirements of s80(4) and 76(2) PPERA. It does not provide the itemised details of each payment that would be included in an invoice or receipt. Once raised by us during the investigation, the Party provided the required invoices or receipts for these payments. The Party provided no explanation in relation to this failure other than to refer to administrative errors in the compilation of its campaign spending return. Outcome Accordingly, Mr Day committed an offence under section 82(4)(b) of PPERA in that he delivered, without reasonable excuse, a spending return of which payments totalling £52,924 were not accompanied by the required invoice or receipt. Our actions in respect of the declaration issue Under section 83 of PPERA, campaign spending returns must be accompanied by a declaration to us made by the registered treasurer of the Party. The treasurer is required to state that they have examined the return and, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, it is complete and correct as required by law. It is an offence for the treasurer to knowingly or recklessly make a false declaration. Civil sanctions do not attach to this offence; it can only be pursued via a criminal prosecution. When Mr Day made the declaration accompanying the 2015 UKPGE spending return, he declared that he personally had examined the return, and that to the best of his knowledge and belief, the return was complete and correct. As explained above, we have concluded that the Party's spending return was missing payments worth at least £104,765, and more likely a far higher figure; that it included payments worth £118,124, a proportion of which should not have been included; and that it did not include the required invoices and receipts for 81 payments to the value of £52,924. Consequently, the spending return was not complete or correct in a number of significant respects. Our enforcement policy explains that where we consider a criminal offence may have occurred that is outside our enforcement role, if appropriate we will refer the matter to the police. We considered the evidence gathered in this investigation about Mr Day's actions in respect of the compilation and submission of the Party's 2015 UKPGE spending return. As a result, we have referred Mr Day to the Metropolitan Police Service for

consideration as to whether to investigate him for a potential offence under section 83(3) of PPERA. It will be a matter for the Metropolitan Police Service as to what steps they take in this regard. Representations made by the Party In accordance with the procedure set out in Schedule 19C of PPERA, we issued the Party with initial notices setting out its initial determination in respect of the matters under investigation. For each contravention and offence, the initial notices also set out the proposed sanction and the grounds for proposing it. The Party made representations in respect of each of the contraventions and offences, and proposed sanctions, set out by us in our initial notices. In its representations, the Party raised a number of points about, and disagreements with, our conclusions in matters of fact and law. This section summarises the key representations made by the Party, and our response to them. In addition to the key representations set out below, the Party submitted that it had not been uncooperative during the investigation, and that the proposed sanctions were disproportionate in comparison with the penalties issued to other parties in respect of similar matters. We did not agree with these points.

The Party's unreasonable failure to cooperate with us caused delay to the investigation, as described in this report. In addition, when determining the sanctions we considered the specific facts of this case, and its aggravating and mitigating factors, in line with our enforcement policy. The accounting records issues The Party submitted that only those situations where the Party received a monetary income or paid out a monetary amount could be 'transactions' entered into by the Party. The calculation of the notional invoices provided by the Party for inclusion in its candidates' returns for the three 2014 by-elections were not, according to the Party, transactions under section 41 of PPERA as there was no movement of money. This is not the position under PPERA. What counts as a transaction under section 41 of PPERA must be understood in the context of that legislation. The Party's position would mean that there would be no accounting records kept to cover agreements between a party and its candidates and agents for the provision of campaigning services. This would be a major gap in a party's financial records, and inconsistent with the purpose of the PPERA rules, which are there to ensure transparency, scrutiny, fairness and legitimacy in elections. The Party submitted that if contraventions were to be determined in respect of the three 2014 by-elections, then only one sanction in respect of all three should be imposed. The three by-elections were, however, three distinct elections. For us to conclude that three separate sanctions are appropriate is fair and proper. We accepted that the fact that the three arose from the Party taking the same wrong approach to the rules in relatively short succession was a mitigating factor. The 2015 UKPGE spending return – South Thanet, Battlebus2015 and further omitted payments issues The Party raised a point of law that in its view there was no duty on Mr Day as the then registered treasurer to exclude candidate campaign expenses from its Party campaign spending return. This position is at odds with section 72(7) of PPERA, which states that party campaign expenditure does not include anything which falls to be included in a return as to election expenses in respect of a candidate or candidates at a particular election. It is also at odds with the purpose of section 80 of PPERA and the wider PPERA campaign spending regime. To read into the rules that a return can include anything, with the impression that it is all reportable campaign spending, and still be lawful, is inconsistent with a regime the purpose of which is for there to be clear transparency about, and public confidence in, campaign spending. The Party repeated its point, made during the investigation, that it did not consider spending on accommodation for its staff campaigning for the UKPGE to be reportable.

It extended this argument to spending on accommodation for volunteers. To support this point it referred to Part 1 of Schedule 8 of PPERA, which sets out a list of what may be considered campaign expenditure by a Party. Part 1 does not refer explicitly to accommodation. We are satisfied that spending on accommodation that is incurred by or on behalf of a registered political party for electoral purposes, is reportable where it is not excluded from reporting by virtue of being candidate campaign expenses or staff remuneration or allowances. The list given in Part 1 of Schedule 8 should be regarded as categories of spending and does not state all types of spending falling within each category, but confirms that all payments qualifying under it are reportable. Staff and volunteer accommodation is not excluded from being reported by paragraph 2 of Schedule 8 – unless it forms part of staff remuneration and allowances which was not, as a matter of fact, the case in this matter. The consequence of the Party's position would be that political parties with the staffing and financial resource to pay for staff and volunteers to stay and campaign in particular constituencies would have an advantage over those without that resource, as that spending would not count towards the relevant spending limit. This is not consistent with the purpose of the PPERA regime. The Party disagreed that the evidence demonstrated its team based in South Thanet took active roles in campaigning for its candidate, Mr Mackinlay. It also disagreed that the evidence demonstrated activities on the Battlebus2015 tour was campaigning in part for candidates in the constituencies visited. We, however, were satisfied with the evidence on this point.

The 2015 UKPGE spending return - omitted invoices/receipts issue The Party submitted that failing to include the required invoices and receipts for 81 payments of over £200 was not an omission from its 2015 UKPGE campaign spending return, as the payments themselves were included. The rules in PPERA are clear, however, that an invoice or receipt was required for each of these payments. Final determinations

Contraventions and Offences We determined that Mr Day had committed three contraventions under section 41 of PPERA, in that he failed to ensure that accounting records were kept that showed and explained the Party's transactions. Specifically the Party's accounting records failed to explain three transactions entered into with three candidates and their agents for a notional donation and spending by the Party on campaigning in by-elections in Newark, Clacton and Rochester and Strood during 2014. We determined that Mr Day committed an offence under section 82(4)(b) of PPERA in that he failed to deliver, without reasonable excuse, the Party's 2015 UKPGE spending return accompanied by a statement of all campaign spending payments.

Specifically: Spending in relation to South Thanet that was not Party campaign spending was included in the return. Party campaign spending in relation to South Thanet was omitted from the return. Spending in relation to the Battlebus2015 campaign that was not Party campaign spending was included in the return. Party campaign spending in relation to the Battlebus2015 campaign was omitted from the return. Five further payments were omitted from the return. We determined that Mr Day committed a further offence under section 82(4)(b) of PPERA in respect of the Party's 2015 UKPGE spending return, as a result of payments totalling £52,924 having been reported without the required invoices or receipts. Penalties In respect of each of the three contraventions under section 41 of PPERA, we have imposed the maximum financial penalty of £20,000 for the first contravention, £15,000 for the second and £10,000 for the third, a total of £45,000. In determining this penalty we took into account the following factors: The magnitude of the contraventions and the harm caused to confidence in the PPERA regime were, in our view, significant. The correct apportionment of spending between parties and candidates has a significant impact on

the effectiveness of, and public confidence in, the PPERA regime. The advantage obtained by the Party from its actions with each invoice provided to each of the three candidates and agents which inaccurately understated the amount spent by the Party on behalf of the three candidates. This is irrespective of whether, in the end, the Party's candidates were successful in the by-election. The significant uncertainty for voters as to whether the Party complied with its duties significantly, which increased the weighting to be attached to the magnitude of the breach and the impact on public confidence. The lack of cooperation by the Party during the investigation. The fact that the Party does not accept the requirement to keep records of this type, which leads us to consider the risk that the Party may follow a similar course of action in future if we do not take robust action to make our position clear. An acceptance that, while the second and third contraventions were no less serious than the first, the three separate failures resulted from the same misconceived course of action. In respect of the offence under section 82(4)(b) of PPERA related to the failure to deliver the Party's 2015 UKPGE spending return with a statement of all campaign spending payments, we have imposed the maximum financial penalty of £20,000. In determining this penalty we took into account the following factors; The omission of over £100,000 of spending from the Party's return alone, which was a significant loss of transparency and a failure of significant magnitude. The actual value of the under- and overstated spending was likely to be far greater. The advantage obtained by Party by its actions; the inclusion in the Party return of what in our view should have been reported as candidate spending meant that there was a realistic prospect that this enabled its candidates to gain a financial advantage over opponents. In this respect we noted that the Battlebus2015 campaign visited target constituencies and that South Thanet was also a key priority for the Party. The unreasonable uncooperative conduct by the Party, of which this offence was one element, which delayed without good reason and for a number of months the provision of information needed to progress the investigation. This in turn increased the public funds incurred by us during the investigation. In respect of the offence under section 82(4)(b) of PPERA related to the failure to deliver all the required invoices or receipts with the Party's 2015 UKPGE spending return, we have imposed a financial penalty of £5,000. In determining this penalty we took into account the following factors: The harm caused to confidence in the party finance regime represented an aggravating factor, in light of the value of the payments and the campaign to which they related. The omission of supporting information undermines the ability of us and the public to review and verify the spending figures within the return. There was a consequent impact on transparency and most likely, as a direct result, on public confidence. The unreasonable uncooperative conduct by the Party during the investigation, of which this offence was one element, which delayed without good reason and for a number of months the provision of information needed to progress the investigation. The Party has now provided the missing invoices and receipts. However, these were only provided as a result of our enquiries. The total value of the penalties imposed on the Party following this investigation is £70,000.

1. On 25 April 2016 the Party registered a new treasurer, Mr Alan Mabbutt. ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. Individuals contacted as part of the investigation have only been named where it is necessary to do so in order to give a clear and transparent account of the investigation and the Commission's findings. ■ Back to content at footnote 2 3. In a parliamentary by-election, each candidate has a spending limit of £100,000 ■ Back to content at footnote 3 Related content about our enforcement work Electoral law is out of date. Find out where we want to see improvements

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Our consultations On this page Summary Background Themes raised through consultation First published: 6 February 2023 Last updated: 8 February 2023 Summary There should be no barriers to voting for disabled people. Everyone should have the right to vote on their own and in secret. The Elections Act 2022 includes provisions requiring Returning Officers (ROs) to provide such equipment as is reasonable to enable, or make it easier for, disabled people to vote independently and in secret at the polling station. Between 5 December 2022 and 16 January 2023, we conducted a statutory consultation on our draft guidance for ROs on assistance with voting for disabled people. The consultation received 41 responses from members of the public, electoral administrators, and a range of charity, civil society and third sector organisations. We are grateful to everyone who provided us with feedback, including as part of our initial consultation earlier in 2022. We have used this to inform the further development of the guidance which will be used for the May 2023 polls. View the guidance We set out below a summary of the key themes and issues that emerged in the statutory consultation, and how we have considered them in updating the guidance and in our wider work to support making elections accessible for all.

Background

Elections Act 2022 The Elections Act 2022 includes amendments to the Representation of the People Act 1983 which introduce a new requirement for ROs to provide such equipment as is reasonable for the purposes of enabling, or making it easier for, relevant persons to vote independently and in secret at the polling station. We must give guidance to ROs on this duty, and to consult on this guidance. ROs must have regard to this guidance in performing their duty. 'Relevant persons' are defined in the legislation as those who find it difficult or impossible to vote due to blindness, partial sight or another disability. 'Independently' refers to voting without assistance from another person, not without any form of assistive device. These provisions will apply to: UK parliamentary elections Police and Crime Commissioner elections in England and Wales Northern Ireland Assembly and local elections Local elections in England ROs are personally responsible for the conduct of elections in their area. In Northern Ireland, the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) is the RO, so references to 'ROs' should be read to include the CEO.

Development of the guidance The guidance was developed in three phases: A pre-consultation phase: We engaged with representatives from the electoral administrator sector and a range of civil society, charity and third-sector organisations across the whole of the UK. An initial six-week public consultation on draft guidance : We received 67 responses from members of the public, electoral administrators and a range of organisations. We also engaged with electoral administrators from across the UK at a national seminar. A statutory consultation on the updated guidance. Themes raised through consultation Here is a summary of the key themes and issues that emerged in the statutory consultation. This includes how we have considered them when updating the guidance, and in our wider work to support making elections accessible for all.

Addressing barriers to voting Overall, respondents welcomed the updated guidance and felt it provided a comprehensive overview of the barriers faced by disabled voters and how these might be addressed. We have made the following updates to our guidance as a result of comments received on barriers to voting: We included those with cognitive impairments in the list of people for whom instructions may not always be provided in an accessible format. We expanded on the specific additional barriers that blind and

partially sighted people face, due to the method of voting, making a cross in a specific location on a piece of paper, being principally a visual exercise. We expanded on areas to be covered in training for polling station staff, to include: awareness that there are no legal barriers to prevent disabled people from voting, including voters with any learning disability or cognitive impairment awareness that not all disabilities are visible or obvious, and that polling station staff should not make assumptions about what equipment voters might need awareness that a companion, if they have completed the declaration, can accompany a voter into the polling booth to assist them awareness of equipment with which staff may be less familiar, such as hearing loop systems awareness of Makaton and British Sign Language as alternative methods of communication that voters may use We included making information available in large print to support elderly voters, dyslexic voters, and voters who have dementia. We clarified that support and auxiliary aids need to be easily accessible to help people to vote independently and in secret. Supporting ROs to help make voting accessible Some respondents asked for additional information to be provided to ROs to support them in delivering accessible elections. We also received requests for more guidance on ROs' statutory duties under the Elections Act and the wider framework of equalities legislation. We have made the following changes to the guidance as a result: We clarified that the strength of magnifier needed will vary depending on the amount of vision a voter has. Therefore, ROs may need to provide more than one strength of magnifier. We made clear that tactile voting devices on their own do not allow blind voters to vote independently, unless they also have accessible information about the order of the candidates on the ballot paper. We expanded on and updated the language in the guidance around the legislative framework, including: ensuring the wording in the guidance consistently and more closely mirrored the relevant wording in the Elections Act 2022 referring more consistently to ROs' anticipatory duty to make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 and how ROs must consider requests for adjustments, including keeping a record of requests for future planning purposes referencing the Public Sector Equality Duty and how this interacts with ROs' other duties under the Equality Act 2010. We expanded on how ROs can proactively use local data to inform their decisions about the additional support and equipment they provide at polling stations to enable or make it easier for disabled people to vote independently and in secret. For example, we have referenced how ROs might use the sight loss registers or the Sight Loss Data Tool provided by the RNIB, to help them identify how many electors in their area are affected by sight loss. This could help ROs to anticipate the needs of blind and partially sighted people in their area and comply with their duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments to assist individuals on the register to participate in electoral events. Equipment to be provided in polling stations Some points were raised about the suggested minimum requirements for equipment at the polling station and around ensuring consistent provision across all polling stations: We received some suggestions that audio devices should be included on our list of equipment that all ROs should provide as a minimum in every polling station. We have recommended that ROs consider providing audio devices at specific polling stations where they identify, or are made aware, that an audio device would enable or make it easier for a voter in a specific polling station to vote independently and in secret. We highlight how ROs can use sight loss registers or the Sight Loss Data Tool as a way of identifying blind and partially sighted voters in their area who may need such a device, as part of meeting their anticipatory duty under the Equality Act 2010. Some respondents raised concerns about the possible lack

of consistency across the UK in terms of equipment and support provided at different polling stations. Under the Equality Act 2010, ROs have an anticipatory duty to make reasonable adjustments. This means they must take steps to understand and anticipate on an ongoing basis the needs of disabled voters with different types of disability, support and access requirements. Such adjustments will necessarily reflect local circumstances and approaches, which means that a standardised list alone would not be appropriate. Our guidance aims to support ROs in meeting their duties under the Elections Act and the wider framework of equalities legislation. We also received feedback asking us to mandate, rather than suggest, provisions and equipment in the guidance. The Elections Act does not give us scope to prescribe a list of items or equipment that ROs must make available in each polling station. ROs must have regard to our guidance to help them decide, based on ongoing review of local needs. We will keep the guidance under regular review, including in relation to the equipment that should be provided as a minimum, and any additional equipment and support. We will ask for feedback from voters and electoral administrators on the equipment provided to support disabled voters. This will be as part of our reporting on elections and to support the identification and sharing of good practice. Additional resources for ROs We have included some suggestions in the polling station handbook, rather than in the guidance. This includes: a checklist for equipment to be provided at the polling station, as part of the polling station set-up checklist information on providing directional signage at the polling station ensuring that polling station staff know how to use equipment in order to support voters ensuring that equipment is visible and readily available for voters to use ensuring that polling station staff are aware that there are no legal barriers to prevent disabled people from voting, including voters with any learning disability or cognitive impairment. The polling station handbook is a resource designed to assist polling station staff. The handbook describes the procedures to be followed and how to deal with any issues that may arise. Supporting ROs with public awareness and partnerships work Some respondents asked for more support for ROs to help them identify and communicate with disabled voters in their local area and provide them with information in accessible alternative formats, including on their voting rights. We also received feedback about the lack of information in alternative formats for voters who are digitally excluded, and about providing ROs with a list of partners, including in other local authority teams, with whom they could work. We expanded on how ROs can communicate directly with disabled voters to provide information and find out more about the types of provision they might need. This includes how ROs can work with others across a local authority. We highlighted how ROs can use local authority sight loss registers to ensure that they communicate with people in their preferred formats, including those who are digitally excluded. We expanded on how ROs can communicate with voters about the voting process and the support that is available to voters. We clarified that, in addition to providing a dedicated web page, ROs may display advance information on voting at the polling station on public notice boards. We referenced the fact ROs can work with care homes and day centres in their local area. We referenced existing guidance from the Government Communication Service on making communications accessible. We have also developed additional resources to support the delivery of accessible elections. This includes resources to help organisations raise awareness of the voter ID requirement , which contain information about registering to vote and voting in the elections. These are printable resources that organisations can disseminate with their users and members. In previous years, we have co-created voter information materials in accessible formats, including easy read guides (co-

produced with Mencap), mock ballot papers (co-created with United Response), and a suite of videos and guides in BSL. We are working to build on our offering and to co-create voter information resources and programmes for disabled voters with partner organisations for future elections, to ensure that they are fit for purpose and impactful. We anticipate that new resources will be evergreen, for year-round use, beyond election periods. We will continue to grow our partner network and seek further opportunities for co-creation, and to refine resources and programmes in response to voter feedback. Evaluation and learning lessons for the future Most respondents welcomed the additional information and resources we will provide to help ROs to evaluate and learn lessons for future polls. They also welcomed the activity we will undertake to report on the implementation of the new accessibility provisions. Many respondents also appreciated the emphasis on the guidance being a living document, which will be kept under regular review. Some respondents asked us to provide ROs with a questionnaire to collect feedback from the disabled community. Others suggested making surveys available in easy read and print formats, and that voters should be able to complete these outside the polling station environment. We intend to provide a template survey that can be used by ROs to gather feedback from disabled voters. We will consider making this template survey available in easy read format for the 2023 elections. We will gather feedback from disabled voters by two main routes: Our public opinion survey will include a boosted sample of disabled people, including voters and non-voters, asking questions about their experience and perceptions of the recent elections. We will not survey voters in the polling station environment. We will also gather feedback from representative organisations through a survey that they can share with their members and service users. This survey will be available as a Word document, which can be printed, filled out and returned by post for those who are digitally excluded. As part of our post-poll surveys of poll staff and electoral administrators, we will ask for feedback about the accessibility support provided to voters, and about any specific support requested and provided to voters. We will also use our new performance standards to support and challenge ROs around the accessibility of elections, and to inform our reporting on the support and equipment provided. Comments received which were out of scope Some responses raised issues outside the scope of this consultation and the guidance, some of which would require further legislative change in order to be actioned. Issues included: The suitability and location of polling stations The availability of telephone or electronic voting Publication of candidate and party information in accessible formats, well ahead of an election Providing the canvass and postal vote application forms, and the invitation to register letter in alternative formats (including Welsh or other language versions) Allowing voters to declare specific requirements when registering to vote Creating a national risk list where difficulties with accessible voting are recorded While we have not addressed these here, we will continue to consider how we can take these into account in our guidance, research and public awareness work. Some respondents also raised wider concerns around staff capacity, recruiting staff, and funding. We will continue to monitor these as part of our wider engagement with ROs. Funding remains a matter for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. Breakdown of statutory consultation responses by question The breakdown of statutory consultation responses by question does not include those respondents who chose to submit feedback in other formats or as free text only. All responses have been considered when updating the guidance and in our wider work to support making elections accessible to all. Questions Yes (total and %) No (total and %) DK (total and %) Total responses Question 1 Does the updated guidance give ROs

enough information to help them understand the types of barriers that voters may experience when voting at the polling station? 14 (42%) 15 (45%) 4 (12%) 33 Question 2 Do you think the updated guidance and additional resources provided will sufficiently support ROs in assisting disabled voters to vote independently and in secret at the polling station? 13 (39%) 14 (42%) 6 (18%) 33 Question 3 Will the additional partnership activity and production of resources outlined help voters to understand what to expect at the polling station and what support is available? 16 (47%) 6 (18%) 12 (35%) 34 Question 4 Does the updated guidance and additional resources provide ROs with the tools they need to evaluate and learn lessons for future polls? 17 (52%) 7 (21%) 9 (27%) 33

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Using our resources to support the delivery of our goals | Electoral Commission

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priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23 On this page Our environmental impact

Using our financial resources efficiently Supply estimate for 2023-24 First

published: 4 July 2023 Last updated: 27 September 2023 Our people Staff relations and

engagement The Commission relies on the dedication, expertise and hard work of its

staff. Together, teams work to deliver a high-quality service to voters and

stakeholders, while also striving to fulfil the strategic objectives set out in the

Corporate Plan. This work relies on constructive relationships across the Commission,

with the Executive Team, and the Board. A staff engagement group, made up of

representatives from all parts of the organisation, meets regularly to discuss

corporate issues and Commission culture to seek input and views from colleagues. This

is supported by regular cross-team project meetings, team meetings, and line

management check ins, to ensure that views and voices are being heard. This year the

Commission launched a new Culture Charter, created by staff, and a new Dignity and

Respect Policy. We also rolled out bullying and harassment training. Staff Awards

were also held to recognise and celebrate the efforts and achievements of those

working within the organisation. The Commission has an active union, which plays an

important role in the dialogue between staff and management. There was an official

trade dispute in relation to pay settlements this year, but dialogue and engagement

remained constructive. We completed our latest staff survey in December 2022 and 86%

of employees responded. Our employee engagement score was 66% (down marginally from

67% in 2021). Our scores compared most positively to the Civil Service benchmark

(2021) in areas such as our people agreeing that: They have the opportunity to

contribute views before decisions are made that affect them (at 60%, 21% points

higher than the benchmark) They feel proud when they tell others they work for the

Commission (at 81%, 18% points higher than the benchmark) The areas where we compared

least positively to the Civil Service benchmark, and we need to improve, include

people agreeing that: There are opportunities to progress in their career at the

Commission (at 23%, 36% points lower than the benchmark) They have the IT systems and

equipment needed to do their job effectively (at 48%, 24% points lower than the

benchmark) Performance indicators Indicator Target 2022-23 Maintained staff wellbeing

score in staff survey 77% 77% Maintained staff engagement score in staff survey 67%

66% Occupational health and safety We review our health and safety policy annually.

We also have procedures, guidance and risk assessments in place to cover our core

activities. A health and safety group oversees our arrangements. They meet regularly

and report to our senior leadership group. However, primary responsibility for health

and safety sits with people managers. We initiate independent health and safety

audits of our premises each year, which involves inspecting working environments and

reviewing safety management systems. These audits tell us if our arrangements are

suitable and highlight any improvements we need to make. In 2022/23 we: Installed LED

lighting at our London office, providing a feeling of natural light Conducted fixed

wire testing at our offices in London and Cardiff Supported homeworkers and office-

based staff with equipment requests, such as workstation and orthopaedic chairs and

back support cushions Conducted portable appliance testing at all of our offices

Continued enhanced cleaning regimes, including provision of hand sanitisers and anti-

bacterial wipes. Our environmental impact We recognise that delivering our activities

has an impact on the environment and we continue to work towards minimising this

impact. We lease office space in four cities from a combination of public and private

sector property owners. We do not have direct control of utility supplier and waste disposal targets and management at our premises. For a number of our offices, the property owner manages energy and water consumption as well as waste disposal and recovers costs through a consolidated service charge. Offices in Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast have relocated to smaller, more environmentally efficient premises in the last 10 years. We completed the renewal of the lease for our London office in 2020.

Performance indicators

	Indicators	Target	2022-23	Reduced environmental impact of energy consumption
N/A	Sustainability report	The Commission is committed to supporting the governments and the wider electoral community. We will adopt a strategy and implementation plan which meets environmental standards required of our electoral system. Internally, we recognise the importance of sustainability as an organisation. During 2023/24 we will start the process of developing a full environmental and sustainability review. Our aim is that this work will help us to report on our sustainability strategy in more detail in the coming years and to measure progress. More detail will be available in the next Annual Report & Accounts, and will take into account our work across all nations in the UK and with devolved administrations. Initiatives are in place to help minimise environmental impact reduced printed resources provided to electoral administrators and other groups, focusing on electronic provision wherever possible encouraged the use of video and teleconferencing to avoid unnecessary travel with consequential CO2 emissions operated recycling facilities in all our offices	London Office Performance commentary on emissions	We aim to decrease our fossil fuel consumption year on year, an ongoing effect of the property owner's introduction of measures to reduce levels of electricity consumption, including lower 'out of hours' operation of plant and machinery and the introduction of energy-efficient lighting.
Non-financial	indictors (CO2e in tonnes)	20250 target	2017-18 (Baseline)	Total gross emissions 125 175 235 Gross emissions - fossil fuel consumption 99 149 198 Gross emissions - Travel 26 26 37 Related energy consumption (Kwh)
		2050 target	2017-18 (Baseline)	Electricity 375,818 365,708 487,611 Gas 188,854 158,993 211,990
Financial	indicators	20250 target	2017-2018 (Baseline)	Expenditure on Energy Not available Not available Expenditure on Travel 75,527 85,389 113,852
				We have reduced out of hours working since 2017-18 to help cut our emissions. Since the introduction of hybrid working, we have reduced our travel and energy consumption within the office. In February 2023, a project to install LED lighting at our London office was completed. The impact on the energy consumption was immediate and resulted in a 43% reduction during February and March 2023, when compared with the corresponding 2-month period in 2022.
Waste	report	General waste and recycling figures	are based on a proportion of total building waste and are not directly controllable by us. Confidential waste disposal for the organisation is handled separately from that for other building occupants. We shred the confidential waste we generate on-site before it is recycled into low-grade paper. The general and recycled waste is based on a proportion of total building waste. All general waste produced in the building, including that generated by us, is sent to a nearby energy from waste plant, instead of landfill sites. We have reduced our use of paper since 2017-18 to help cut our waste. Since the introduction of hybrid working, we have further reduced our paper use significantly.	Non hazardous waste: Confidential 1.00 2.81 Non hazardous waste: General waste (Including recycled) 4.08 7.26 Quantity of paper
				(tonnes) 2022-23 2017-18 (Baseline) Total waste 5.08 10.01 Non hazardous waste: General waste (Including recycled) 4.08 7.26 Quantity of paper

purchased (reams) 2022-23 2017-18 (Baseline) 105 650 Financial indicators 2022-23
2017-18 (baseline) Total disposal cost Not available Not available Confidential
£1,972 £1,134 General waste (incl. recycled) Not available Not available Using our
financial resources efficiently Summary Our resource funding is received from three
Parliaments – UK, Scottish and Senedd. UK Parliament: £25.2m Scottish Parliament:
£2.1m Senedd: £1.5m The combined resource initially made available to the Commission
was £25.2m voted activity. We also received non-voted funding of £225k to pay
Commissioners' fees. Our final budget breakdown Expenditure Voted £m Non-voted £m
Total £m Departmental Expenditure Limit: Resource 25.222 0.225 25.447 Departmental
Expenditure Limit: Capital 1.424 0.000 1.424 Annually Managed Expenditure: Resource
0.050 0.000 0.050 Annually Managed Expenditure: Capital 0.100 0.000 0.100 Total Net
Budget: Resource 25.272 0.225 25.497 Total Net Budget: Capital 1.524 0.000 1.524 Net
cash requirement 26.123 0.000 26.123 The £2.1m from Scottish Parliament and £1.5m
from Senedd budget is shown as income throughout the accounts and Statement of
Outturn against Parliamentary Supply (SoPS). The remainder of the budget drawn down
and not spent is included as deferred income in the Statement of Financial Position.
In achieving our objectives, we have used £25.1m worth of our resource budget for the
whole year. This was out of the available sum of £25.2m approved by the UK Parliament
in our Supplementary Estimate for the net resource voted requirement, net of income
received from the devolved authorities. The graphic below summarises our financial
performance on the 'voted' element of our budget. Financial performance 2022/23 Our
financial performance follows our strategic performance. For the year 2022/23: our
staff costs represented 42% of our resource expenditure, which is a decrease from
2021/22 due to additional spend within our public awareness campaigns. The overall
spend on staffing is higher by £1.3m. our capital expenditure increased by £0.1m from
2021-22 due to the continued improvement within ICT. Overall expenditure Scottish
Parliament and Senedd expenditure in the table above are a subset of the overall
cost. We report our underspend to reflect in-year operational decisions, we exclude
Policy Development Grant which is distributed by formula set by government. In
2022/23 the underspend on this measure was £79k against the voted budget (>1%). Other
underspend £211k in provisions (Resource AME) due to less than expected pension and
dilapidation movements. £612k in capital projects due to not continuing with our
Political Finance Online project and the shift of on-premise servers to cloud based
systems. Our income in the accounts relates to charges for registering political
parties. We also report and are accountable to the Senedd and Scottish Parliament
Corporate Body. The income recognised in the accounts is predominately for devolved
elections work. All income is recognised in note 4 of the accounts. We collect fines
raised against political parties and individuals for failure to comply with the rules
on party and election finance and then surrender these to the Consolidated Fund as
required by law. In addition to monitoring performance against budgets, we also
managed within our cash limits set by the UK Parliament. We required cash amounting
to £22.5m to finance our voted activities, which was £3.6m less than the sum of
£26.1m approved by the UK Parliament in our Supplementary Estimate. The
reconciliation of net resources outturn to net cash requirement, within the
accountability report, provides a reconciliation from our outturn to the net cash we
required in-year. The Statement of Cash Flows shows that the cash balance as at 31
March 2023 was £9k. The Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2023 shows
negative taxpayers' equity. These liabilities will be met through future provision of
supply funding. Supplier payments Although we are independent of government, we aim
to comply with the Prompt Payment Code that operates across the public sector. The

target is to pay undisputed invoices within 30 days. In 2022-23, we paid 100% of invoices within 30 days. Supply estimate for 2023-24 Our Main Supply Estimate for 2023-24 (HC1385) provides for a net resource requirement of £28.8m. This is an 14% increase from 2022-23 mainly due to the inflationary increases and additional public awareness budget. Our Main Estimate is broken down as follows: Expenditure Voted £m Non-voted £m Total £m Departmental Expenditure Limit: Resource 28.775 0.225 28.980 Departmental Expenditure Limit: Capital 2.005 0.000 2.005 Annually Managed Expenditure: Resource 0.050 0.000 0.050 Annually Managed Expenditure: Capital 0.100 0.000 0.100 Total Net Budget: Resource 28.805 0.225 29.030 Total Net Budget: Capital 2.105 0.000 2.105 Net cash requirement 29.133 0.000 29.133 Naivgation Previous Next Enabling activity: A learning organisation where improvement is continuous and resources are used efficiently Powers and sanctions report

Performance analysis 2021/22: Goal three | Electoral Commission Search
Performance analysis 2021/22: Goal three You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 On this page Key achievements Performance measures Our activities during the year First published: 1 August 2022 Last updated: 1 August 2022 Goal three To be an independent and respected centre of expertise, using knowledge and insight to further the transparency, fairness and efficiency of our democratic system, and help adapt it to the modern, digital age. This area of work focuses on innovation and strengthening our evidence base. Our expertise in policy, research and communications are core to enabling this work. Key achievements To share our independent and expert advice on our democratic system, we: deployed a public awareness campaign to support understanding of online advertising techniques, in conjunction with regulatory partners published our annual survey of public opinion, which found public confidence in the running of elections at a record high provided detailed analysis of the UK Government's Elections Bill, including feedback to Cabinet Office, briefings to parliamentarians, oral evidence to parliamentary committees, meetings with the Minister, and content for our website provided analysis to parliamentarians in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland on the impact of measures in the Elections Bill, and briefings to the Scottish and Welsh governments, particularly in relation to their consideration of requests for legislative consent responded to the Welsh Government's consultation on election rules for local government elections in May 2022, and shared thinking and evaluation plans for the pilots they intend to run extended our engagement with educators and published more learning resources for young people, and those that work with them, to promote political literacy and understanding of democratic processes provided evidence to the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee of the UK Parliament on our work, and published our views on the findings of the Committee on Standards in Public Life's report on political finance published the findings of qualitative research on modernising elections, looking at public attitudes to voting and the information available around elections Performance measures Measure Performance We publish 100% of our reports to planned deadlines 100 % Achieved We comment on 100% of relevant legislation and policy proposals 100 % Achieved Work in support of the electoral law reform recommendations from the England and Wales, Scotland and the Northern Ireland Law Commissions Ongoing Our activities during the year Providing independent and expert advice We published three reports on the May 2021 elections, the most complex set of polls in recent years, with the additional challenges brought by the coronavirus pandemic. We found that the changes put in place by the UK's governments, electoral administrators and by us helped to support and reassure voters and campaigners. Our reports described the continued concerns about the resilience and capacity of local electoral services teams across Great Britain. In response, we highlighted our plans to work in partnership with the electoral community, including Government and local authorities, to help build more resilience for the future. The UK Government's Elections Bill has been a significant focal point of our work over the last year. As well as working closely to support officials on developing the legislation, we gave evidence to the Joint Committee on Human Rights, the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee, and the Public Bill Committee, on the Bill as a whole or particular aspects. We also provided briefings to parliamentarians across Great Britain about key considerations and potential impacts, including before key parliamentary debates. We provided evidence to the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee of the UK Parliament on our work, and briefed

selected peers ahead of Dissolution and Calling of Parliament Bill Second Reading in Lords. We published findings from a new research study looking at the public's needs and expectations about the voting process and the information they receive about voting. This research is part of a wider project looking at the future of voting, and we will use it to develop recommendations to the UK's governments about how the electoral system can continue to support participation in the democratic process. We continued to expand our engagement with educators to promote political literacy and understanding of democratic processes, publishing more learning resources for young people and those that work with them. This included form-time activities, lesson plans and activities for assemblies, for use in secondary schools in Great Britain. Acting on analytics and feedback from user testing, we continued to develop our website functionality and content. We deployed new search functionality and restructured guidance content on our website for electoral administrators, political parties and campaigners. Report navigation links Previous Next Performance analysis 2021/22: Goal two Performance analysis 2021/22: Goal four

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Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Apologies and welcomes Declaration of interest Minutes of the previous Board meeting Commission Board action tracker Forward Plan of Board business Board effectiveness review and follow up on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) discussion on improving Board diversity First published: 7 March 2022 Last updated: 13 May 2022 Meeting summary

Date: Wednesday 20 October 2021 Time: 9.30am to 12.50pm Location: In person and by video conference Date of next scheduled meeting: Wednesday 1 December 2021 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Pullinger, Chair Rob Vincent Sue Bruce Alex

Attwood Sarah Chambers Elan Closs Stephens Stephen Gilbert Alasdair Morgan Joan Walley Katy Radford In attendance: Bob Posner, Chief Executive Craig Westwood, Director, Communications, Policy and Research Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services Binnie Goh, General Counsel Zena Khan, Board Secretary (Senior Advisor, Governance) Marcia Bluck, External Consultant (item 6f) Carol Sweetenham, Head of Projects (item 6f) Cindy Williams, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead (item 6f)

Apologies and welcomes There were no apologies received. The Chair welcomed all to the meeting welcoming Commissioners in person (reminding of the meeting social distancing requirement) and joining remotely, and formally welcomed Commissioner Katy Radford following receipt of her Royal Warrant. The Board noted that they would be joined by an external facilitator, Marcia Bluck at agenda item 6, to facilitate part of the discussions on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. The Board took a moment to reflect on the life and work of Sir David Amess MP and noted the statement of condolences issued by the Commission. Commissioners expressed their concerns in light of the tragic event, about the physical and verbal threats received by elected representatives, and lack of respect for the contributions made by public servants. Discussions were had relating to the Metropolitan Police advice on private security for candidates standing for elections, and that this raised a difficult aspect for candidates as under elections law currently the cost of security would count against their candidate spending limit. Commissioners considered that security should not be an election expense. The Board requested that the Commission Chair write to Mr Speaker with condolences and to note concerns about treatment under election law of security costs for candidates standing for elections. The Board noted updates from the Chair, Commissioner Elan Closs Stephens and the Chief Executive on activities that had taken place since the last meeting, including a meeting with UK Minister Kemi Badenoch, preparations for 2022 elections in Northern Ireland,

consideration by the Llywydd Committee of the Commission's draft Corporate Plan, the recruitment of the new Chief Executive role was underway, the EDI Strategy to go out for consultation including translation in Welsh, and progress in relation to the Elections Bill. The Board requested further briefing on the devolution aspects of the Elections Bill. There was further discussion of the proposals for a Strategy and

Policy Statement and the Commission's response. Declarations of interest Commissioner Joan Walley declared in writing to the Board Secretary, that she attended a seminar in September 2021 organised by the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, which was remunerated. The Board noted that the Commissioners' Register of interests would be updated and this reflected on the Commission's external website in line with the Commissioners' Code of Conduct. Minutes of the previous Board meeting (EC 68/21) Resolved: That the minutes of the Commission Board meeting on 22 September 2021 be agreed noting the following addition to the action point at paragraph 6.8 "and a

mechanism for engaging Commissioners". Commission Board action tracker (EC 69/21) Resolved: That the Board noted the progress against actions requested by the Board.

Forward Plan of Board business (EC 70/21) Resolved: That the Board reviewed and noted the Forward Plan of Board business scheduling further topics for the next few meetings, including a discussion of Key Performance Indicators for the new Corporate Plan. Board effectiveness review and follow up on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) discussion on improving Board diversity (EC 71/21)

a. Governance Structure: Committee terms of reference The General Counsel introduced the report providing context to each session of the report to be discussed and for next steps agreed. The Board reminded itself that the Commission's duties and responsibilities were set out in PPERA and the Board are indivisible from the Commission. The Committee Chairs of Audit and Risk (ARC) and Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo) advised that they had reviewed their committee terms of reference in their previous meetings but would consider reviewing further to make sure they were content and aligned with the Commission's strategy in the new Corporate Plan. The Board discussed that the Corporate Governance Framework (CGF) be reviewed in light of the new Corporate Plan (CP), once finalised, to ensure that it appropriately reflects the Commission's new objectives and the legal duties of Commissioners as set out in PPERA. It will be brought back to the March 2022 Board meeting for endorsement. Action: Both ARC and RemCo to review their terms of reference in order to agree that they align with the Commission's strategy, and bring back to the March 2022 Board meeting for agreement.

Action: The CGF to be reviewed once the CP has been finalised to ensure it appropriately reflects the Commission's new objectives and the legal duties of Commissioners as set out in PPERA, and to be brought back to the March 2022 Board meeting for endorsement. Action owner: General Counsel Submitted by: March 2022.

b. Review of Forward Plan of Business The General Counsel introduced the session on the Forward Plan of Board Business. The Board discussed future items to be included onto the Forward Plan, making sure that it reflected its objectives and priorities, including monitoring of the Corporate Plan, and planning future 'deep dive' strategic sessions. The Board discussed that they would like to see the Forward Plan reflect the annual cycle of business including preparation of the Forward Plan in the autumn. The Board discussed that the review and reporting items including the Board effectiveness review should be planned before the end of the financial year, and horizon scanning in the summer, with updates from the Chief Executive at each Board meeting with detailed written performance reports every quarter. The Board discussed the desired approach for the performance reports, making sure they align to the Key Performance Indicators for the Corporate Plan, focussing on outcomes rather than activities, and drawing out impacts on all four nations. The Board further discussed topics for 'deep dive' strategic sessions on risk, which has been scheduled for December 2021, regulation, which the Board scheduled for January 2022, Elections Bill, understanding devolution and the wider landscape in England. It was noted that the Board would where appropriate welcome external speakers for 'deep dive' strategic sessions, and that items for the Forward Plan could be constructed over a 2 year period. It was further noted that rolling consideration over the lifetime of the Corporate Plan, on each of the 5 objectives and underpinning work relating to the Commission should also be programmed. The new Forward Plan will be brought back to the Board for review and agreement.

c. Review of Board delegations The Board reviewed the schedule of Board delegations, in order to be satisfied it continued to strike the right balance between the Board, its Committees and the Executive, to set strategy and enable non-executive oversight. It was noted that the Board is

accountable for all decisions of the Commission notwithstanding the delegations made to the Executive. The Board discussed how they could work more effectively in support of the Executive Team and wanted to see a fuller partnership model. The Board requested that the Corporate Governance Framework is made clearer as to the circumstances where the Executive should inform or consult the Board on delegated matters. The Board agreed that Commissioners Sarah Chambers and Stephen Gilbert work with Director, Regulation by joining a new quarterly strategy session on regulation.

Action: The CGF to be reviewed to be clearer as to the circumstances where the Executive should inform or consult the Board on delegated matters and to be brought back to the March 2022 Board meeting for endorsement. Action owner: General Counsel Submitted by: March 2022. Resolved: The Board agreed that Commissioners Sarah Chambers and Stephen Gilbert work with Director of Regulation to join a new quarterly strategy session on regulation. d. Linked Commissioners The Board noted the session on linked Commissioners and noted the significant contribution made by Commissioners in specific areas. The Board noted the importance of closer working between Commissioners and the Executive. Commissioners offered to share their skills and experience and this will be captured by the forthcoming Commissioner questionnaire.

Resolved: That the Board agreed that Commissioners Joan Walley and Katy Radford be linked Commissioners for work on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). e. Managing risk of divergence and resolving conflicts The Board noted the session on managing risk of divergence and resolving conflicts, striving to maintain high standards of independence and integrity. f. Board Equality, Diversity and Inclusion The General Counsel introduced Marcia Bluck, an external consultant, to participate in discussions for this session. The Board considered the proposal for an Independent Adviser to the Board on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). The Board resolved that the work for the Independent Adviser would likely take 2 days per month for an initial period. The Board resolved that Commissioners Joan Walley and Katy Radford work with Commission staff to recruit an Independent Adviser and to propose Board level commitments on EDI. Resolved: That the Board agreed to that Commissioners Joan Walley and Katy Radford work with the General Counsel to progress work on recruitment of an Independent Adviser to the Board, and to report back to the Board at the next meeting.

Scottish Parliament Political Parties Panel Minutes: 29 April 2020 | Electoral Commission Search Scottish Parliament Political Parties

Panel Minutes: 29 April 2020 You are in the Party panels section Home How we make decisions Party panels On this page Welcome Minutes of previous meeting Covid-19 Impact on by elections Scottish Government update Scotland Office update Scottish Boundary Commission update Royal Mail update Electoral Management Board update The Electoral Commission update Dates of future meetings First published: 5 October 2020 Last updated: 9 October 2020 Date: Wednesday 29 April 2020 Date: Wednesday 29 April 2020 (by video conference) Time: 10:45 am Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Scott Martin, Scottish National Party (Chair) Gordon Dickson, Scottish Green Party Paul Moat, Scottish Liberal Democrats Matt Edmonds, Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party Michael Sharpe, Scottish Labour Party Isabel Drummond-Murray, Scottish Boundary Commissions James Newman, Scottish Government Iain Hockenhull, Scottish Government Chris Highcock, Electoral Management Board for Scotland Pete Wildman, Scottish Assessors Association (Chair of Electoral Registration Committee) Craig Chalcraft, Scotland Office Scott Forsyth, Royal Mail Peter Lovedee, Royal Mail The Electoral Commission Dame Susan Bruce, Electoral Commissioner, Scotland Alasdair Morgan, Electoral Commissioner Andy O'Neill, Head of Electoral Commission, Scotland Sarah Mackie, Manager Martin McKeown, Senior Adviser, Elections & s Lindsey Hamilton, Business Support Officer (Minutes) Apologies Maria McCann, Scottish Government and Kate Crawford, Scottish Assessors Association Welcome Scott Martin (SM) welcomed those present to the meeting, apologies were noted and introductions made. SM suggested that the PPP consider a letter from the Director of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party, to the Convener of the Electoral Management Board for Scotland, as the first substantive item. Minutes of previous meeting The minute was confirmed subject to the inclusion of an amendment suggested by Isabel Drummond-Murray. There were no action points outstanding. Covid-19 Impact on by elections SM referred to a letter from the Director of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party, to the Convener of the Electoral Management Board for Scotland (EMB), requesting that the EMB recommend to Councils and the Scottish Parliament that all by-elections in Scotland be held over to 6 May 2021 in line with England and Wales. SM sought the views of the PPP on the proposals, accepting it was a matter for the EMB. The following points were raised and discussed: SM felt holding two different types of election on the same day might result in confusion (as happened in 2007) and said democracy should happen when the health situation allowed it to happen. He suggested an alternative approach of a 'Super Thursday' i.e. holding by-elections the month after the Scottish Parliament election. Matt Edmonds (ME) agreed postponement was a way to provide clarity to councils and minimise confusion. He referred to the recent Clackmannanshire by-election. He suggested the possibility of postponing elections could allow focus on other activities, such as the 2020 Annual Canvass. Paul Moat (PM) agreed with the principle of delaying by-elections until next year as it was uncertain if by-elections could take place in the current climate. He suggested that holding by-elections on the same day as Scottish Parliament elections would raise issues and considered it prudent to delay holding by-elections until March next year. Michael Sharpe (MS) felt we should hold by-elections when safe to do so but there was still ambiguity about when that would be. With rolling lockdowns a possibility, it would be useful for us to know, practically, how we can deliver democracy and we should take the opportunity to hold socially distanced elections where possible. He did not want to see a repeat of holding multiple types of elections on one day, but if democracy were continually interrupted then we would

have to consider alternatives where we could. James Newman (JN) advised on Scottish Government thinking behind the revisions to the Coronavirus Act 2020. He noted that the Clackmannanshire East by-election had been postponed before the Act was in place. A number of Council by elections in Scotland had since been postponed under the Act. Postponement provisions currently run only until May 2021. Scottish Government were considering options for the May 2021 election should restrictions continue. SM asked if any consideration had been given to the application of the “6-month rule” when meetings were not physically held. Important that this did not create unintentional vacancies. Malcolm Burr (MB) indicated he was happy to speak to Solace about the ‘six month rule’. MB noted the potential impact of vacancies on the ability of smaller local authorities to conduct business. He thought that it was important not to lose sight of the ‘local’ impact of vacancies. He indicated his view that by elections should be held as soon as practically possible. Craig Chalcraft (CC) noted that Parliamentary time to limited in terms of providing scope for legislative change going forward. Andy O'Neill (AON) noted the Electoral Commission had no official view on the terms of the letter but, essentially, thought the Scottish provisions were a subtle solution which allowed by-elections to take place when they could. He acknowledged the particular issues and difficulties of holding Council by elections on the same day as Scottish Parliamentary elections. Dame Susan Bruce (SB) agreed that it would be preferable not to hold Council by elections on the same day as the Scottish Parliament poll, given experience of the past. She did not feel Scottish elections required alignment with England and Wales arrangements. Chris Highcock (CH) expressed the view that there should not be undue delays to the democratic processes while accepting that there would be practical difficulties in holding by elections during restrictions. SM thanked everyone for their contributions to the discussion.

Scottish Government update James Newman (JN) and Iain Hockenhull provided the following updates: The prisoner voting aspects of the Scottish Elections (Franchise and Representation) Act 2020 had been implemented. The remaining provisions were likely to be commenced from early August 2020 with secondary legislation being introduced to the Scottish parliament imminently. A provisional date had been set for Stage 3 consideration of the Scottish Elections (Reform) Bill. Confirmation of the date was awaited. Work has started on the conduct Order for the 2021 Scottish Parliament election. Consideration is being given to any impact from Covid-19 on how the poll may be conducted. The E-counting project for the 2022 elections is progressing, with the contract out to tender. AON highlighted the impact that any delay to the Bill would have on the Commission’s accountability to the Scottish Parliament and for Codes of Practice. JN acknowledged the concern. SM referred to the issue he had raised with Scottish Government on Bill related to local government candidate spending. IH advised that the issue was being considered. SM asked if any other amendments were likely to appear in the SP Conduct Order. JN advised that the Order was likely to be an updated version of the 2015 Order, plus any essential changes. In respect of the E-counting project, SM noted he had looked at the public procurement document through the public contracts website. He asked why the specification required the first preference graphs to stop at the 80% votes threshold. JN said he would discuss with CH and others and come back to the PPP.

Scotland Office update Craig Chalcraft (CC) provided an update on the review of UK Parliamentary boundaries. The UK Government had decided that the number of UK constituencies would remain at 650 with no change to the parliamentary quota levels. Future reviews would be conducted on that basis. Scottish Boundary Commission update The PPP noted the written update provided by Isabel Drummond-Murray (ID-M) who, while

present, was unable to be heard due to technical difficulties. The report highlighted the following: On 18 March, LGBCS submitted its recommendations to Scottish Ministers following its interim review of the boundary between Glasgow Provan and Coatbridge and Chryston constituencies. If accepted, the recommendations would realign the constituency boundaries with the Glasgow City and North Lanarkshire council area boundary further information was available on the website. In terms of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018, LGBCS had completed its consultations in Na h-Heileanan an Iar, Orkney and Shetland Council areas. Consultations in respect of proposals for Argyll and Bute, Highland and North Ayrshire council areas will be expected to begin shortly. Recommendations for all 6 council areas would be submitted to Scottish Ministers in May 2021 in order that, if passed by the Scottish Parliament, changes would be in force for the local government elections expected in May 2022. Scottish Elections (Reform) Bill – The legislation has a number of potential implications for LGBCS including a name change to Boundaries Scotland; change in scheduling and approval process for reviews of both Scottish parliament constituencies and regions and a local government electoral arrangements; introduction of use of 2 and 5 member wards across Scotland. Review of UK Parliamentary constituencies in Scotland – the Minister for State for the Cabinet Office made a Written Ministerial Statement on 24 March setting out the Government's intentions regarding implementation of the 2018 Review and plans for future reviews. No further information was available at this time.

Royal Mail update Scott Forsyth (SF) talked about the accelerated plan prepared by Rachel Winham for the snap UKPGE in December 2019 to ensure processes were in place. Pressure on infrastructure reflected the pace required to execute an election in incredibly short timescales and at their absolute busiest period of the year. As a result of the truncated timelines, lessons were learned. SF confirmed procedures had been reviewed to ensure those improvements are in place for future campaigns.

Electoral Management Board update Pete Wildman (PW) updated on electoral registration. He reported on how Electoral Registration offices were operating under Covid-19 restrictions and noted the main focus of work was on the new style Annual Canvass which was likely to start on 3 August and included the enfranchisement of foreign nationals. EROs were considering the practicalities of how the work would be progressed. He indicated it was unlikely follow up visits to properties could take place under current restrictions and EROs would rely on telephone calls. Chris Highcock (CH) advised that the EMB had reviewed how the UK Parliamentary General election had gone and were now thinking about planning for the 2021 Scottish Parliament elections under future Coronavirus restrictions. In relation to comments from SB, he noted that the Election Reform Bill carried provisions for extending the role of the Electoral Management Board to Scottish Parliament elections. It would be important to see that Bill taken through to legislation. He noted the progress of the e-counting contract and agreed to look with JN at the issue raised by SM about first preference display screens. The Electoral Commission update Sarah Mackie (SMa) said the Electoral Commission's report on the 2019 UK Parliamentary elections confirmed the poll had, in general, been well run with high levels of satisfaction amongst voters. Some people indicated dissatisfaction with tactics used by parties in campaigning. There had been strain on electoral services, EROs and ROs in the run up to Christmas and extra pressure on the postal service; some related to voters already registered trying to register again. SM asked if the report should have said more about the provisions on the electoral register during the canvass. Only applied where the poll was after 1 December as opposed to election happening during the time. PW said they had certainly heard back from Scottish Government and Cabinet Office and is

something which needs to be looked at. He remarked that the Electoral Commission had also highlighted this as an issue. Martin McKeown (MMcK) reported that a consultation had recently been launched on the development of a Party and a Candidate Code of Practice for Scottish Parliament elections which will run until mid-July. This had already been highlighted to party members on the PPP and also directly with party treasurers. He confirmed he would be keen to hear views from people who have to comply with the Codes and would contact PPP party representatives to discuss. The aim was to have codes in place for the 2021 SP elections but this was dependent on the passage of existing legislation. MMcK advised that the 2019 electoral fraud data had been published and included a link to the data on the WC website. The data continued to show there is no real issue with electoral fraud in the UK. Users are able to analyse data on the website. SM asked questions in relation to what the data revealed about instance of personation in Scotland. From discussion it was acknowledged that allegations of personation could arise for a variety of reasons and that the issuing of a tendered ballot paper did not necessarily mean that an offence had occurred. A new tool had been published which allows spending of candidates at the 2019 UK Parliamentary election to be analysed. Gordon Dickson (GD) asked if the tool could be revised to draw out the Green parties from the 'other' category. MMcK undertook to raise this. AON updated on a request from Scottish Government that the Commission test the question of any future referendum on Scottish independence. The matter had been put on hold by the Board under the current restrictions. Scottish Ministers were aware. SM asked if the EC Board had ever refused to give advice to Government. AON said he would check records and report back to the panel.

Dates of future meetings

2020 Tuesday 29 September at 2pm Tuesday 24 November at 10:30 am 2021 Thursday 21 January at 10:30 am Thursday 4 March at 10:30 am

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14 June 2023 Last updated: 23 June 2023 Board minutes 25 April 2023 Date: Tuesday, 25 April 2023, 9.30am Location: Bunhill Row, London, and by Video conference Date of next scheduled Board meeting, Tuesday, 23 May 2023 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Pullinger Chair Rob Vincent Alex Attwood Sarah Chambers Roseanna Cunningham Chris Ruane Katy Radford Sue Bruce In attendance: Shaun McNally Chief Executive Kieran Rix Director, Finance and Corporate Services Craig Westwood Director, Communications, Policy and Research Ailsa Irvine Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Louise Edwards Director, Regulation Binnie Goh General Counsel David Moran Interim Director, Finance Matt Pledger Senior Adviser, Governance Tasnim Jahan Legal Officer [meeting support] Phil Thompson Head of Research [items 1 and 5] Emma Rose Senior Research Officer [item 1] Tom Kelsey Senior Research Officer [item 1] Sandy Grant Senior Research Officer [item 1] Helen Lyon Senior Research Officer [item 1] Charlotte Eva Senior Research Officer [item 1] Tom Hawthorn Head of Policy [items 5 and 7] Michela Palese Policy Manager [item 5] Cahir Hughes Head of Electoral Commission, Northern Ireland [item 5] Professor Kate Dommett University of Sheffield [item 7] Welcomes and apologies, followed by an introduction to the Research Team providing an overview of its work The Board received apologies from: Commissioners: Elan Closs Stephens Stephen Gilbert Independent Adviser to the Commission Board EDI Sal Naseem The Board noted that Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services would be leaving the Commission and that this was his last Board meeting. The Board thanked him for his work at the Commission. There were farewell words from the Chair of the Board, Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and the Chief Executive. All thanked the Director, Finance and Corporate Services for his dedication and support to both them and the Commission. The Board welcomed David Moran, Interim Director, Finance to the Commission. The Board welcomed the Research Team members, who provided an outline of their work. The Board noted the team works across the Commission's objectives, basing their research methodology on robust processes to present qualitative and quantitative findings, which are published wherever possible to support wider sector insight. The Board thanked the Research Team members for their time and update. Declarations of Interests The Board noted the following updated entry of declarations of interests since the March 2023 Board meeting: Commissioner: Sarah Chambers: Consumer Expert Panel member for the Office of Rail and Road Minutes (EC 189/23) Matters arising: That the Board noted that under item 8.3 resolved that the Chair had agreed the rewording of the Conflicts of interest guidance appendix of the Commissioner Code of Conduct. This revised version has been adopted as part of the Corporate Governance Framework. The document would be circulated to commissioners for signing. Resolved : That the Board agreed the minutes of the Board meeting of 22 March 2023. Commission Board action tracker (EC 190/23) The Director, Communications, Policy and Research reported to the Board that arrangements were underway for an expert to attend the July 2023 meeting to support the Board's discussions on public awareness campaigning. Resolved : That the Board noted the progress against actions requested by the Board. Chief Executive's update (quarterly) (EC 191/23) The Chief Executive reported that there

were a range of challenges for the team arising from the latest timetable for the next phases of Elections Act implementation. The Board noted that the UK Government had also communicated an updated timetable for the parliamentary consultation on the proposed Strategy and Policy Statement. The Board requested an update on the next phase of Elections Act implementation at the next meeting. The Board noted key findings of the annual tracker survey 2022, and an update on the Commission's readiness for the May 2023 polls. The Board noted that it had been regularly updated by the Executive Team as to the preparations for the May 2023 polls. The Board discussed the impact of voter ID and noted that there would be an interim analysis of the voter ID data to be published in June/July 2023, followed by the Commission's full post poll report in September 2023. Resolved : That the Board noted the Chief Executive's update on operations and matters arising, including an update on election preparations for the May 2023 polls, and an update on the annual tracker survey 2022 key findings. Update on the plan for the review of Commission's Strategic Objectives (EC 192/23) The Chief Executive introduced this item reporting to the Board following discussions at the February 2023 Board Away event, noting that the review was an opportunity to engage in an open discussion and test the level of ambition of the Board. These discussions would in turn influence the next Corporate Plan. The Board agreed to hold a series of thematic reviews of the current strategic objectives through extensions to the monthly Board meetings. Resolved : That the Board noted the presentation and approved the programme of activities. Digital campaigning The Director, Regulation introduced Professor Kate Dommett to the Board. Professor Dommett from the University of Sheffield presented research on public attitudes towards online political advertising. The project was aimed at determining public perceptions of what legitimate political advertising looks like. She presented data about the relative campaign spend on online political advertising. Professor Dommett highlighted findings indicating that there appeared to be general public consensus on the factors that determine whether an advert is acceptable; such as decency, legality and truth. The Director, Regulation noted that the research provided insights into both the value of online campaigning as an accessible tool for campaigners, and the risks around voter trust in online campaign material. The Board explored the findings presented and thanked Professor Dommett for her presentation. Resolved : That the Board noted the presentation by Professor Dommett, University of Sheffield. Forward Plan of Board business 2023/24 (EC 193/23) The Board noted that extended Board meeting sessions would be incorporated into the Forward Plan and for the September 2023 Board meeting to start at 9.00am. The Forward Plan would be amended to include a discussion on the Strategy and Policy Statement at the June 2023 Board meeting. Resolved : That the Board noted the Forward Plan of Board business 2023/24. Update on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion activities (EC194/23) The Chief Executive gave an update on the first meeting of the EDI Project Board. The Board noted that the next meeting of the EDI project Board would consider external facing EDI activities as well as activities to further promote EDI within the Commission. It would also consider the structures and resources required to implement EDI work. Resolved : That the Board noted the update on EDI activities. Registers of Interests, gifts, donations and hospitality (EC195/23) The General Counsel updated the Board as to the Register of Interests. The Board noted that the Governance Team would be issuing the annual documentation for Commissioners to update their interests. Resolved : That the Board noted the Commissioner's Register of Interests, gifts, donations and hospitality.

Public attitudes towards voting in Scotland in the context of COVID-19 | Electoral Commission Search Public attitudes towards voting in Scotland in the context of COVID-19 You are in the Public attitudes towards voting in the context of COVID-19 section Home Our research Public attitudes towards voting in the context of COVID-19 On this page Introduction Key findings Polling station voting Postal voting Other findings Background notes First published: 25 August 2020 Last updated: 26 November 2020 Introduction In February 2021, we asked a representative sample of eligible voters in Scotland about their attitudes towards voting during the pandemic. The questions covered attitudes towards postal voting and other options for the safe running of the election in 2021. This is a repeat of the work carried out in August 2020 and November 2020. In both August and November this research was requested by the Scottish Government under Section 10 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. This page provides a summary of the findings from the latest of these surveys conducted in February, making comparisons with the other surveys throughout. Key findings The key findings are consistent across August, November 2020 and February 2021 with voting in a polling place remaining the preferred option amongst a majority of voters although the results also indicate a likely increase in the proportion of voters opting to use a postal vote at the 2021 Scottish Parliament election compared to previous polls. Polling station voting Over three quarters (76%) of eligible electors and 82% of those who say they ordinarily vote in a polling station would feel safe voting there. This is not significantly different from what we saw when we asked these questions previously. When we explain the planned Covid safety measures for polling stations, based on Electoral Commission guidance, there is an increase in the proportion who see in-person voting as safe (84%). Among those who typically vote in a polling station 88% said they would feel safe. Of those who said they would not feel safe voting in polling stations, just under 9/10 (87%) said there was no measure that could be introduced to make them feel safe voting in person. While we are not able, from this research, to report specifically on BAME respondents in Scotland we can report for Great Britain as a whole. 61% of BAME respondents said voting in person was safe compared to 75% of White respondents. Once told about the Electoral Commission guidance around safety measures 73% of BAME respondents said they would feel safe voting in person compared with 84% of white respondents. Postal voting The same proportion of people, compared to November, said they would vote by post (38%) if an election were held now. The proportion of people who say they ordinarily vote at a polling station and would now choose to vote by post has remained consistent too with 22% saying they would vote by post (23% in November). While this should not be taken as a reliable indicator of the number of people who will actually vote by mail this does indicate that there could be a significant uplift in the number of postal votes compared with previous polls. Other findings There has been an increase in the willingness to vote if an election were to take place now. 90% said they would vote in February compared to 83% in November. Given a number of different options around how the May elections should be conducted the most popular option expressed was, again, for the Scottish Parliament election to be run with the same methods of voting as usual (42%). 28% would prefer polling stations to be open for more than one day, 10% wanted the election to be held as an all postal ballot and 12% preferred a short postponement. The proportion who thought the election should be postponed (by not more than 6 months) has increased from 5% in November to 12% in February. Those who were more inclined to think the elections should be delayed were also more likely to say that they think the elections would not be safe. They were also more likely to be

older. Just under a third of those who intend to vote in person (31%) said they would not know anybody who could vote by proxy for them if their household had to isolate due to covid-19. Just over half were sure they did know somebody who could vote for them (57%). 12% were unsure. Respondents from social grade ABC1 are more likely to know people in their local area who could act as a proxy for them (67%) compared to C2DE (46%) As in the previous research, around a half (50%) of all those surveyed would vote by post if encouraged to (including 58% of polling place voters). Once those already registered to vote by post are included this would mean around two-thirds of electors who would vote by post. When asked why they would not apply for a postal vote, the majority (65%) said they would prefer to vote in person at a polling station Background notes All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from work done for the Commission by YouGov Plc. For the February fieldwork, total sample size was 504 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 29th January and 20th February. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all adults in Scotland (aged 16+). For the August fieldwork, total sample size was 1,145 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 3rd and 7th August 2020. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all adults in Scotland (aged 16+). For the November fieldwork, total sample size was 1,089 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 6th and 10th November 2020. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all adults in Scotland (aged 16+) Full tables Scotland Related content Our research about our research, which helps inform our work and our policies Public attitudes Read our reports about public attitudes towards voting Analysis of electoral registration data Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run

2021 electoral fraud data | Electoral Commission Search 2021
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research Electoral fraud data On this page 2021 elections Cases where the suspect
accepted a police caution Outcomes of all reported cases Types of electoral fraud
allegations Election petitions First published: 11 May 2022 Last updated: 11 May 2022
Overview The UK has low levels of proven electoral fraud. There remains no evidence
of large-scale electoral fraud in 2021. 2021 elections In May 2021, elections took
place across England, Wales and Scotland: Scottish Parliament Senedd Cymru Police and
Crime Commissioners (England and Wales) Local councils and local mayors (England)
Combined Authority Mayors (England) Mayor of London and London Assembly Many of these
polls had been postponed from 2020. There were also six UK parliamentary by-elections
during 2021. 317 cases of alleged electoral fraud were investigated by the police
during 2021. There was one conviction and one acquittal. Police issued cautions in
one case. This table shows the number of cases of alleged fraud reported to us by the
police for elections held in 2021. Election Number of cases Local election 258 Local
referendum 12 Local by-election 10 Non-election specific (e.g. rolling registration)
10 Senedd election 8 Mayor of London election 7 Police and Crime Commissioner
election 6 UK Parliamentary by-election 3 Scottish Parliament 2 Local Mayoral
election 1 Cases where the suspect accepted a police caution Kent Police issued
cautions to two people for the same offence of personation. A woman used her mother's
polling card to try to vote in a local government election after her father suggested
doing so. The polling station staff suspected that she was not the voter named on the
polling card. Father and daughter both accepted a caution after the police had
obtained advice from the Crown Prosecution Service. Outcomes of all reported cases
More than half of all cases (64%) resulted in the police taking no further action.
This means that the cases were not investigated further by the police because there
was no evidence (or there wasn't enough evidence), or an offence wasn't found. This
table and pie chart show the number and outcome of the cases that were reported to
the police in 2021. Outcome Number of Cases Percentage of Total No further action 202
64% Locally resolved 104 33% Under investigation 4 1% Court proceedings initiated 3
1% Prosecution advice awaited 1 0% Acquitted 1 0% Convicted 1 0% Caution 1 0% Types
of electoral fraud allegations Just over half of all reported cases in 2021 were
campaigning offences. Most of these were about: s not including details about the
printer, promoter or publisher on election material - an 'imprint' Someone making
false statements about the personal character or conduct of a candidate. This table
and pie chart show the number of cases and types of offences that were investigated
in 2021. Offence Type Number of Cases Percentage of Total Campaigning 166 52% Voting
79 25% Registration 35 11% Nomination 33 10% Other 1 4 1% Download this table to
search for data from specific police forces, by category of offence or outcome. 2021
Electoral Fraud Cases Election petitions An election petition is a legal challenge to
the result of an election. There were five petitions following the May 2021
elections, including two that involved allegations of electoral fraud. Three others
involved alleged electoral administration problems. One petition that involved
allegations of electoral fraud has been decided, and we have included a summary
below. We are waiting for a decision on the other electoral fraud petition and will
report on it once we know the outcome. Fens and Greatham ward, Hartlepool Borough
Council The petition alleged that the successful Labour candidate had made a false
statement about his personal conduct in an election leaflet. The court found that the
statement was about his political, rather than personal, conduct. The petition was
unsuccessful, and the court certified that the Labour candidate was duly elected.

Description of the tableau 2021 Category Percentage of total Campaigning 52% Voting 25% Nomination 10% Registration 11% Other 1% 2019 Category Percentage of total Campaigning 54% Voting 24% Nomination 12% Registration 10% Administration 1% 2018 Category Percentage of total Campaigning 48% Voting 21% Nomination 15% Registration 15% Administration 0% 2017 Category Percentage of total Campaigning 49% Voting 31% Registration 11% Nomination 7% Administration 1% Miscellaneous 1% 2016 Category Percentage of total Voting 43% Campaigning 37% Nomination 9% Registration 8% Administration 2% 2015 Category Percentage of total Campaigning 56% Voting 26% Nomination 10% Registration 8% Administration 1% 2014 Category Percentage of total Campaigning 38% Voting 27% Registration 15% Nomination 14% Miscellaneous 3% Administration 3% 2013 Category Percentage of total Campaigning 54% Registration 18% Voting 13% Nomination 8% Miscellaneous 5% Administration 1% 2012 Category Percentage of total Campaigning 41% Voting 25% Registration 23% Nomination 6% Miscellaneous 3% Administration 1% 2011 Category Percentage of total Campaigning 52% Registration 22% Voting 14% Nomination 7% Miscellaneous 4% Administration 2% 2010 Category Percentage of total Voting 32% Campaigning 31% Registration 28% Nomination 6% Miscellaneous 2% Administration 1% 1. These are cases where the alleged conduct was not an electoral offence. But it concerned aspects of voting or campaigning, and so the police gave advice to the people complaints were made about ■ Back to content at footnote 1 Related content 2020 electoral fraud data 2019 electoral fraud data about electoral fraud in 2019 and view the data 2018 electoral fraud data about electoral fraud in 2018 and view the data 2017 electoral fraud data about electoral fraud in 2017 and view the data

Board minutes: 23 February 2022 | Electoral Commission Search
Board minutes: 23 February 2022 You are in the Electoral Commission Board section Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Who was at the meeting Apologies and welcomes Declarations of interest Update from the Extraordinary Board meeting Minutes Commission Board action tracker Forward Plans of Board business 2021/22 and 2022/23 Performance report quarter three 2020/21 Performance indicators and targets 2022/23 Updates on two stages of the Commission policy making and influencing process Update from the Audit and Risk Committee Chair Chief Executive update Registers of interests, gifts, donations and hospitality Deep dive strategic discussion: Risk appetite Incoming Chief Executive terms and conditions AOB First published: 5 May 2022 Last updated: 25 May 2022 Meeting summary Date: Wednesday 23 February 2022 Time: 9:00am to 1:20pm Location: In person and by video conference Date of next scheduled meeting: Wednesday 6 April 2022 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Pullinger, Chair Rob Vincent Sue Bruce Alex Attwood Sarah Chambers Elan Closs Stephens Stephen Gilbert Alasdair Morgan Joan Walley Katy Radford In attendance: Bob Posner, Chief Executive Craig Westwood, Director, Communications, Policy and Research Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services Mel Davidson, Head, Support and Improvement Binnie Goh, General Counsel Zena Khan, Senior Adviser, Governance Hannah Kavanagh, Legal Officer Paul Redfern, Independent Advisor to the EC Audit and Risk Committee David Bailey, Head, Strategic Planning and Performance (items 8 and 13) Tom Hawthorn, Head, Policy (item 9) Niki Nixon, Head, Internal Communications (item 9) Phil Thompson, Head, Research (item 9) Apologies and welcomes Apologies were received from Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance. Mel Davidson (Head, Support and Improvement) attended and deputised in Ailsa's absence. The Chair advised that the first part of the meeting would be reserved to Commissioners and the Executive Team for follow up discussions following the Extraordinary Board meeting held last week. The main business of the meeting would commence from 0930. The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, in particular Paul Redfern, Independent advisor to the Audit and Risk Committee. Paul would continue to maintain relationships with Commissioners and on occasion provide advice where applicable. Declarations of interest Commissioner Katy Radford declared the following interests: Commissioner Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (Remunerated) Chair Northern Ireland Committee British Council (Not remunerated) Employed by Commission for Victims and Survivors Northern Ireland Member of the Executive Council of the Belfast Jewish Community (Not remunerated) Social Partner on the Ards and North Down Borough Council Peace IV Partnership Commissioner Stephen Gilbert declared the following updates: Chairmanship and membership of Digital and Comms select committee ended on 20 January 2022 Membership of Online safety scrutiny committee ended on 11 December 2021 The Board noted that in order to support a paper going to the next Board meeting on annual declarations of interests, Commissioners should forward any updates on their declarations of interests to the governance team. The Board noted that these declarations would be included in the Commissioners Register of interests and uploaded onto the Commission's external website in line with Commissioners Code of Conduct. Update from the Extraordinary Board meeting (EC 89/22) There was a short discussion following the Extraordinary Board meeting held the previous week. Resolved: That the minutes of the Extraordinary Board meeting on 16 February 2022 be noted. Resolved: That the Board noted progress and actions arising. Minutes (EC 90/22) Resolved: That the minutes of the Ordinary Board meeting on 19 January 2022 be agreed. Commission Board action tracker (EC 91/22) The Board noted updates on ongoing

work with Political Finance Online, with continued scrutiny of the Audit and Risk Committee, to provide assurance to the Board on progress, proposals for an IT strategy including an update on board paper management systems, appointment of the Head of IT and additional posts for work on the Elections Bill. Resolved: That the Board noted the progress against actions requested by the Board. Forward Plans of Board business 2021/22 and 2022/23 (EC 92/22) The Board noted that reports on and EDI activities would be scheduled at the next two meetings. It was noted that Commissioners and senior colleagues would be contacted on their availability for the October Board meeting in Northern Ireland, in order to start the planning process for the agenda and wider activities. Resolved: That the Board reviewed and noted the Forward Plan of Board business for 2021/22 and 2022/23. Performance report quarter three 2020/21 (EC 93/22) The Chief Executive joined by the Director, Finance and Corporate Services introduced the report highlighting some of the key areas such as work underway with the May elections, preparatory work to support the roll out of Elections Bill provisions, decisions made on freedom of information requests with no challenges, progress on audit recommendations, progress made with Political Finance Online, cyber security, disaster recovery plans, regulatory investigations, annual finances and staff motivation and the changing nature of the workplace including hybrid working. Resolved: That the Board noted the delivery of the work programme and that the budget was managed. Performance indicators and targets 2022/23 (EC 94/22) The Chief Executive, joined by Director, Finance and Corporate Services and Head, Strategic Planning and Performance, introduced the report setting out the operational indicators and targets both for our own work and for the health of the electoral system. The Board discussed the number of indicators to consider and whether the balance was right for the Board, as lower level indicators should remain operational for the Executive. The Board noted that we have a new architecture for performance indicators focused on Corporate Plan objectives. This would require careful differentiation between those areas we control and those where we influence. The nuances need to be considered to facilitate action planning and management of variation. The Board thanked the Head, Strategic Planning and Performance and the team, for engaging with Commissioners to produce positive indicators developed across the organisation. Resolved: That the Board noted and are content with the 2022/23 indicators and targets for the health of the electoral system and for our corporate performance subject to review by the Executive to ensure clarity of language and focus of intent. The key corporate indicators will be used for presentation externally side by side with the new corporate plan. Updates on two stages of the Commission policy making and influencing process (a) Priority policy recommendations (EC 95/22) The Director, Communications, Policy and Research introduced the report, with updates provided by Head of Policy, Head of Internal Communications and Head of Research. The Board discussed areas on modernising voting and political finance, recognising overall progress to take forward aligned to the corporate plan. The Board noted the value of engagement with parliamentary committees at UK level and in Scotland and Wales. Resolved: That the Board noted progress on previously agreed priorities. (b) Horizon scanning (EC 96/22) The Director, Communications, Policy and Research advised the Board that an updated version of this paper would be circulated following the meeting. Action: To circulate latest version of the horizon scanning report to Commissioners. Action owner: Senior Governance Adviser Update from the Audit and Risk Committee Chair (Oral) The Board received an oral update from the Chair, Audit and Risk Committee of their meeting held on 22 February. The Board noted updates on audit controls, an oral update from the National Audit Office on the

annual report which was still in its early stages, but that it would be reported to the next scheduled Audit and Risk meeting, that it had received the operational and organisational risk registers and, that risk appetite would be covered in a deep dive discussion item at the end of the Board agenda. Resolved: That the Board noted the oral update. Chief Executive update (Oral) The Board received an oral update from the Chief Executive on operations and matters arising since the last Board meeting. The Board noted updates on the May elections, including guidance on new legislation and on Covid-19 measures which have been published on our website. It was noted that results of the PACAC report on the work of the Commission was expected soon. The Board noted that the Commission was moving back to hybrid working with different approaches across the different offices, reflecting the relevant government public health advice in each case. The Board noted that the Executive Team had been in touch with the incoming Chief Executive with arrangements for his induction. It was noted that the recruitment of a new Head of HR and Head of IT have been completed with appointments offered and accepted. Resolved: That the Board noted the oral updates. Registers of interests, gifts, donations and hospitality (EC 97/22) The Board noted that the current register of interests would be circulated to Commissioners for further updates, in order to present the annual report due at next month's meeting. Resolved: That the Board noted the report. Deep dive strategic discussion: Risk appetite (EC 98/22) The Director, Finance and Corporate Services provided a presentation on the following: Remit risk Corporate risk Our next steps leading to an agreed risk appetite statement Risk improvement plan The Board discussed the aspects of developing risks, measuring against performance management and the corporate plan and how to mitigate and manage future issues. The Board noted the need to differentiate effectively between those areas where there is a higher risk tolerance and those where tolerance is lower. The Board also noted the impact on management of multiple unrelated risks crystallising at the same time. Resolved: That the Board noted the presentation and agreed next steps to come back to a future Board meeting. Incoming Chief Executive terms and conditions (EC 99/22) Resolved: That the Board noted the recommendation of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee taken via e-business on 17 February 2022 and decision by Chair under delegation from the Board on 8 December 2021. AOB The Board noted that this would be Bob Posner's last Board meeting as Chief Executive as he takes up his retirement, and thanked Bob for all he has done for the organisation with grace and determination, which helped shape the Commission as it is today, and wished him all the best on his retirement. Bob Posner addressed the Board thanking them and reflecting on his time at the Commission totalling 15 years.

Report: How the 2016 Police and Crime Commissioner elections were run | Electoral Commission Search Report: How the 2016 Police and Crime Commissioner elections were run You are in the Police and Crime Commissioner elections section Home Police and Crime Commissioner elections On this page About the elections Registration and turnout The experience of voters The administration of the poll Campaigning Looking ahead Recommendations: Voter experience Recommendations: Candidates and campaigners Recommendations: Looking ahead to 2020 Download our full report First published: 25 June 2019 Last updated: 13 August 2019 About the elections On 5 May 2016 elections for Police and Crime Commissioner (PCCs) were held across 40 police force areas in England and Wales (but not in London, where the Mayor of London carries out the functions of a PCC, or in Greater Manchester where a directly elected Mayor for the Greater Manchester is intended to assume the functions of a PCC after May 2017). There were also elections to local authorities across parts of England, and mayoral elections in Bristol, Liverpool and Salford. This report looks specifically at the administration of the PCC elections across England and Wales, including the combination of the polls for the PCC elections with the National Assembly for Wales (NAW) elections and local government elections. Registration and turnout Almost 33.7 million people were registered to vote in the Police and Crime Commissioner elections on 5 May 2016: 31.4 million in England and 2.25 million in Wales. More than 5.5 million electors (representing 16.4% of the total electorate) were issued with postal votes for the PCC elections. Overall turnout at the May 2016 PCC elections was 27.3%, ranging from 18% in Durham to 52% in Dyfed Powys. Turnout at the 2012 PCC elections was 15.1%. By comparison, turnout at the May 2016 National Assembly for Wales elections was 45.6%², and turnout at the local government elections in England was 33.9%. At the PCC elections, across England and Wales just over 61% of postal votes issued were returned compared with less than 21% of voters that cast their vote at a polling station. For the local government elections in England, more than two thirds of those voting by post (67.9%) returned their ballot compared with a turnout of 27.5% among those who voted in person. The experience of voters Our public opinion research suggests that most voters believed the elections were well-run, and they were satisfied with the process of registering to vote and voting. Nonetheless there is clear evidence to suggest that people did not feel informed about the PCC elections, with 72% reporting that they knew not very much or nothing at all about them. The majority of respondents to our research said that they did not have enough information to understand the role of the PCC in order to make an informed decision about the elections. Almost twice as many people said that they found it difficult to access information on the PCC candidates compared with local election candidates (44% compared with 23%). In Wales, only 12% of people said it was difficult to access information about candidates at the NAW elections. Candidates themselves were also overwhelmingly negative about the Government's arrangements for communicating the views of candidates to voters, with 96% of those who responded to our survey saying that they were dissatisfied with the arrangements. These findings underline a key concern, which we first highlighted in our report on November 2012 PCC elections – that the information needs of voters at PCC elections have not been adequately met. We are concerned that the UK Government has not yet made improvements in this important area. Evidence from our research suggests that sending a booklet including candidate addresses to all households in each PCC area (similar to the approach adopted for elections of the Mayor of London and directly elected mayor elections, and the UK Government's proposed approach to elections for mayors of Combined Authorities in 2017) would have a significant impact on people's levels of

understanding about future PCC elections and the candidates standing for election. It would also ensure consistency across the different types of elections covering large electoral areas which currently use the supplementary vote electoral system. Data from the May 2016 PCC elections shows that some voters continue to mark their ballot papers incorrectly, which means that their votes are not counted. This highlights the need for further improvements to be made to the design and wording of ballot papers for all elections which use the supplementary vote electoral system, and legislation should be amended to reflect the Commission's recommendations on ballot paper design which were submitted to the UK Government in 2015. The administration of the poll Overall the PCC elections were administered professionally and efficiently, although we have again highlighted the importance of ensuring that relevant legislation is in place in good time before the elections to allow for effective planning and the commitment of resources. Duplicate electoral registration applications (from electors who were already correctly registered) continued to be a significant issue at these elections, which led to additional unnecessary pressure on electoral registration staff resources. This reinforces the need for an online registration status check to be made available for voters, as we recommended following the May 2015 UK Parliamentary general election. The deposit and subscriber requirements for PCC candidates continue to represent a barrier for some potential candidates, particularly independent candidates. There is also a need to ensure that independent candidates have access to the electoral register on a more consistent basis with candidates representing political parties, to enable them to plan and deliver their campaigns effectively Campaigning Our post-election survey of candidates suggests that the majority of candidates agree that the rules on spending and donations are clear. However, access to information about candidate spending and donations could be improved by making candidates' election returns available for viewing online. Looking ahead The next scheduled PCC elections in May 2020 will be held on the same day as scheduled local government elections in England, which include local council elections and, in some areas, directly elected local authority mayoral elections and combined authority mayoral elections. In London, there will be elections for the Mayor of London and members of the London Assembly. In addition, the next UK Parliamentary general election is scheduled to be held on the same day, Thursday 7 May 2020. In our view, this potential combination of polls presents significant risks which need to be mitigated in order to give voters, campaigners and Returning Officers confidence that the elections can be well-run. While it may be possible to manage some of these issues by early planning by Returning Officers, suppliers, campaigners and the Commission, the most effective way to mitigate these significant risks would be to change polling day for one or more of these elections, so that they do not coincide with the next scheduled UK Parliamentary general election which will be held on Thursday 7 May 2020. Any change to the date of scheduled elections would be a significant proposal, and must be informed by appropriate consultation with political parties, the Electoral Commission, relevant Government departments, elected bodies, administrators and voters themselves to ensure that the interests of voters are put first. Recommendations: Voter experience Recommendation 1: Electors should have better access to information about candidates at future PCC elections We remain concerned that the UK Government did not accept and implement our recommendation following the 2012 PCC elections to ensure that electors are sent printed information about candidates at future PCC elections. It is clear from our research that voters at the 2016 elections found it less easy to access information on PCC candidates than those standing in other polls. We continue to recommend that electors should be sent

printed information about candidates at future PCC elections. This should take the form of a booklet containing information provided by each candidate, sent by the relevant Police Area Returning Officer to every household in the police area. The UK Government should ensure that any necessary amendments to the 2016 Order are made no later than November 2019, in line with the timescales set out in Recommendation 3 for improving planning and the management of legislation for the May 2020 PCC elections.

Recommendation 2: The design of ballot papers for elections using the supplementary vote system should be improved We remain concerned that the UK Government did not accept and implement our recommendation to improve the design of ballot papers for elections using the supplementary vote system ahead of the May 2016 elections. In 2015, following user testing, we recommended to the UK Government that the supplementary vote ballot paper used at Police and Crime Commissioner and mayoral elections should be amended to: Ensure that the instructions draw voter's attention to key words to emphasise how voters should complete their ballot paper. This would include emboldening key words to make them more prominent on the ballot paper. Re-label Column 1 and Column 2 as Column A and Column B to avoid confusion. We also recommend that additional information for voters about how to complete a supplementary vote ballot paper should be provided, including highlighting that the voting system is different from a first-past-the-post election. This should include information explaining that voters can select two candidates, a first and a second choice, and that they cannot vote for the same candidate twice. This information should be prominent on all voter materials to guide, support and reassure voters in completing their ballot paper. In some areas in May 2020 the scheduled PCC elections will be combined with local authority mayoral elections, which also use the SV voting system. Combined Authority Mayoral elections may also be held in some areas in England in May 2020, and it is proposed that they will also use the SV voting system.

We continue to recommend that the prescribed design and wording of ballot papers for PCC elections, local mayoral elections and Combined Authority Mayoral elections should be amended to reflect our 2015 recommendations, to ensure that voters at the May 2020 elections receive well-designed ballot papers. Recommendations:

Administration of the poll Recommendation 3: Legislation for elections should be clear in good time before it is required to be implemented or complied with The Police and Crime Commissioner Elections Order 2016 was laid in Parliament on 17 December 2015, just under five months before polling day for the 2016 elections.

Governments with legislative competence over elections within the UK should manage the development and approval of legislation so that it is clear (either by Royal Assent to primary legislation, or by laying secondary legislation for approval by Parliament) at least six months before it is required to be implemented or complied with by campaigners or electoral administrators. If a government has not been able to make legislation clear at least six months before the date of a scheduled poll, it should table a formal statement in the relevant legislature, explaining why it has not, and setting out its assessment of the likely impact of the late confirmation of legislation for campaigners, electoral administrators and electors. Recommendation 4:

Information and analysis of the costs of the 2012 and 2016 PCC elections should be made publicly available Information about the costs of running elections will help governments and Returning Officers to secure the most efficient allocation of resources at future polls. The UK Government should publish as soon as possible full cost details for the 2012 and 2016 PCC elections, and make any recommendations for improvements in the way the process is administered at future elections.

Recommendation 5: Electors should be able to check online whether they are correctly

registered to vote Providing a way for electors to check their registration status at the beginning of the online registration application process would reduce the action required by voters to keep their register entry up to date, and would also reduce the impact on EROs of processing duplicate applications. The UK Government should develop an online service to allow people to check whether they are already correctly registered to vote before they complete a new application to register. Any such service would need to carefully manage and protect voters' personal information.

Recommendations: Candidates and campaigners Recommendation 6: The number of subscribers should be set as low as reasonably possible in order to promote candidate participation in elections To be validly nominated, candidates for the PCC elections were required to secure the signatures and elector numbers of 100 electors (known as subscribers) who are included in an electoral register within the relevant police area. This number of subscribers is irrespective of police force area size, and significantly more than that required for candidates at UK Parliamentary elections or local government elections (both ten). We reported that this had been an issue for some candidates, especially independent candidates, in the 2012 PCC elections and our evidence continues to suggest that the requirements to obtain subscriber signatures are a barrier to standing for election ad participation in elections. The UK

Government should set out its assessment of the impact of the requirement for such a large number of subscribers on participation by candidates at elections for PCCs. The UK Government should also explain why the proposed subscriber requirements are appropriate for these elections, and should also set out why it does not believe the number of subscribers required can be reduced. Recommendation 7: Candidates should not be required to pay a deposit in order to be able to stand for election Our

evidence continues to suggest that deposits represent a significant financial hurdle for independent candidates and candidates from smaller parties and the ability to pay a deposit is not a relevant or appropriate criterion for determining access to the ballot paper. We continue to recommend that there should be no deposit requirement for candidates or political parties at all UK elections, as we consider that the ability to pay a deposit is not a relevant or appropriate criterion for determining access to the ballot paper. Recommendation 8: Independent candidates should be given more equal access to the electoral register for electoral purposes We continue to recommend that the law is changed to allow all candidates to get earlier access to the register for electoral purposes. This would particularly enable independent

candidates to campaign on a more equal basis with candidates from political parties. Recommendation 9: Candidate spending returns should be published online To improve transparency and accessibility of candidate spending returns, we have previously recommended that Returning Officers and Police Area Returning Officers should be required to publish spending returns online as well as through the existing methods of public inspection. We recommend that spending returns of Police and Crime

Commissioner candidates should be published online in future. We support recommendation 12-5 of the Law Commissions' review of Electoral Law which proposes a method for implementing this change through legislation. 3 Recommendation 10: Legislation for the registration of party names and descriptions for use on ballot papers should be reformed We continue to recommend that where a candidate represents a political party on a ballot paper, it should be clear to voters which party the candidate represents. The legal provisions for registration of party descriptions present risks of confusion for voters and restrict the participation of political parties. The Governments of the UK should work with the Electoral Commission to reform the provisions on party descriptions. Recommendations: Looking ahead to 2020

Recommendation 11: Analysis and consultation on the risks of holding polls on the same day The next scheduled PCC elections in May 2020 will be held on the same day as scheduled local government elections in England, which include local council elections, directly elected local authority mayoral elections and combined authority mayoral elections. In London, there will be elections for the Mayor of London and members of the London Assembly. In addition, the next UK Parliamentary general election is scheduled to be held on the same day, Thursday 7 May 2020. In our view, this potential combination of polls presents significant risks which need to be mitigated in order to give voters, campaigners and Returning Officers confidence that the elections can be well-run: There will be multiple sets of elections in different parts of the UK, incorporating up to four ballot papers and three methods of voting: UK Parliamentary elections use the 'first-past-the-post' system; elections for PCCs, directly elected local authority Mayors, Combined Authority Mayors and the Mayor of London use the supplementary vote system; elections for Constituency Members of the London Assembly use the 'first-past-the-post' system and elections for London-wide Members use the closed list system which is a form of proportional representation; local government elections use the 'first-past-the-post' system, in single- and multi-member wards. Clear and tailored information on how to complete their ballot papers will be essential to minimise confusion for voters. It will be communicating with voters about a range of issues across multiple contests: Given the political and media prominence of Parliamentary general elections, there is a significant risk that coverage of the May 2020 polls will be dominated by the UKPGE. It is likely to be harder for candidates and campaigners at the other polls to get their messages across to voters, and it may mean that voters feel they have less information that they require to be able to participate in those elections. Regulated periods for campaigners will overlap: Under the Political parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, a regulated period will apply to the spending of political parties and non-party campaigners for a year prior to the UK Parliamentary general election scheduled in 2020. This will mean that spending by these campaigners on other elections taking place during that time period will also be regulated and count towards the UKPGE spending limit. Careful consideration will therefore need to be given to the regulation of party, candidate and campaigner spending for the polls in 2020 to ensure that the relevant rules are understood and complied with. The voting areas for the different sets of elections may not be consistent: Constituency boundaries for the May 2020 UK Parliamentary elections are likely to change as a result of the current review being carried out by the UK's Boundary Commissions. The other elections scheduled to be held on in May 2020 have previously been administered on the basis of local government areas. While early planning can help to mitigate the risks for those administering the May 2020 elections, any significant differences to the boundaries of electoral areas will also present challenges – for example, in relation the administration of postal voting and the management and timing of the counts. The UK Government should immediately begin the necessary analysis and consultation on the risks of holding these polls on the same day, including giving consideration to the potential for changing the date of elections currently scheduled to be held in May 2020, so that they do not coincide with the next scheduled UK Parliamentary general election which will be held on Thursday 7 May 2020. The Government should publish its assessment and any proposals for change by September 2017, to allow sufficient time to make any changes to legislation which might be required, and to allow Returning Officers, suppliers, campaigners and the Commission time to prepare. Any change to the date of scheduled elections would be a significant

proposal, and must be informed by appropriate consultation with political parties, the Electoral Commission, relevant Government departments, elected bodies, administrators and voters themselves to ensure that the interests of voters are put first. Download our full report 2016 Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and local government elections report 1. There were also elections held to the Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales, the Northern Ireland Assembly, and the London Authority and Mayor of London. There were also UK parliamentary by elections in Ogmore (Wales) and Hillsborough and Brightside (England). ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. Constituency turnout ■ Back to content at footnote 2 3. Law Commissions' Review of Electoral Law, Recommendation 12-3, page 161 ■ Back to content at footnote 3 Related content Results and turnout at the 2016 Police and Crime Commissioner elections View the results and turnout at the 2016 Police and Crime Commissioner elections Report: How the 2012 Police and Crime Commissioner elections were run Read our report about how the 2012 Police and Crime Commissioner elections were run Police and Crime Commissioners Past elections and referendums Read our reports and view data about past elections and referendums

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was noted that a risk appetite session would be added to the Forward Plan of Board business 2022/23, along with identifying an area in the regions to hold the February Board meeting. Resolved: That the Board discussed and reviewed the Forward Plan of Board business for 2022/23, with pending topical items for scheduling. May 2022 elections reporting (Oral) The Board received a presentation from the Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance. The presentation gave an overview of the conduct of the elections in the different parts of the UK, and covered activities following the local elections. It was noted that a further report would be received at the July Board meeting. The Head of Policy advised the Board of the upcoming key dates, leading to publishing the different election reports in mid-September 2022, after the relevant parliamentary body returns from its summer recess. The Board noted that the evaluation of the Welsh early voting pilots would be published before the statutory deadline of 5 August 2022. The Board discussed reports surrounding the abuse and intimidation of female candidates who stood for election in Northern Ireland, and noted the importance of including reference to this in the statutory report. The Board noted updates from the Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland Commissioners on their visits to polling stations and counts in their respective parts of the UK. The Board noted an update on the Chief Executive's visit to a number of polling stations across Tower Hamlets on polling day. The Board thanked the teams involved for all of their hard work and efforts on preparations to support the smooth running of the elections across the UK. Resolved: That the Board noted the presentation and oral updates and the emerging themes for reporting, including on the evaluation of Welsh local election pilots of early voting. Chief Executive's update (a) Chief Executive's report (EC 111/22) The Chief Executive advised the Board that for the next meeting, a new style format of the Chief Executive's report would be submitted, paying more attention to the Board's focus on particular topics. The Board noted the priorities and key themes set out in the report, since the Chief Executive has been in post. The themes were around Culture, Basic People enablers, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Elections Act and IT. The Board requested sight of a report into the extent to which bullying and harassment was an issue within the Commission, which was reported to a meeting of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee in 2021, as well as an update on work done following the report. They also requested more of a strategic insight on the new digital IT implementation programme. Resolved: That the Board welcomed the report and noted the work across the breadth of the Commission, in meeting its role and responsibilities. (b) Elections Act update (EC 112/22) The Director, Regulation introduced an update on the Elections Act since receiving Royal Assent, with key changes and messages on the Strategy and Policy Statement (SPS). The Board discussed that the Commission would continue to act as an independent regulator and noted that ministers and representatives of all parties had expressed the importance of the Electoral Commission's independence during the parliamentary debates. The Board noted the importance of clear engagement with the Speaker's Committee. Resolved: That the Board noted the update. (c) Quarterly performance update report 2021/22 – Q4 (EC 113/22) Resolved: That the Board noted the delivery of our work programme and that the budget was being managed. Key messages for the Annual Report (EC 114/22) The Director, Finance and Corporate Services introduced the report, which proposed key messages overall and by Goal. It also included key performance information, and key events and achievements for the year. The Board gave feedback on some improvements to finalise the document. It noted that a lot of the structure set out in the Annual Report was determined by statute, so our key messages will fit into that structure. Resolved: That the Board was content and

agreed the proposed key messages. public awareness campaign approach (EC 115/22) The Director, Communications, Policy and Research introduced the report, welcoming input from linked Commissioners on finalising the paper. The Board noted that the Commission had significant expertise in delivering campaigns in the context of elections, but that voter ID posed a very different challenge requiring a fresh approach. The outlined proposal was set out in the paper, including in relation to audience breakdown; time pressure in relation to confirmation of the policy; and interrelation with the voter registration campaign. The Board discussed the importance of delivering this campaign well, of ensuring good value for money and the establishment of clear statistical objectives. It reflected on the proposed approach and phasing of the campaign, and the risks to delivery, including of the UK government not meeting its own delivery requirements. Resolved: That the Board welcomed and agreed the approach, and that the linked Commissioners would carry the Board interests through. Risk appetite statement (EC 116/22) Resolved: That the Board considered the risk appetite statement agreeing for a risk appetite workshop to be scheduled on to the Forward Plan of Board business 2022/23, to agree the direction of travel and test our tolerance level. Action: A Risk appetite workshop to be scheduled onto the Forward Plan of Board business 2022/23. Action owner: Director, Finance and Corporate Services Returning Officer (RO) and Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) performance standards (EC 117/22) The Board received the report on the outlined approach to updating the RO performance standards framework and proposed approach for its use. The Board were advised that the statutory powers only covered Great Britain and that work was underway to continue to press for future extension to Northern Ireland, which had been a longstanding recommendation. Resolved: That the Board agreed and supported the outlined approach. Update from the Audit and Risk Committee Chair (Oral) The Board received an oral update from the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, on their work following their meeting yesterday. The Board noted that the Committee considered the internal audit reports and agreed the website management, follow-up and electoral fraud audits, with discussions on quality assurance scheduled for a future Audit and Risk Committee meeting. The Board also noted an update from the National Audit Office (NAO), a paper on recruitment and retention and the schedule of audit recommendations. The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee advised the Board that a paper on information risk management was received, designed to allow the Committee to provide the Accounting Officer with the Committee's independent review of information assurance. The Committee reviewed the detailed report on Information Risk Management, exploring the risk issues identified and proposed mitigation plans. It considered that the Commission is bearing high degrees of risk arising from its outdated information technology systems; and it noted the resilience issues and potential security vulnerabilities. The Committee welcomed the activities underway aimed at addressing or mitigating those risks. It noted that a proper assessment of the effectiveness of overall information risk management had been conducted but it did not consider that the risks identified should be tolerated long-term by the organisation. The Committee wishes to monitor these risks through regular reporting. It was content to provide the Accounting Officer with assurance that the management of information risk has been independently reviewed. Resolved: That the Board noted the updates.

Report on the May 2022 Scottish council elections | Electoral Commission Search Report on the May 2022 Scottish council elections You are in the Scotland local council elections section Home Scotland local council elections Currently reading: of 4 - Show page contents On this page Voting at the elections Campaigning at the elections Delivering the elections Supporting evidence Summary This report looks at how the May 2022 Scottish council elections were run, how voters and campaigners found taking part, and what lessons can be learned for the future. We have reported separately on elections held this year in England , Northern Ireland and Wales . On 5 May 2022 elections were held across Scotland's 32 councils. Voters used the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system to elect their councillors, numbering the candidates in order of preference. We found that the vast majority of voters were satisfied with the process of voting and almost all were able to use their preferred method. Polling station voters felt confident that they could vote safely in person. Most voters said they found it easy to fill in their ballot paper. However, while the level of spoilt ballots across Scotland has declined since the 2017 council elections, they increased in some wards and further targeted action is needed to address this. Some voters felt able to get their views across to voters, but many voters said they needed more information on the candidates in order to make an informed choice when they came to vote. Some candidates reported experiences of intimidation and abuse at these elections, which is not acceptable. We will work with the UK's governments, Police Scotland and the wider electoral community to make sure we understand what is driving candidate abuse and intimidation, and to ensure this issue is addressed as a matter of urgency. While the elections were well-run the resilience of electoral administration teams remains a concern. Adequate staffing for polling stations proved a challenge in many areas. We found that Returning Officers took all the necessary steps set out in law to support disabled voters at the poll, and our public opinion research found increased levels of satisfaction amongst disabled voters. The Scottish Government has committed to a public consultation on ideas for future electoral reform in Scotland in the coming months. We hope that our report helps to inform that debate. Voting at the elections The experience of voters at the May 2022 elections The vast majority of voters (97%) were satisfied with the process of voting. This is consistent with findings at recent elections. Almost everyone who voted was able to use their preferred method and found it easy to fill in their ballot paper. Polling station voters felt confident that they could vote safely in person. While the level of spoilt ballots across Scotland has declined since the 2017 council elections, they increased in some wards; further action is needed to address this. Overview On 5 May 2022, elections were held to Scotland's 32 councils. Voters used the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system to elect their councillors, numbering the candidates in order of preference. Six wards out of the 355 across Scotland were uncontested, meaning that the number of candidates nominated was equal to or fewer than the total number of seats available. In these wards no poll went ahead and the nominated candidates were declared elected on polling day. In three of these wards the number of candidates was less than the number of seats available and, following 5 May, by-elections took place to fill the outstanding vacancies. A total of 4,222,332 people were registered to vote at the council elections. Voters continue to have positive views about how elections are run After each election we ask members of the public who were eligible to vote for their views on voting and elections. This enables us to understand whether there have been changes in the views of voters between comparable sets of elections. People remain satisfied with the registration and voting process People had high levels of satisfaction with the process of registering to vote and

voting. Our research shows that: nearly all voters (97%) said that they were satisfied with the process of voting. This is consistent with the levels of satisfaction at the 2021 Scottish Parliament election (95%). Levels of satisfaction with the voting process were consistent across all age groups 82% of respondents said they were satisfied with the process of registering to vote. This is a slight fall from the 89% who expressed satisfaction after the 2021 Scottish Parliament election. Of the 10% of respondents who expressed dissatisfaction with the process, the main reason given was that they thought voter registration should be automatic (32%) or that it should be compulsory (23%) the vast majority of Scottish voters (94%) found participating in the election easy, and four out of five (81%) felt casting their vote was secret and that the elections were secure nearly all voters in Scotland (97%) felt safe voting in polling stations with the Covid measures in place Most people were confident the elections were well-run Nearly four in five (77%) people said they were confident the elections were well-run, with one in 10 (10%) saying that they were not confident. People aged 25 to 34 were the most likely to say that they were not confident (14%). When we asked people why they were not confident the elections were well-run, the most commonly given reasons related to a lack of information about candidates or the elections in general. Most people think that voting is safe from fraud Nearly nine in 10 (86%) people think that voting in Scotland is safe from fraud and abuse, which is an increase from the 80% who said so after the 2017 council elections. However, one in five (21%) said that they thought that either a 'lot' or 'a little' electoral fraud had taken place at the 5 May elections. We asked those people who thought fraud had taken place why they thought this, and the most cited reason was the lack of ID requirements when voting (45%). Other reasons given focused on things people had read or heard rather than anything they had directly experienced. Turnout at these elections was broadly consistent with the 2017 council elections Turnout at these elections was 44.8% which was a slight decrease from the turnout in 2017 (46.9%). People who told us that they didn't vote were most likely to say that this was because they did not have time (21%), they had medical or health reasons (11%) or they were not interested in politics (12%). People were confident that they could vote using their preferred method At each election people can vote in person, by post or by proxy (asking someone they trust to vote on their behalf). If a voter's situation changes close to polling day (for work or health reasons) then they may be eligible to appoint an emergency proxy up to 5pm on polling day. Ahead of the 2021 elections, the law was changed so that anyone who had to self-isolate close to polling day because they had tested positive for Covid, or had been in close contact with someone who had tested positive, could also appoint an emergency proxy. This change remained in place for the 2022 elections. In February 2022, the majority of Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) in Scotland wrote out to all households to remind them of who was registered to vote at that address, and whether they had a postal or proxy vote in place. Voting using their preferred method was possible for most people Most people who voted were able to use their preferred method: 78% of people said that they found it easy to get information on the different methods of voting available. nearly all people said they were able to vote using their preferred method with 96% of polling station voters and 94% of postal voters saying they had used their preferred method. Nearly four in 10 votes counted were cast by post Nearly 1 million (976,108) people were registered as postal voters at these elections, amounting to 23% of the electorate. This is a very slight decrease from the 2021 Scottish Parliament election but a substantial increase from the Scottish council elections in 2017 (17.8%). Over three-quarters (76%) of postal

voters cast their vote, amounting to 38.4% of all votes included in the count. The vast majority (97%) of people who voted by post told us that they found it easy to understand what to do, with 96% finding the postal voting instructions useful. Rates of postal vote rejection remain consistent with recent elections. When a postal ballot pack is returned to the Returning Officer (RO), the signature and date of birth are checked against those provided previously. Where these details are missing or do not match, the postal vote is rejected and not included in the count. Data collected from ROs indicates that 18,557 postal votes were not included in the count due to missing or mismatched signatures and/or dates of birth. This amounts to 2.5% of all postal ballots returned. This is comparable to the 2.4% that were rejected at the 2021 Scottish Parliament election. We will continue to explore ways of improving the electoral system to meet voters' needs. As part of this, we will consider evidence about whether changes to postal voting documents or processes could help to reduce the number of postal ballot packs that are rejected at future elections. Emergency proxy voting remains an important safeguard to enable people to vote. There were 4,840 proxy voters appointed for these elections, amounting to 0.11% of the electorate. Of these, 550 people were issued with an emergency proxy as a result of medical or work emergency, including 242 for Covid reasons. Some Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) continue to raise concerns that eligibility for an emergency proxy does not extend to carers. This is of particular concern in the Scottish island communities where patients may be transferred to the mainland for medical treatment. In this case the patient would be eligible for an emergency proxy, but not any family member accompanying them. Recommendation 1

We continue to recommend that the Scottish Government work with the electoral community to explore ways to extend the provisions for emergency proxies to cover carers. Voters said that they found the ballot paper easy to fill in but concerns remain about levels of rejection in some wards. Nearly all voters (95%) said that they found the ballot paper easy to fill in, with 4% saying that they found it difficult. People aged 25-34 were the most likely to say that they found the ballot paper difficult to fill in (9%). Rejection rates for ballot papers remain high in some wards. Data from ROs indicates that 1.85% of all ballots were rejected at the count. This is slightly down from the 1.95% which were rejected in 2017. However, there is significant variation in rejection rates both across Scotland and within specific council areas, and in some wards the rejection rates have increased since the last set of council elections in 2017.

Wards	2022 Ward Rejection rate (%)	2022 Rejection rate (%)	2017 Rejection rate (%)
Glasgow – Canal Ward	5.64	5.36	
West Dunbartonshire – Kilpatrick	4.51	3.71	
West Dunbartonshire – Clydebank Central	4.21	3.66	
North Lanarkshire – Coatbridge South	4.13	3.91	
Dundee – Coldside	4.08	3.91	

Of those votes that were rejected, the data shows that the majority (64%) were rejected because there was more than one first preference expressed. Our observations at the counts and feedback from campaigners and electoral administrators suggests that these are largely where someone has placed an 'X' or a '1' next to multiple candidates from the same party. The Electoral Commission has previously carried out research which indicated that the wards with the highest levels of rejection were more likely to have higher levels of deprivation and unemployment. However, we also found that these wards were more likely to have more than one candidate standing from a particular party, thereby increasing the risk of voters placing 'Xs' against their preferred party's candidates on the ballot paper. We will repeat our ward level analysis when the new Scottish census data is available in 2023. The Electoral Commission will work with the Electoral Management Board for Scotland (EMB) and Returning Officers to improve voter communications in

polling stations and postal ballot packs to reinforce messaging about how to complete the ballot paper. Further work to identify the wards at risk of a higher rate of rejected ballots will also support the targeting of election communication activity, to help minimise voter errors on the ballot paper. Some prisoners were entitled to register and vote at the elections. The 2022 elections were the second in which prisoners serving a sentence of 12 months or less in a UK prison, who would usually be resident in Scotland, had the right to vote, following the introduction of the Scottish Elections (Franchise and Representation) Act 2020. Data from EROs indicates that 49 eligible prisoners were registered to vote ahead of the council elections in 2022. EROs worked with the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) to ensure that they received notification where any eligible individuals entered the prison system so that they could invite them to register to vote. The Commission also worked with the SPS to develop and circulate a guide for prison staff and a poster to raise awareness amongst prisoners. The Scottish Government is required to review the arrangements for prisoner voting by March 2023. Ahead of this review, we are committed to continuing to work with EROs, the SPS and the EMB to ensure that prisoners who have the right to vote understand how to register and vote, and can access information and support as required. Work continued to support recently enfranchised voters to participate. The Commission continued to work in partnership with the electoral community and Scottish civic society to support young people and qualifying foreign nationals to engage in the elections. To encourage schools to run political education sessions and raise awareness amongst young people, we worked with partners across the education sector to run Welcome to Your Vote week in January 2022. Ahead of the awareness week, the Commission launched new education resources, including lesson plans, a template assembly on the council elections, and short interactive activities. We also delivered information sessions for teachers and care providers working with young people, in partnership with West of Scotland Development Education Centre (WOSDEC) and the Care Inspectorate. The Commission worked with a number of partners to distribute information to qualifying foreign nationals, including consulates, regional equality councils and charities. In collaboration with EROs and civil society organisations, we ran Welcome to Your Vote Day on 10 March, providing communication resources to support partners to raise awareness and running online information events. Civil society organisations which work with a range of under-registered audiences have highlighted a frustration that work to increase registration is only carried out ahead of elections. Whilst we have strong relationships with organisations across the third sector, there is a high level of staff turnover in charities, and a shift towards ongoing engagement work would reduce the need to rebuild relationships ahead of each election. The Electoral Commission will embed work to increase registration amongst under-registered groups outside of election periods. Existing partnerships will be maintained and strengthened through ongoing collaboration, and the Commission will scope opportunities for new partnerships to reach under-registered groups. Campaigning at the elections. The experience of campaigning at the May 2022 elections. The majority of candidates responding to our survey (69%) felt they were able to get their views across to voters, with printed material, social media and door-to-door canvassing the most popular methods. Just over half of voters said they had enough information on who to vote for, but a substantial minority (26%) disagreed. A notable minority of candidates who responded to our survey reported experiences of intimidation and abuse at these elections and action is needed to tackle this. We will work with the UK's governments, Police Scotland and the wider electoral community to make sure we

understand what is driving candidate abuse and intimidation, and to ensure this issue is addressed as a matter of urgency. While most candidates found election law easy to understand, there was an increased demand for advice and guidance on the law.

Introduction

A total of 2,548 candidates were nominated to contest the 1,226 councillor vacancies at the 2022 council elections. This was broadly equivalent to the numbers standing in 2017 (2,572). There were 357 independent candidates standing at the election and 2,191 candidates representing 26 different political parties (four more parties than in 2017). There were a number of changes to the campaign laws for candidates at these elections which included a requirement to report donations for the first time and the need to include an imprint on any digital candidate campaign material. The Electoral Commission provided guidance for candidates and agents on the laws in force at these elections. To inform our report we carried out research with candidates to understand their experience of standing at the elections, and we also talked to parties about the process. 5 were largely able to engage with voters Just over two-thirds of candidates who responded to the survey (69%) felt that they were able to effectively get their views across to voters. This is a significant increase from the 43% who expressed that view at the 2021 Scottish Parliament election. 5 used a variety of methods to engage with voters Traditional campaigning (namely leaflets and canvassing) remain the most popular campaigning methods compared to any digital method. Our research found that: the most popular campaigning method used by respondents was leaflets/newsletters/flyers. Overall, 90% of respondents put leafletting in their top-three campaigning methods, with just under two-thirds (63%) of respondents citing this as their most used a substantial number of respondents used social media in their campaigns, though it was primarily used to supplement traditional campaigning methods rather than being the primary tool. Two-thirds (68%) put social media in their top-three most used campaigning methods, with one in 10 (12%) saying it was their most used compared to almost a third (31%) who said it was their third most used when asked what digital campaigning methods respondents used, free methods were far more popular than any paid-for campaigning. Almost four in five (78%) respondents put posts on social media about their campaign, and over two-fifths (44%) asked supporters to share their posts. By comparison, the most popular paid-for digital campaigning method was paying for adverts on social media, which was done by 14% of respondents the other popular campaigning method was door-to-door canvassing, which was the most used tactic for just under a fifth (17%) of respondents. Overall, over half (56%) of respondents said that canvassing was in their top three campaigning methods One in five (20%) of candidates who responded to the survey said that the spending limit was too low, largely citing difficulties of reaching voters in large rural wards while remaining within the spending limit. Voters want more information about candidates Just over half (52%) of all voters said they had enough information on candidates to be able to make an informed decision on who to vote for. However, more than a quarter (26%) disagreed. Voters aged 25-34 were most likely to disagree (40%). When asked where they had seen information about candidates and parties, the most cited sources were leaflets or flyers from the candidate or party (61%) or from another source (27%). Political parties and candidates have raised concerns about their ability to provide information to voters and have called for council election candidates to be able to access a freepost delivery as is available at other elections. This proposal has been supported by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (Cosla). Should this proposal be taken forward for the 2027 Scottish council elections, the Scottish Government will need to ensure there is sufficient time and resource to implement the proposal ahead of the elections. Some

candidates reported experiences of intimidation at these elections. While over half (56%) of candidates who responded to the survey said that they did not have a problem with threats, abuse or intimidation, over two in five (44%) experienced some kind of problem (that is, on a scale of '1 to 5', rated their problem with threats, abuse or intimidation as a '2' or above). One in 10 (11%) said that they had a serious problem (rated '4' or '5' out of '5'). There was a difference between the reported experiences of those respondents identifying as either male or female. 1 , with a larger proportion of female respondents reporting problems with threats, abuse or intimidation (64% of male respondents said they did not have a problem with threats, abuse or intimidation, compared to less than half (48%) of female candidates who did not have an issue.) "In person intimidation/threats/abuse only happened when I was campaigning alone. I've decided not to do that in future, however it's frustrating when seeing other (male!) candidates campaigning solo seemingly without such concerns of intimidation." Of those that said they experienced some kind of abuse, the most common sources were verbal (55%) and online (53%). Over four in five of these (84%) said the abuse came from members of the public. Three in 10 (31%) said it was from an anonymous/unknown source, while a further one in 10 (11%) received threats or abuse from other candidates. One in 10 (10%) who experienced threats or abuse said that their experience(s) would discourage them from standing as a candidate in the future.

The 2022 elections were the first council elections where candidates could choose whether or not to have their home address displayed on the ballot paper. This option was legislated for in response to concerns raised by candidates at previous elections about personal safety. The vast majority of candidates opted not to display their home address on the ballot papers. Recommendation 2 Action is needed to tackle and prevent abuse and intimidation, and to ensure candidates and campaigners can participate freely in our democratic processes. We will work with the UK's governments, Police Scotland and the wider electoral community to make sure we understand what is driving candidate abuse and intimidation, and to ensure this issue is addressed as a matter of urgency.

Candidates had confidence in the election process

The vast majority (94%) of candidates who responded to the survey were confident that the Scottish council elections were well run. Almost two-thirds (64%) said they were very confident, and no respondents said they were not confident. The majority of candidates who responded to our survey were satisfied with all aspects of the nomination process: the vast majority (96%) agreed that the rules for becoming a candidate were easy to understand and follow over nine in 10 (94%) agreed that the nomination process was well run 85% of respondents agreed that they found the pre-nomination checks helpful, compared to 1% who disagreed, and 14% who said they neither agreed nor disagreed/didn't know. of those that interacted with their elections teams or needed to access their local authority offices, the majority (87%) were satisfied with their ability to do so

The vast majority of candidates were satisfied with the count process

Over nine in 10 (92%) of candidates who responded to the survey attended the count and the majority of those who attended were satisfied with the experience. Of those who attended: nearly nine in 10 agreed that elections staff made it clear what was happening at all stages of the count (86%) and a similar proportion (92%) were satisfied with how efficiently the verification/count processes were run 94% agreed that the count process was transparent 93% were satisfied with when the count took place finally, 89% agreed that electronic counting of ballot papers worked well Candidates were broadly confident that no electoral fraud had taken place

Over nine in 10 (94%) respondents felt that, in general, voting is safe from abuse. Over two-thirds (69%) of respondents thought that it is very safe.

However, only half (51%) believed that no fraud at all took place in elections in their area. A fifth (21%) thought that there was ‘hardly any at all’, 5% said ‘a little’, and almost a quarter (23%) said they didn’t know. Reassuringly, no respondents said that there was ‘a lot’ of fraud. Most candidates understood the campaign spending laws. The majority of respondents to our candidate survey agreed that the law around spending, donations and personal expenses was clear, although the proportions were smaller than those who found the nomination process clear. Three-quarters (76%) agreed that the law on election spending and reporting was clear. 71% found the law on donations and how to check permissibility to be clear. Almost three-quarters (73%) found the law about personal expenses clear. Awareness about expenses related to disability was far lower than self-reported awareness about the general spending and reporting law. Just half (51%) of respondents said that they knew that expenses relating to a candidate’s disability did not count towards the spending limit. Candidates understood the new laws on the requirement for digital imprints on their campaign material but concerns continued to be raised around printed material. Nearly nine out of 10 (88%) respondents agreed that they understood the requirement to include imprints on digital campaign material, compared to 5% who disagreed. A smaller majority (72%) agreed that it was easy to meet these requirements, with almost one in 10 (8%) disagreeing. 70% agreed that digital imprint requirements improve the transparency of digital campaigning, while 7% disagreed and 17% said they neither agreed nor disagreed. The Electoral Commission received a small number of complaints about the lack of imprints on printed election material both from candidates and from political parties and non-party campaigners. Where complaints were received, we followed up with the party or campaigner concerned to remind them of the law and, where relevant, to ask them to bring their candidates into compliance. The Electoral Commission is responsible for investigating potential breaches of law on party and campaigner imprints while Police Scotland is responsible for investigating breaches of candidate imprint law. The Commission will continue to monitor compliance with the law by parties and campaigners and will take action where necessary and proportionate. Candidates and parties have called for the ability to submit spending returns electronically. Currently it is at the Returning Officer’s discretion whether they will accept spending returns electronically. Some political parties have asked for a consistent approach across Scotland in relation to the acceptance of digital spending returns. Our research with candidates found two-thirds (68%) of candidates would prefer to submit their spending returns electronically, compared to 16% who prefer paper spending returns and 17% who said they don’t know.

Recommendation 3

Recommendation 3 The Scottish Government should consider electronic submission of spending returns as part of their electoral reform agenda. Disabled candidates continue to value the Access to Elected Office Fund. The Access to Elected Office Fund is administered independently by Inclusion Scotland and financed by the Scottish Government. Its purpose is to offer financial assistance to disabled people to stand at elections. The financial assistance can be used to meet the costs of any adaptations needed to ensure a level playing field for disabled candidates.⁵⁴ 11 applicants were supported by the fund, with 48 of them going on to be candidates at the election. Of these, 22 were successfully elected. Our survey with candidates found that: more than half (52%) said they knew about the Access to Elected Office Fund. 11 respondents received support from the Access to Elected Office Fund. Of these, four said they would not have been able to stand if the Fund had not existed. A further five said they did not know whether they would be able to stand for election had the fund not existed. In a few comments, respondents made references to

not being quite sure how the Fund worked, even from those who used it There was an increasing demand for advice and guidance from candidates The Electoral Commission and electoral administrators faced an increased demand from candidates for advice and guidance on the nomination process and the spending laws. Particular demands came from independent candidates and those representing smaller and more recently registered political parties. “As you would expect, independent candidates required more support than those standing for political parties, which resulted in an increased number of calls from independent candidates requiring additional information and support” “Smaller parties had poor paperwork, did not engage with the office early in the process, and frequently had to be reminded at deadlines”

Increasing opportunities for supporting candidates and parties The May 2021 Scottish Parliament elections were the first at which the Electoral Commission had a statutory role to provide advice and guidance to candidates and agents (although we had done so at previous elections at the request of the Scottish Government). Following feedback from the electoral community, we offered candidates and parties at these elections an increased range of support to understand and comply with political finance rules both before and after the elections. Alongside our standard advice and guidance support to candidates, we also ran seminars on the candidate laws at political party conferences in Scotland in the run up to the May polls. The Commission also ran an online seminar for candidates in advance of the polls which was attended by 183 candidates and agents. We also delivered virtual advice surgeries that allowed candidates and agents to book an appointment to speak to one of our expert advisers and discuss specific issues around the spending and donation laws. Due to the take up and demand, particularly from new and independent candidates, we offered further advice surgeries after the elections and in advance of the reporting deadlines, to provide support with spending returns. Our approach has been informed and led by the evidence and feedback we received in our most recent survey of the regulated community. We will continue to focus on delivering more bespoke advice and guidance resources so that parties and campaigners can easily understand the political finance laws, regardless of their size or experience. Delivering the elections The experience of electoral administration at the May 2022 elections The elections were well-run with no significant issues arising. However, the resilience of electoral administration teams remains a concern, with staffing polling stations proving challenging in a number of areas. Returning Officers took all the necessary steps to support disabled voters at the poll, and 96% of disabled voters said they were satisfied with their experience of voting. Section introduction Our evidence shows that the May 2022 polls, including electoral registration services, were well-run. Voters and campaigners reported high levels of satisfaction and confidence in both the voting process and the count. However, electoral administrators have reported that diminishing council resources are increasing pressures on the delivery of elections. The capacity of election teams continues to be stretched While Returning Officers and their staff reported fewer challenges than in 2021, at the height of the pandemic, concerns were still raised about their ability to continue to deliver elections with diminishing resources. Many Returning Officers struggled to recruit and retain enough poll staff Many Returning Officers experienced difficulties in recruiting sufficient staff for polling stations. The challenges included recruiting enough people in the first place and then managing levels of ‘call-off’ close to or on polling day. Planning for the council elections was undertaken when Scotland was still subject to Covid prevention measures, although many of these had begun to lift as voters went to the polls. This exacerbated the staffing challenges faced as some long-standing poll-staff were

reluctant to work in the context of relaxed public health restrictions, whilst others were keen to take advantage of the easing of restrictions by going on holiday. "We had a number of polling staff call off due to Covid. We had to use all standby staff and some information officers ... to ensure that all posts were covered on day of poll." "Appointment of staff - particularly retention of Presiding Officers and other poll staff was a significant challenge and call offs (not Covid related) soaked up standbys recruited twice before the election. Causes huge administrative burden on small administration team at point of delivery in the last 2 weeks as backtracking to fill posts repeatedly and retrain." "Initial request to staff on our list returned limited availability and as Covid restrictions eased throughout the country, many poll staff – including long standing ones – called off." The Electoral Commission is working with the Electoral Management Board for Scotland (EMB) and the wider electoral community across the UK to discuss and identify solutions to the staffing, resilience and capacity challenges experienced by Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and their teams. An immediate focus is addressing the challenges of recruiting on polling station staff. Further changes to the delivery of elections have the potential to increase pressure on already stretched elections teams unless well managed While Covid was the predominant factor highlighted as affecting the recruitment of staff, Returning Officers have also reported that diminishing council resources more generally are having an effect. This includes making it more difficult to pull in staff from other council departments to support staffing at the polls. Changes to the delivery of UK Parliament elections in Scotland are being introduced through the Elections Act. These have the potential to increase the challenge of recruiting and retaining skilled and experienced polling station staff for future elections, due to the additional responsibilities that Presiding Officers and Poll Clerks will need to deliver, such as checking voter ID. The Scottish Government is also planning to consult on electoral law reform, with any changes expected to take effect in time for the 2026 Scottish Parliament election. It is important that electoral administrators have early clarity about any legislative changes in order that they can plan effectively to deliver them. As a minimum, legislation should be clear at least six months before it is required to be implemented by administrators. Changes to legislation add to the already fragmented and complex sets of rules which must be followed at an election, increasing the risks of mistakes being made and public confidence in election results being undermined. We continue to recommend that both the Scottish and UK Governments commit to simplifying and consolidating electoral law, in line with the recommendations from the UK's Law Commissions. Counts were delivered well across Scotland Due to the complexities of counting the votes and calculating the results at an election which uses the type 2 of the Single Transferable Vote system of voting in place for council elections, all counts in Scotland were conducted electronically. The e-Counting equipment, including the software, is procured nationally by the Scottish Government on behalf of the 32 Returning Officers. As highlighted above, candidates had high levels of satisfaction with the count process. Electoral Commission representatives who attended counts across Scotland did not have any concerns about the delivery or transparency of the counts. Counts were delivered well across Scotland points Some Returning Officers raised concerns about late appointment of staff by the count suppliers A number of Returning Officers noted that, while their counts had gone well overall, the late appointment of supporting technical staff by the supplier had led to some difficulties, as the technical staff then had to familiarise themselves with the count process very close to the event. This had led to initial set up and operational

delivery problems at some counts which, while resolved, had raised concerns amongst those Returning Officers affected. “[They] appeared to lack experience of the system which gave us cause for concern in the run up to the count. While the team was very helpful and positive in their engagement their inability to diagnose problems and their lack of confidence using the system was quite worrying.” The Scottish Government and the EMB are currently carrying out a review of the e-counting project. Once that review has been concluded we would expect that any relevant recommendations are implemented so that Returning Officers can have full confidence in their delivery of future electronic counts. National co-ordination made it easier for people to find information on the election results At previous elections the media had raised concerns about difficulties in accessing reliable results information in real time. This had led broadcasters to send staff to every count venue in Scotland in order to collate results information. Concerns had also been raised by others with an interest in Scottish politics, including voters, about the lack of a central source for all election results. Ahead of the elections, the Electoral Commission worked with the EMB and communications staff from Scotland’s 32 councils to agree a common hashtag and format for the tweeting of each council ward’s results declaration. The EMB also collated the results for all councils and published them on their website, which enabled voters to access all the results in one place. Feedback from broadcasters was positive, and this approach should continue for future elections. The Electoral Management Board continued to support consistency in the delivery of elections The Electoral Management Board (EMB) has statutory responsibility for supporting the delivery of council elections in Scotland, including a power to direct Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers in respect of their duties at these elections. Directions issued by the Convener of the EMB at this election included timings for the dispatch of poll cards and postal votes and also for counts. Electoral administrators and the wider electoral community continue to value the role that the EMB plays in providing support and advice for the delivery of local elections. “Directions of the Convener of EMB invariably helpful and well timed.” “Everything worked well. Directions were helpful without being overly prescriptive or heavy-handed.” ROs improved the support available for disabled voters at these elections The Electoral Commission has a specific legal duty 3 to report on the steps taken by ROs to assist disabled people to vote at the election. To inform our report we asked for information from Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and polling station staff. We also looked at the views of disabled voters who responded to our public opinion research and gathered evidence from disability organisations. ROs improved the support available for disabled voters at these elections points The electoral community worked to improve access for disabled people. Following the 2021 Scottish Parliament elections, where some concerns were raised about Covid measures impacting on disabled people’s access to the poll, 4 work was undertaken to improve the service disabled voters received in polling stations. In January 2022, the Electoral Commission and the EMB ran a briefing event for electoral administrators which included contributions from representatives of disabled people in Scotland outlining some of the barriers faced in accessing voting. Following the event, videos of the contributions from disability organisations at these sessions were disseminated to electoral administrators and were widely used in the training of poll staff. “We used all EC training slides and accessibility at training events and encouraged staff to view videos on how to deal with disabled persons at the poll.” Electoral administrator All Returning Officers who responded to our survey reported having provided the measures required in law to support disabled voters. In 2021 some

sight impaired voters raised concerns about polling staff confidence in supporting voters to use tactile voting devices (TVDs)⁵ in polling stations. At this election no concerns were raised in relation to this, although some electoral administrators highlighted concerns raised by sight impaired voters about the usefulness of the TVD at an election using STV. "We did receive a couple of comments...regarding the use of TVDs – specifically that voters find it harder to use these in elections using STV (i.e using numbers to allocate multiple preferences)." The UK Government's Elections Act makes changes to the way disabled people are supported in the polling station at UK Parliament elections by replacing the prescription of what must be provided, including TVDs, with a requirement for Returning Officers to take all reasonable steps to support disabled voters to vote independently and in secret. This has the potential to improve the range and quality of support available and should speed up the process of providing additional support when a gap is identified, as legislation would no longer be required to allow the use of new technology. The Electoral Commission will provide guidance, developed in consultation with disability organisations and the electoral community, which ROs must have regard to in delivering their duties. It is important that disabled voters receive an equivalent level of support regardless of which election they are voting at in Scotland. The Scottish Government should monitor the impact of this legislation and consider whether similar provisions should be introduced to support the participation of disabled voters at devolved Scottish elections. Disabled voters reported a high rate of satisfaction with the voting process Respondents to our voter survey who defined themselves as disabled or with a long-term health condition were only marginally less satisfied with the process of voting than non-disabled voters: 96% of disabled voters reported satisfaction, compared to 97% of non-disabled voters. Nearly three-quarters (74%) of voters who had a disability or health condition that limited them a lot said they found the help/support from polling station staff useful, compared with 72% of non-disabled voters, and over half (55%) said they found the help/support from polling station staff very useful, compared with 51% of non-disabled voters. Disabled voters also reported finding it easy to get inside their polling station to vote (100%), including 83% who said it was very easy. More work is needed to reach disabled people with information on how to register and vote Respondents to our voter survey who defined themselves as disabled or with a long-term health condition were less likely to say they had enough information on how to cast their vote than respondents who did not consider themselves disabled (61% vs 69%). The Electoral Commission will continue to work in partnership with organisations representing disabled people in Scotland, and the wider electoral community, to address the information needs of disabled voters and to strengthen polling station staff training on accessibility. Supporting evidence Scottish council elections May 2022 Public opinion research tables 2022 Scotland Electoral Data 1. The sample of non-binary respondents was too small to use in analysis ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. Weighted Inclusive Gregory ■ Back to content at footnote 2 3. Section 5 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 as amended by the Scottish Elections Reform Act 2020 ■ Back to content at footnote 3 4. Electoral Commission (2021), Report on the 2021 Scottish Parliament election (<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/elections-and-referendums/past-elections-and-referendums/scottish-parliamentary-elections/report-scottish-parliament-election-6-may-2021>) ■ Back to content at footnote 4 5. The Tactile Voting Device attaches on top of the ballot paper. It has numbered lift up flaps (the numbers are raised and in braille) directly over the boxes where the vote

is to be marked. ■ Back to content at footnote 5 Page history First published: 21 September 2022 Last updated: 21 September 2022 Related content Report on the May 2022 local elections in England Read our report on the May 2022 local elections in England Report on the May 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election Read our report on the May 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election Report on the May 2022 elections in Wales Read our report on the May 2022 elections in Wales. Looking back at the May 2022 elections Read our latest blog post on looking back at the May 2022 elections.

Our recommendations | Electoral Commission Search Our
recommendations You are in the May 2018 voter identification pilot schemes section Home Our research Voter identification pilots May 2018 voter identification pilot schemes First published: 24 July 2019 Last updated: 24 July 2019 Our recommendations When the UK Government invited local councils to run voter identification pilot schemes in May 2018, it also said that it was open to looking at further piloting in future elections. We agree that it would be helpful to collect more evidence from further pilot schemes at elections in 2019. This will help the Government and Parliament to decide whether or not to introduce an identification requirement for future elections, and how any such requirement should be designed. This first round of pilots has shown that there could be several different ways of delivering a voter identification scheme in Great Britain. It is right that the Government should now focus on the detail of what further evidence they need, and how the design of future pilot schemes will help to provide that evidence. We have some limited evidence from these pilots that younger people and those who don't always vote were less likely to say that they would find it easy to show identification. We think that more work is needed to look at evidence about the impact of different schemes on these people, and to identify what additional steps can be taken to minimise the risk that they are not able to vote in future. We have identified some important lessons from the 2018 pilot schemes in this report and we have set out our recommendations for further work and future pilot schemes below. These recommendations would help provide the best possible evidence base for any decisions about identification requirements for voters at polling stations in Great Britain in the future. The UK Government should: ensure that a wider range of local councils run pilot schemes in May 2019 These should include a mixture of rural and urban areas, and areas with different demographic profiles. This would help make sure there is more evidence about the impact of voter identification requirements on different groups of people. set out more specifically how pilot schemes in May 2019 should be designed and run The Government should take a stronger role in setting the design of pilot schemes in 2019, instead of allowing Returning Officers as much flexibility to design their own schemes as in 2018. This would help to make sure there is a good range of evidence to test the impact of different options in different parts of England. Too many different schemes will make it harder to identify the impact of requirements on different groups of people. work with the Equality and Human Rights Commission and organisations that represent people with different needs to carry out robust Equality Impact Assessments for future pilot schemes This would help to make sure that the Government and Returning Officers think carefully about the potential impact of different voter identification requirements for different groups of people. It would also help Returning Officers to identify the most effective ways to communicate the requirements to different groups of people in their areas. carry out further work to identify what kinds of alternative identification are available for people who would find it harder to show their passport, driving licence 21 or travel pass This is particularly for people with protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act Most voters in the 2018 pilot schemes that required either photo or non-photo identification were able to show their passport, driving licence or travel card, but some groups of people are less likely to have these documents. Further work, which could include research as well as more pilot schemes, should look at whether these groups in particular would find it helpful to show other types of identification, and should also look at the impact on polling station staff. carry out further work to gather more evidence on the levels of identity assurance provided

by different types of documents This would help the Government and Parliament to assess the relative security benefits of different types of identification, and consider those against the potential impact on voters. carry out further work to establish whether poll cards could be included as acceptable identification without needing scanning technology in polling stations This would help to establish whether this could be a cost-effective and affordable part of a future identification scheme. The pilot schemes in Swindon and Watford were significantly more expensive than those in Bromley, Gosport and Woking. This was because of the extra cost of the scanners and technology that staff used in the polling stations. Further work, which could include more pilot schemes, should explore whether it would be possible to check poll cards without using such expensive technology. Future pilot schemes should: continue to include options for people who don't have any of the required forms of identification This will make sure that no-one who is eligible is prevented from voting because they don't have the right identification. Although only a small number of people in the 2018 pilot schemes used alternative options, it will still be important to offer these or similar options in future pilot schemes. It will also be important to promote these options more widely and to test the practical impact if they are used by larger numbers of voters. Related content Register to vote All you need to register to vote is 5 minutes and your National Insurance number. Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Party registration decisions View our decisions on political party names, descriptions and emblems Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run

Our advice on the proposed Scottish independence referendum question | Electoral Commission Search Our advice on the proposed Scottish independence referendum question You are in the Scottish Independence referendum section Home Scottish Independence referendum On this page Summary of our advice Download our reports First published: 30 January 2013 Last updated: 30 January 2013 Summary of our advice We have responded to the Scottish Government's request to provide advice and assistance by considering the wording and intelligibility of the proposed question for the referendum on independence for Scotland, which is: 'Do you agree that Scotland should be an independent country? Yes / No' To inform our assessment we carried out research with members of the public to see how well the proposed question meets our guidelines for intelligible questions, and whether it is easy for voters to use and understand. 1 We also wrote to people and organisations including the main political parties represented in the Scottish Parliament and would-be campaigners, to seek their views on the proposed question. We took account of views expressed by other individuals and groups who contacted us, and by members and committees of the UK and Scottish Parliaments. Our guidelines say that a question should be clear and simple, that is, easy to understand; to the point; and not ambiguous. It should also be neutral, which means it should not encourage voters to consider one response more favourably than another or mislead voters. In the research we looked at whether or not the question is clear, simple and neutral. We found that the question is written in plain language and is easy for people to understand and answer. It is clear to people what they are being asked to vote on. However, based on our research and taking into account what we heard from people and organisations who submitted their views on the question, we consider that the proposed question is not neutral because the phrase 'Do you agree ...?' could lead people towards voting 'yes'. Our recommendation The referendum result should be one that all voters and referendum campaigners can accept and have confidence in. For that reason, we recommend changing the way the question is asked, so that it is more neutral. Instead of asking 'Do you agree...?' we recommend the following wording: 'Should Scotland be an independent country? Yes/No' Information about independence A common theme that arose during our research was that people wanted more information about the pros and cons of independence before polling day, to be able to make an informed choice on how to vote. Download our reports You can download our: advice on referendum question for independence referendum for Scotland report on our research with voters which informed our views on the question 1. Our guidelines are reproduced in full in Appendix 3. ■ Back to content at footnote 1 Related content Report: Scottish Independence Referendum Read our report about the Scottish Independence Referendum Donations and loans reported by campaigners at the Scottish referendum View donations and loans reported by campaigners at the Scottish referendum Campaign spending at the Scottish referendum View data about campaign spending at the Scottish independence referendum Report: Regulation of campaigners at the independence referendum held on 18 September 2014 Read our report about regulation at the Scottish independence referendum

Board minutes: 22 September 2021 | Electoral Commission Search
Board minutes: 22 September 2021 You are in the Electoral Commission Board section Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Who was at the meeting Apologies and welcomes Declarations of interest Minutes of the previous Board meeting Corporate Plan 2022/23 – 2026/27: Final Performance report quarter one 2021/22 Discussion on Board diversity and update on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) activities Policy Development Grants scheme Dates of proposed Commission Board and Committee meetings 2022/23 Update from the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo) Chair Update from the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) Chair Annual review of complaints Chief Executive's update Commission Board action tracker Forward Plan of Board business Incoming Chief Executive salary First published: 4 January 2022 Last updated: 4 February 2022 Meeting summary Date: Wednesday 22 September 2021 Time: 9:30am to 12:50pm Location: In person and by video conference Date of next scheduled meeting: Wednesday 20 October 2021 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Pullinger, Chair Rob Vincent Sue Bruce Alex Attwood Sarah Chambers Elan Closs Stephens Stephen Gilbert Alasdair Morgan Joan Walley Katy Radford In attendance: Bob Posner, Chief Executive Craig Westwood, Director, Communications, Policy and Research Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services Binnie Goh, General Counsel Zena Khan, Senior Advisor, Governance David Bailey, Head, Strategic Planning and Performance (items 4, 5, 6 and 12) Bola Raja, Performance and Planning Manager (item 4) Tim Crowley, Head, Digital Communications and Learning (item 4) Marcia Bluck, External Consultant (item 6) Carol Sweetenham, Head of Projects (item 6) Cindy Williams, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead (item 6) Daniel Stoker, Senior Advisor, Policy (item 7) Kate Engles, Policy Manager (item 7) Apologies and welcomes The Chair welcomed all to the first hybrid meeting of the Commission Board, with some attendees joining in person, following social distancing rules, and others joining remotely. The Chair welcomed Katy Radford, the new Commissioner for Northern Ireland, to her first Board meeting, participating as an observer while we wait for her signed Royal Warrant. The Chair advised that they would be joined by an external facilitator, Marcia Bluck at agenda item 6, to facilitate part of the discussions on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. It was noted that item 9 of the agenda (Incoming Chief Executive salary) would be taken at the end of all business items, as limited staff members would remain. Declarations of interest Commissioner Sue Bruce declared that she had stepped up from Deputy Chair to presently Chair the 'Prince's Foundation'. The Board noted that the Commissioners' Register of interests would be updated and this reflected on the Commission's external website in line with the Commissioners' Code of Conduct. Minutes of the previous Board meeting (EC 58/21) Resolved: That the minutes of the Commission Board meeting on 21 July 2021 be agreed. Corporate Plan 2022/23 – 2026/27: Final (EC 59/21) The Chief Executive introduced the report updating Commissioners on the present position with regards to processes for the three parliaments and on the final budgets. It was noted that Commissioners for Scotland and Wales would further review the cover letters to respectively the Scottish Parliament and the Senedd that will accompany the narrative for the Corporate Plan and Main Estimate. Resolved: That the Board agreed the final Corporate Plan 2022/23 – 2026/27 and associated budgets subject to further review of material to be submitted to the Scottish Parliament and the Senedd by the Commissioners for Scotland and Wales. Performance report quarter one 2021/22 (EC 60/21) The Chief Executive introduced the report providing a summary on progress. The Director, Finance and Corporate Services advised that he was

currently confident that financial pressures could be managed within budget, although he and the Chief Executive would be holding meetings with Directors during October to assure the mid-year forecasts. Commissioners discussed several aspects of recent performance including speed of complex investigations and staff turnover. The Board requested a paper to a future meeting showing the process of an investigation including the length of time it takes and outcomes. The Board further requested the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee to report back on staff turnover, liaising as necessary with the Audit and Risk Committee. Action: To bring back to a future meeting a paper on the process of an investigation, time allocated and outcomes.

Action owner: Director, Regulation. Submitted by: December Board meeting. Resolved: That the Board noted the delivery of the work programme and considered areas where more scrutiny was required. Discussion on Board diversity and update on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) activities (EC 61/21) The General Counsel introduced the item updating Commissioners on the recent progress made delivering the Commission's commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). The second item on well-being was deferred to a future meeting. The Board reviewed and discussed areas within the draft EDI Strategy including widening the range of groups reached such as carers and people with various disabilities and generally to recognise diversity of thought beyond the groups identified in law with protected characteristics. Serious consideration needs to be given to unconscious bias.

Commissioners emphasised the importance of demonstrating commitment to the themes of the strategy rather than simply being compliant with rules. It was suggested that we should explore best practice adopted elsewhere, notably in Northern Ireland. The Board noted the importance of getting the strategy out and for the consultation to be put in place and the work programme introduced. Further progress will be reported to future meetings. The General Counsel introduced Marcia Bluck, an external consultant who led a session on exploring options to improve Board diversity. The Board noted a presentation focussing Commissioners on the following: Improving diversity at Board level Improving representation – protected characteristics and socio-economics Widening the perspectives of the Board Deepening authentic engagement with diverse groups The Board discussed various ways in which to build confidence and reputation and set clear objectives and value for individuals, including recruiting an independent advisor on EDI to the Board. The Board thanked Marcia for a provoking, thoughtful presentation and welcomed discussions. Further detail and job description for an EDI independent advisor to the Board will be brought back to a future meeting for agreeing. Action: The Board delegated authority to the Chief Executive and General Counsel to prepare further detail and job description, for an independent advisor on EDI to the Board and a mechanism for engaging Commissioners. Action owner: Chief Executive and General Counsel. Submitted by: October 2021. Resolved: That the Board noted and agreed the actions taken during this year to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion. Resolved: That the Board agreed for the Commission to go out to consultation on the EDI Strategy and the new EIA material. Policy Development Grants scheme (EC 62/21) The Chief Executive and the Director, Communications, Policy and Research introduced the report. The Executive invited the Board to agree the Alba party joining the Scheme, but wanted to further consider both how the allocation of grant should work and the additional recommendation. The Board agreed that the Alba party join the Scheme and delegated to the Chief Executive, with Director, Communications, Policy and Research, reviewing and then writing to the Board with proposed recommendations to the Minister. Board responses would enable the Chief Executive to finalise the approach and write accordingly to the Minister.

Action: The Board delegated to the Chief Executive, with the Director, Communications, Policy and Research to review how the grant will be allocated with the Alba party being part of the Scheme, then write to the Board with proposed recommendations to the Minister. Action owner: Chief Executive Submitted by: End of October Resolved: That the Board agreed to include the Alba Party as an eligible Scotland-only party. Dates of proposed Commission Board and Committee meetings 2022/23 (EC 63/21) The Chair advised Commissioners to liaise directly with the Board Secretary on slight adjustments to the proposed Board and Committee meeting dates for 2022/23. This would include a meeting outside London and continuing to plan for hybrid meetings. Action: The Board Secretary would revisit the proposed Board and Committee meeting dates for 2022/23 incorporating a meeting outside London and continuation of hybrid meetings. Action owner: Board Secretary Submitted by: December 2021 Resolved: That the Board noted a revised proposal would be circulated by the Board Secretary on Board and Committee meeting dates for 2022/23. Update from the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo) Chair (Oral) The Board received an oral update from the Chair of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo) of their meeting held on the 20 July 2021. The Board noted an update on People Strategy followed by a presentation on COVID ways of working and wellbeing from the Head of Information, Communication and Technology. There was an update on the EDI Strategy from the Head of Projects and, a report on recruitment showing a low turnover. A report on the Executive salaries was agreed. Resolved: That the Board noted the oral update. Update from the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) Chair (Oral) The Board received an oral update from the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) of their meeting held on the 21 September 2021. The Board noted a report on the Risk appetite statement of which recommendations will come to a future Board meeting for discussion, an oral update on the Risk improvement plan and oral updates from our internal and external auditors. It was noted that non-ARC Commission members would be welcome to observe a future ARC meeting. The Board noted a presentation on a deep dive into training and development of ARC members. There was a review of schedule of policies and codes which is done periodically. It was noted that within the post meeting discussion following main ARC business, a discussion was had about recruitment and retention in the Commission and a risk of losing corporate memory. A discussion on an action plan arose and a suggestion was to invite the Chair of RemCo to a discussion on this topic. The Board noted that it was Commissioner Alasdair Morgan's last ARC meeting serving on the Committee for 10 years and Commissioner Stephen Gilbert's first ARC meeting as a participating observer until he joins as a full member in November. Resolved: That the Board noted the oral update. Annual review of complaints (EC 64/21) The Director, Finance and Corporate Services introduced the report providing the Board with the annual review of complaints received during the period 1 April 2020 to 30 June 2021. The period also took into account data related to May 2021 elections. Resolved: That the Board noted and have been assured that complaints are dealt with appropriately and that any necessary action resulting from complaints was taken. Chief Executive's update (EC 65/21) Resolved: That the Board noted the introduction and update from the Chief Executive's report. Commission Board action tracker (EC 66/21) Resolved: That the Board noted the progress against actions requested by the Board. Forward Plan of Board business (EC 67/21) Resolved: That the Board reviewed and noted the Forward Plan of Board business scheduling further topics for the next few meetings. At this point staff colleagues and guests were asked to leave the meeting except for the Chief Executive, General Counsel, Director, Finance and Corporate Services and the Board Secretary. Incoming

Chief Executive salary (Oral) Director, Finance and Corporate Services introduced a paper following an Extraordinary meeting of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo) on 17 September 2021 with recommendations to the Board. Resolved:
That the Board agreed the recommendations of the Committee.

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investigations in respect of Leave.EU You are in the Key correspondence section Home Key correspondence On this page Letter summary Read our letter in full First published: 16 November 2017 Last updated: 16 July 2019 Summary of the letter Date: 16 November 2017 To: Mr Arron Banks, Chairman, Leave.EU Email address: info@leave.eu From: Louise Edwards, Head of Regulation Format: Sent by email Full letter Dear Mr Banks Electoral Commission investigations in respect of Leave.EU Ms Bassett has asked me to respond to your letter of 9 November. As you note, the Electoral Commission currently has two investigations open in respect of Leave.EU, one relating to whether services were provided to Leave.EU and used during its campaign for the June 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the EU, and the other relating to loans provided to Leave.EU for that referendum. Both are being progressed in line with the Commission's published Enforcement Policy and will reach proper outcomes based on full enquiry. How long an investigation takes will depend on the steps the Commission needs to take to determine whether or not offences have been committed. They can require substantial material to be reviewed, leading to further enquiry. Progress is likely to be slower if those we request information from initially fail to comply and the Commission is required to use its formal statutory powers to progress the investigation. In that respect I refer you to our correspondence of 30 June 2017. Investigations can take further time where the Commission needs to go back to organisations to ensure that full disclosure of requested material has been provided.

In relation to our first investigation in respect of Leave.EU, the Commission will shortly set out to Leave.EU areas where it appears material has not been provided, notably relating to documents comprising the services provided by Goddard Gunster in late 2015/early 2016. We look forward to cooperation in disclosing this material to us. In relation to the second investigation, please note that investigations are not opened on the basis of questions asked in parliament or elsewhere by MPs. We will consider your requests for specific information – those numbered 1-4 in your letter – in accordance with our obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

However, we can confirm now that no meeting with Mr Bradshaw MP was held in the run up to the announcement of this investigation. The Electoral Commission is an independent regulator of political finance in the UK. We apply the rules set out in the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 fairly and proportionately to all parties and campaigners. During and after the EU referendum we published guidance and offered an advice service to assist campaigners to comply with the rules. We also responded to allegations the rules had not been followed. This included my email to Leave.EU, copied to you, of 8 March 2017 about the leaflets published by the Government prior to the referendum. You will recall that I explained that other than the rules in section 125 PPERA, which were not engaged, the regulatory framework set out in PPERA does not apply to the Government. Since the June 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the EU, the Commission has published the conclusions of investigations into campaigners for both the 'leave' and 'remain' outcomes. More investigations are ongoing, again into campaigners on both sides. For example, you can expect the conclusions of our publicly announced investigations in respect of Vote Leave's and Britain Stronger In Europe's referendum spending returns to be published in due course. We will continue to investigate, and to publish the conclusions, where evidence causes us to suspect the campaign finance rules were broken. Related content Letter: Coronavirus and its impact on the May polls Read our letter to Chloe Smith MP (Minister for the Constitution and Devolution) from March

2020 Letter: To Twitter about digital campaigning at the EU referendum Read our letter to Twitter from November 2017 Letter: To Facebook about digital campaigning at the EU referendum Read our letter to Facebook from November 2017 Letter: BBC NI Spotlight programme “Brexit, Dark Money and the DUP” Read our letter to Mr Jim Fitzpatrick from February 2018

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Key findings Confidence and satisfaction with the electoral process Party finance

Voter identification in polling stations Trustworthy campaigning Increase in proportion of people who believe the vote is not counted accurately Political education in schools Electoral Commission perceptions Tables First published: 11 July 2019 Last updated: 11 July 2019 Public Opinion Tracker 2022 Since 2007 the Electoral Commission has tracked public attitudes to different aspects of elections and democracy in the UK. Our most recent study was carried out online, across the UK, in February 2022. Key findings Public confidence in the running of elections continues to be high. The long-time negative trend in the public's perception of the transparency of party and campaigner finance has continued. More people think that the introduction of a requirement to show ID when voting in polling stations will improve elections (43%), but it is polarising, with (31%) saying that they disagree with this. Around 4% do not have the required ID with a recognisable photo. 1 This is higher among disadvantaged groups. 43% of those without the correct ID said they would definitely or probably apply to get a free voter ID card. People have a difficulty knowing whether the information they read online is reliable or not. There is a great deal of suspicion regarding both political content online and political campaigning material. Though starting from a low position (4% in 2021), twice as many people this year think that votes are not counted accurately at elections in the UK (8% in 2022). Among those that think votes are not counted accurately, the most used news source is social media websites. For those that do think the vote is counted accurately, social media is only their sixth most used news source. Confidence and satisfaction with the electoral process While there has been a decline, since last year, in the public's perception of whether elections are well run and in their satisfaction with the process of voting, the longer term trend is still positive. Last year's results showed the highest recorded satisfaction (86%) with the process of voting at elections, and this year is the second highest (81%). While Northern Ireland has slightly lower satisfaction than the other UK nations, the gap has been decreasing in recent years (3% lower than England in 2022 compared to a 21% gap in 2019). There has been little change over time in the public's confidence in knowing how to register (90% confident) or in knowing how to vote (92% confident). Party finance There has been an increase in the proportion of people who think there is inadequate regulation of the money political parties spend on their election campaigns. Over half of people see it as a problem (56%), up from 48% in 2021. Of the issues we asked about it was up to third 2 in the list of concerns, behind only bias in the media and low voter turnout. Positive perceptions around the transparency of the spending and funding of political parties/campaigners has been in decline since we first asked the question in 2011 (when 37% agreed it was transparent). 13% think it's transparent in 2022. The proportion who actively disagree that spending and finance is transparent had remained in the low 40s (40-42%) between 2018 and 2020, but since then has increased to over to over half (52%) in 2022. In the last year Wales has gone from the least negative (45% in 2021) on whether spending and finance is transparent, to the most negative (56% in 2022). Until 2020, Northern Ireland was the most negative on this but for the last couple of years it is in line with the UK average. There is a similar trend on the funding of political parties and campaigners. 55% say that the system is not transparent (0-4 on a 0-10 point scale) and 24% say it is transparent (6-10 on a 0-10 scale). In 2020 there was an equal proportion saying it was and was not transparent (36% in each case). Over twice as

many people thought they could not find out how parties are funded (43%), compared to the 18% that said they could. As recently as 2017, 40% agreed they could find out how political parties were funded. 32% agree that the authorities will take appropriate action if an organisation is caught breaking the rules. This also has been in decline since 2017 when it was 58% (45% in 2020). The number disagreeing had not changed much between 2018 and 2020 (19-22%) but now it has increased to 37% in 2022. Voter identification in polling stations More people think that the introduction of voter ID would improve the way that elections are run in Great Britain (43%) compared to those who disagree (31%). Electoral fraud is seen as less of a problem than other problems around elections. It was rated as a problem by 26% of the population which is ninth out of nine on a general list of potential problems related to elections.

35% of the population say that it's not a problem at all. 62% of people say that the introduction of voter ID will increase security around the election. 50% though say it will make voting less convenient. 17% of people say that it will make them less likely to vote, compared to 12% who say it will make them more likely to vote. 4% of the population in Great Britain either does not have any photo ID (3%) or does not have any photo ID where they think they are recognisable (1%). A further 2% said they did not know whether they had any of the forms of photo ID we asked about. Less than half of those people without recognisable photo ID (43%) said that they would probably or definitely apply for a free voter ID card. 29% said they would definitely or probably not apply for the free voter ID card. Those people who did not have recognisable photo ID were more likely to be from disadvantaged groups, such as those who are renting from their local authority (17% of whom did not have the correct ID), those renting from a housing association (10%), those who are unemployed (14%), those from lower social grade (8% of those who are DE social grade), and those with lower levels of education (7%). 74% in Great Britain will not need to do anything different when they go to vote as they typically carry the necessary ID with them every time they leave their house. 20% of the population do have the correct ID but will need to be reminded to take it with them as they go to the polls, as they do not typically take it with them when they leave the house. Trustworthy campaigning Just over half of people (59%) agree that they can judge whether the information they read online is reliable or not. Out of those that did agree, only 13% agree strongly with the statement and 46% said they tended to agree. 12% actively disagree that they could judge whether the information they read online is reliable or not. 20% of people said they had seen a deepfake video in the last year. Of these over a third of people (36%) do not think that they could easily identify a deepfake. Under half (44%) actively think that they could. Just under half (48%) disagree that the information available online about politics is trustworthy. Also just under half of people (46%) say they think political campaigning online is untrue or misleading. Increase in proportion of people who believe the vote is not counted accurately Twice as many people think that votes are not counted accurately (8% in 2022) at elections compared with last year (4% in 2021). The number who agree that the vote is counted accurately has decreased from 85% in 2021 to 74% in 2022. Of those who disagree that votes are counted accurately, their main news source are social network websites (34% use social media as their main news source). For the majority who agree that the vote is counted accurately, social media websites rank as their sixth main news source (18% use social media as their main news source). Those that don't believe that votes are counted accurately are more likely to say that they do not feel well equipped to judge whether the information they read is accurate or not (18%) compared with those that do think the vote is counted accurately (11%). Political education in schools

79% of parents of children aged 14-18 agree that it is important that children learn the basics about politics, voting and democracy at school. More parents are dissatisfied (35%) with the information that their children aged 14 to 18 receive about politics and democracy, compared to the 26% who are satisfied. Electoral Commission perceptions 35% had heard a great deal or fair amount about the Commission in 2022. 20% said they had heard about the Commission in the last year. Both statistics are identical to last year's result. 'Independent' is still the word most associated with the commission (25%). 'Important' is back to the second highest association (21%). 'Bureaucratic' is back down to the third largest association (19%).

Tables Public Opinion Tracker 2023 tables 2018-2023 Data table Public Opinion Tracker Footnotes 1. Which of the following forms of photo identification do you have? Select all that apply.

- Passport (British/ Commonwealth/ European economic area), Photocard driving licence, Northern Ireland Electoral ID card/ Translink photo Smartpass, UK biometric immigration document, EEA ID card, PASS scheme (official proof of age) card, Ministry of Defence photo ID card, Concessionary travel pass, Oyster 60+ pass, A Blue Badge photocard parking permit, Don't have any of these forms of identification, Don't know NB. Anybody who selected any form of ID at this question counted as having voter ID (so any answer apart from Don't know or Don't have any of these forms of Identification 2. We gave respondents a list of potential concerns: Barriers to democratic participation for minority groups, barriers to democratic participation for disabled people, Intimidation of candidates that run for election, Electoral fraud, Foreign influence on UK election results, Inadequate regulation of the money political parties spend on their election campaigns, inadequate regulation of political activity on social media, lower voter turnout at elections, Bias in the media Related content Electoral fraud data View electoral fraud data Voter identification pilots Find out about the voter identification pilots that took place in 2018 and 2019 Transparent digital campaigning Find out about digital campaigning and the changes we want to see Political parties, campaigners and other groups have to report their finances to us. Find out about campaign spending, donations and loans and annual accounts.

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research Electoral fraud data On this page Key findings First published: 23 July 2019
Last updated: 13 January 2023 Key findings from cases of alleged electoral fraud in
2017 Headline figures from data on cases of alleged electoral fraud in 2017 are:
There were three convictions: two were in relation to imprint offences one was in
connection with a personation offence in a polling station Suspects in eleven cases
accepted police cautions: six were in relation to registration offences three were
personation when voting by post one was a false statement on a nomination form one
was a return of election expenses. Cases of alleged fraud in 2017 Outcomes of
investigations Number No further action 246 Locally resolved 88 Other 13 Caution 11
Acquitted 4 Just over half (184 cases) of all cases of alleged electoral fraud
reported were campaign offences. The majority of these were imprint offences (111
cases). The majority of cases (334) either resulted in no further action (246) or
were locally resolved (88). Offences Type of offence Number Campaigning 184 Voting
112 Registration 37 Nomination 26 Administration 3 Miscellaneous 3 2017 electoral
fraud data Related content Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to
a political party, individual or other organisation Register to vote All you need to
register to vote is 5 minutes and your National Insurance number. Public funds View
data about public funds received by parties Registers of unincorporated associations
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tables You are in the Modernising electoral registration: feasibility studies section Home A modern electoral register Modernising electoral registration: feasibility studies First published: 26 July 2019 Last updated: 8 June 2021 Appendix tables Appendix A: Better use of data by EROs: implementation scenarios Scenario 1: Medium level digital data sharing Scenario 2: High level digital data sharing The DSO uses an automated trigger to send a snapshot of their data on a regular basis to the IER hub. An API between the DSO and IER hub is used to transfer data to the hub. The existing IER hub receives datasets periodically (e.g. monthly) from the DSO and makes it available to EROs for download. An ERO downloads the dataset from the IER hub into a spreadsheet via their EMS system. An API and the Public Service Network (PSN) are used to transfer the data from the IER hub to the EMS system. The ERO has some basic data cleansing and matching tools, but still does manual checks on the quality of the data. The ERO uses the new data to trigger a mail merge process to contact the identified individuals that could be potential electors, inviting them to register, or existing electors where changes to their personal details have been identified.

The DSO uses an automated trigger to send transactional data as it happens or at regular intervals to the IER hub. An API between the DSO and IER hub is used to transfer data to the hub. The existing IER hub packages the transactional data received from the DSO and makes it available to a specific ERO, based on the address data of the transaction. An ERO downloads the data package specific to their electoral area via their EMS system. An API and the PSN are used to transfer the data from the IER hub to the EMS system. The ERO uses advanced data cleansing and matching tools, with light touch manual checks on the quality of the data to identify potential electors from multiple data sources. Letters are automatically generated by the EMS system for all potential electors or existing electors where changes in personal details have been detected.

Appendix B: Automated and automatic registration scenarios Scenario 1: Automated registration Scenario 2: Automatic registration The ERO identifies potential electors or existing electors where details have changed, from one or a combination of data sources. The citizen is flagged in the EMS system as a potential elector or an existing elector where a change in personal details has been detected. An electronic electoral registration form is populated with available data from the EMS system to initiate the registration or change to personal details. If contact details were obtained from a data source, a link to the electronic registration form (with known fields prepopulated) is sent to the citizen in an email or SMS, requesting the citizen to complete the registration. The citizen has X number of days to complete the electronic registration form. If the citizen has not responded after X number of days, the prepopulated registration form is automatically printed from the EMS system and sent to the citizen. After X number of weeks, a reminder is sent to the citizen to complete the online or printed registration form. If the citizen has not taken any action after X number of weeks, their record remains flagged in the EMS system until the canvass period, during which they could be contacted again. The ERO identifies potential electors from one or a combination of data sources, where there is sufficient information to register the citizen. The citizen is flagged in the EMS system as a potential elector or an existing elector where a change in personal details has been detected. An electronic electoral registration form is populated with sufficient data from the EMS system to automatically register a potential elector or update personal details of an existing elector. If contact details were obtained from a data source, an email or SMS is sent to the citizen to notify them of the proposed electoral registration or update to

their existing details on the register. The citizen has X number of days to respond if the information in the form is incorrect or they have a valid reason to opt out of the registration. If the citizen has not responded after X number of days, the prepopulated registration form is automatically printed from the EMS system and sent to the citizen. If the citizen has not responded after X number of weeks, to change information or opt out, the citizen is automatically registered. The ERO sends a notification letter to the citizen to inform them of the actions taken.

Appendix C: Integration of electoral registration scenarios

Scenario 1: Medium level integration

Scenario 2: High level integration

A citizen is given a choice to register to vote at the end of an online application for a new passport, driving licence, or other public service transaction. The citizen clicks on a link to redirect to the Register to Vote website, with relevant data sent from the source and populated in the electoral registration web form. The citizen follows the standard process to completing the online registration application. This is a more advanced approach to integrating electoral registration into other public services, with the citizen completing the missing information to register after completing the third party transaction, for example: Additional fields on the third party website would capture missing information required to register to vote, as an extension to the third party transaction, e.g. at the end of an online driving licence application. If the citizen selects the option to register to vote, additional fields appear for the citizen to complete. All of the required information is saved to the third party database and transferred to the relevant ERO via the IER hub.

Appendix D: Unique identifier as a prerequisite to managing duplicate records

Prerequisite Summary Benefits Risks

Unique identifier

Currently there is no identifier in the electoral registers to identify an elector uniquely. Creating local identifiers would not solve the issue of duplicates across multiple registers and therefore a UK-wide identifier should be created. All electoral registration applications are currently verified against DWP data, via the IER hub. Therefore, the unique identifier that is linked to the NINo could be generated during this process by either the DWP or GDS. For existing electors, it might be possible to build on canvass reform. Where register entries are validated against DWP data where there is a match, a unique identifier could be linked to the elector. A unique identifier could help to identify duplicates arising from a change in the elector's details, e.g. address. A unique identifier could also identify complete duplicate registration applications, e.g. citizen completes an application to register but is already registered at the same address. Existing electors without a match against DWP data during the canvass discernment step would not be automatically allocated a unique identifier. Electors without a NINo will not be automatically allocated a unique identifier.

Appendix F: ERO focused solution: the impact of centralisation of electoral registers on management of duplicate records

Solution Summary Benefits Risks

Decentralised registers with unique identifier

Current system is decentralised with no unique identifier. However, EMS systems provide tools to identify duplicates within a single, local register. With a unique identifier, duplicates could be detected within a single register. Without the unique identifier, the duplicates problem will not be resolved. Does not allow comparison between registers to identify duplicates. May not be possible to provide unique identifiers for all entries in the register if the elector could not be verified.

Single view of all registers with unique identifier

Maintain separate registers, but enable EROs to view (read-only) all entries on all registers. Would enable comparison of all registers to identify possible duplicates, especially if unique identifiers have been allocated to register entries. The single view of registers could support a

UK wide lookup tool, without having to develop separate solutions. May increase security risks around personal data. Four national registers with unique identifier Single national register for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland already has a centralised register. Welsh government is considering this option. This would require national keepers of the registers. Could identify duplicates across multiple registers within a nation. Could facilitate a wider lookup function than local registers, although not UK wide. This would not allow comparison across the national registers. Impact of any data breaches would be far greater than with local registers. Operational impact, e.g. restructuring of ERO function could be disruptive. National keepers would be required – potential responsibility and accountability issues to resolve. Could disenfranchise voters if moving across to a different nation and assume that they are still registered. Risk that a citizen could be registered in more than one nation or move has been updated in one nation, but not yet the other. Single, UK wide register with unique identifier Restructuring electoral registration process so that there is one UK wide register, rather than the current 372 registers. This would require a keeper of the register. Could identify duplicates across all UK registers. Could facilitate a UK wide lookup function. One unique identifier per elector Unique identifier is issued centrally Facilitate electoral reform more generally, e.g. early voting, voting anywhere Impact of any data breaches would be far greater than with local registers. Operational impact, e.g. restructuring of ERO function could be disruptive. National keeper— potential responsibility and accountability issues to resolve. Different governments may have conflicting rules, structures, processes, etc. that could complicate one register. Also different governments would have to actively support the creation of a single register.

Appendix G: Electoral registration reform and the degree of centralisation

Summary Automation Integration Duplicates Risks Decentralised registers Current system This would be deliverable under the current system. The IER hub would provide the infrastructure to support automation of registration. This would be deliverable under the current system. IER hub would provide the infrastructure to support a more integrated registration system. Does not allow comparison between registers to identify duplicates. However, EMS systems provide tools to identify duplicates within a single, local register. Will not resolve duplicates problem, especially across individual registers. Single view of all registers Maintain separate registers, but enable EROs to view (readonly) all entries on all registers This would help to address some of the risks associated with automation under the current system, e.g. confirming whether a potential elector is already registered elsewhere. This would not offer any obvious advantages for developing a more integrated system. Would enable comparison of all registers to identify possible duplicates. However to identify actual duplicates with certainty, a unique identifier would be required.

Could be used as lookup function, without having to develop separate solutions. May increase security risks around personal data. Four national registers Single national register for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland already has a centralised register. Welsh government is considering this option. This would require national keepers of the registers. Would simplify the infrastructure required to support automated / automatic registration by reducing the number of registers linked to the IER hub. Would enable a move toward a more continuous system of registration with less re-registration required, unless you move to a different part of the UK. Would simplify the infrastructure required to support backend processes of integrating electoral registration. No impact on the elector side of integration.

This would not allow comparison across the national registers. To be of benefit, this

would require a unique identifier to identify actual duplicates within each nation. Could facilitate a wider lookup function, although not UK wide. Impact of any data breaches would be far greater than with local registers. Operational impact, e.g. restructuring of ERO function could be disruptive. National keepers would be required – potential responsibility and accountability issues to resolve. Single, UK wide register Restructuring electoral registration process so that there is one UK wide register, rather than the current 372 registers. This would require a keeper of the register. Further simplify the infrastructure by providing a single link to the IER hub. Would enable a move toward a more continuous, portable system of registration, with updating, rather than re-registering of details. Further simplify the infrastructure by providing a single link to the IER hub. To identify actual duplicates with certainty, a unique identifier would be required. Could facilitate a UK wide lookup function. Impact of any data breaches would be far greater than with local registers. Operational impact, e.g. restructuring of ERO function could be disruptive. National keeper of register – potential responsibility and accountability issues to resolve. Different governments may have conflicting rules, structures, processes, etc. that could complicate one register. Related content Reforming electoral law Find out about electoral law and the changes we want to see A modern electoral register Find out about the changes we want to see to the electoral registration system in the UK Transparent digital campaigning Find out about digital campaigning and the changes we want to see of elections Find out about the accessibility of elections and the changes we want to see

Reporting on elections You are in the section Home On this page What we report on What our reports include Reporting on the May 2023 elections First published: 11 April 2023 Last updated: 28 April 2023 Summary of our duty We have a statutory duty to collect data and publish reports about elections that take place across the UK. We also choose to report on other elections. What we report on We have a statutory duty to report on the administration of : UK Parliament elections recall petitions Police and Crime Commissioner elections council elections in Scotland Scottish Parliament elections Northern Ireland Assembly elections Senedd elections referendums (if they're held under the Political Parties Elections & Referendums Act (PPERA) 2000) In the past, we have chosen to report on: local council elections in England, Wales and Northern Ireland local and combined authority mayoral elections Greater London Authority (GLA) elections What our reports include Our reports aim to look at the experience of people voting and campaigning at elections, and of people delivering the elections. We carry out a public opinion survey to find out voters' views about elections, including whether they thought it was well run and how confident they felt about it. We also ask candidates and campaigners to give us feedback, and we send them a survey after the election. Councils, who are responsible for the running the elections, have to provide data to us about electoral registration, postal voting and turnout. We ask them to fill out a survey, and also ask for feedback from people who worked at the election, such as polling station staff. We usually aim to publish our reports on elections within six months of polling day. Reporting on the May 2023 elections At the local elections in England on 4 May, voters will need to show photo ID to vote at a polling station. In the weeks following polling day, we will carry out research with the public to collect data about the experience of voters. We will also collect data from the local councils who had elections in their area. This will inform an initial analysis of the implementation of voter ID, which we will publish as quickly as possible in the weeks after the elections, subject to data being available. We expect this initial analysis will include: top line data from our public opinion survey on the awareness and experience of voters data from polling stations on the proportion of people turned away from polling places or refused a ballot paper, and those who returned and were able to vote data about the number of Voter Authority Certificates or Anonymous Elector's Documents issued In September, we will publish our full report on the May 2023 elections. This report will feature additional data, including the reasons people were turned away (such as having the wrong or no identification) as well as turnout, postal voting and rejected ballots. It will also provide analysis on other aspects of the elections, including accessibility support that was provided for voters in polling stations for example. We will also publish a separate report about the local elections taking place on 18 May in Northern Ireland in September. Greeters at polling stations We're aware that staff acting as greeters may be used in some polling stations to welcome voters, remind them about the need to show photographic ID, and help speed up the voting process. The Elections Act and the Voter Identification Regulations 2022 require polling station staff to collect data on the people that cannot be issued with a ballot paper because they were unable to provide an accepted form of ID. This includes data on people who are turned away and later return to the polling station with accepted ID. This information can only be recorded at the ballot issuing desk, and not gathered by a greeter at the entrance. The presence of a greeter at a polling station is likely to affect the data recorded at the desk. For this reason, local authorities will need to separate out data for polling stations with and without

greeters when submitting data after the polls. We're experienced at using wider survey work to supplement quantitative data to assess the overall impact of changes to elections. In our reporting on the elections, we will make an assessment of the wider impact of the ID requirements using other types of research. Importantly this will include public opinion surveying across England, asking about people's experiences of voting or trying to vote on 4 May. We will also, as we do each year, survey electoral administrators, campaigners and electoral observers.

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Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Who was at the meeting Apologies and welcomes Declarations of interest Minutes of the previous Board meeting(s) Commission Board action tracker Forward Plans of Board business 2021/22 and 2022/23 Main estimate 2022/23 and corporate plan budgets Policy priorities of the Commission Chief Executive's update Deep dive strategic discussion: approach to political finance First published: 21 March 2022 Last updated: 13 May 2022 Meeting summary Date: Wednesday 19 January 2022 Time: 9:30am to 12:50pm Location: By video conference Date of next scheduled meeting: Wednesday 23 February 2022 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Pullinger, Chair Rob Vincent Sue Bruce Alex Attwood Sarah Chambers Elan Closs Stephens Stephen Gilbert Alasdair Morgan Joan Walley Katy Radford In attendance: Bob Posner, Chief Executive Craig Westwood, Director, Communications, Policy and Research Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services Binnie Goh, General Counsel Zena Khan, Board Secretary (Senior Advisor, Governance) Lilly Malik, Legal Officer (all items) Tom Hawthorn, Head, Policy (item 7) Niki Nixon, Head, Internal Communications (item 7) Dan Adamson, Head, Monitoring and Enforcement (item 9) Majella La Praik, Head, Registration and Reporting (item 9) Laura Mcleod, Head, Regulatory Support (item 9) Jamie Weisz, Registration Manager (observing, item 9) Apologies and welcomes There were no apologies received. The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, advising that timings against agenda items have been slightly amended, to allow more time for the deep dive strategic discussion towards the end. Declarations of interest That the Board noted no new declarations received. Minutes of the previous Board meeting(s) (EC 80/22) Resolved: That the minutes of the Ordinary Commission Board meeting on 1 December 2021 be agreed. Resolved: That the minutes of the Extraordinary Commission Board meeting on 8 December 2021 be noted. Commission Board action tracker (EC 81/22) The Board noted an update from the General Counsel, on progress for appointing an independent adviser to the Board on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), with discussions held with linked Commissioners for EDI. The Board discussed tracking progress on matters that would not routinely be contained within the regular monthly action tracker such as, recruitment of the independent adviser to the Board on EDI, IT infrastructure and planning for the scheduled off site Board meetings. It was noted that the General Counsel would consider how to keep the Board updated on such matters. Action: General Counsel to provide regular updates on progress on items that are not routinely contained within the regular monthly Board action tracker. Action owner: General Counsel Resolved: That the Board noted the progress against actions requested by the Board. Forward Plans of Board business 2021/22 and 2022/23 (EC 82/22) The Board noted that a report from the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC) was scheduled at February's Board meeting but should this not be available, it would then be planned for the meeting in April. The Board noted that February would be Bob Posner's last Board meeting as Chief Executive. The Board noted conversations around planning for the Commission Board meeting being held Northern Ireland were underway. Resolved: That the Board reviewed and noted the Forward Plan of Board business for 2021/22 and 2022/23. Main estimate 2022/23 and corporate plan budgets (EC 83/22) The Chief Executive and the Director, Finance and Corporate Services advised that a number of financial pressures would need to be considered in setting the budget, before the Main Estimate was due to be submitted to the Speaker's Committee ahead of the February Board meeting. The Board

discussed information relating to the extra staff resource for the Commission predominantly consequential to the Elections Bill. The Board also discussed matters relating to on-going work to develop the new Political Finance Online platform. It was noted that a review of our IT infrastructure should be planned alongside the lifetime of the Corporate Plan so going forward, we would be able to identify pressure points, as we start to rely heavily on our IT for day to day business. The Board noted that the Audit and Risk Committee Chair, would be working closely with the Executive Team, in order to provide assurance to the Board on continued work with scoping out procuring IT services. Resolved: That the Board agreed to delegate finalisation of the CP2 budgets, including for 2022/23 to the Accounting Officer in consultation with the Chair and where relevant, the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo) Chair (subject to total changes to each budget line). Resolved:

That the Board agreed finalisation of the Estimate, in line with the budget set and delegated to the Accounting Officer. Policy priorities of the Commission (EC 84/22) The Chair advised that due to time pressures on the agenda, this item would be deferred to the next meeting. Action: To include on the agenda for the February Board. Action owner: Board Secretary Chief Executive's update (EC 85/22) The Chief Executive introduced the report providing an update on operations and matters arising since the last Board meeting. The Board noted updates on the Elections Bill which Director, Regulation provided and a strategic approach to guide our future citizenship education work provided by Director, Communications, Policy and Research. The Board discussed the Elections Bill proposed Strategy Policy Statement with further discussions to be had ahead of the Lord's briefing. Resolved: That the Board noted the report along with additional updates. Deep dive strategic discussion: approach to political finance (EC 86/22) The Board received a presentation on Regulation, from Director, Regulation joined by the Head of Monitoring and Enforcement, Head of Registration and Reporting, Head of Regulatory support and the Registration Manager. The presentation covered the following areas:

- Strategic approach, constraints and choices
- Our place in the regulatory environment
- Delivering outcomes in practice
- Where do we go from here? The Board discussed how resources were allocated to deliver the agreed strategic approach for regulatory work. The Board also discussed the way the political finance regime was based on self-reporting by political parties of declared donations and spending, and the importance of transparency for scrutiny of this. The Board thanked the Director, Regulation and the team for work done, focussing on continued diligence, open and transparent work.

Report: Digital campaigning - increasing transparency for voters | Electoral Commission Search Report: Digital campaigning - increasing transparency for voters You are in the Transparent digital campaigning section

Home Transparent digital campaigning On this page Summary Recommendations The rise of digital campaigning Our role in regulating digital campaigns Who runs digital ads? Spending Who pays for digital campaigns? Enforcing the rules First published: 1 June 2018 Last updated: 9 June 2021 Summary We want to improve voter confidence that digital campaigns are following the rules. We've made recommendations for the UK's governments and legislatures, social media companies and campaigners to follow. These recommendations increase the transparency of digital campaigns. They will help prevent foreign funding of elections and referendum campaigns. And they will give us the power to impose higher fines on campaigners who break the rules. This will be a greater deterrent to those who may be tempted to break them.

Recommendations Each of the UK's governments and legislatures should:

- change the law so that digital material must have an imprint saying who is behind the campaign and who created it
- amend the rules for reporting spending and make campaigners sub-divide their spending returns into different types of spending. These categories should give more information about the money spent on digital campaigns
- clarify that spending on election or referendum campaigns by foreign organisations or bodies is not allowed.

They would need to consider how it could be enforced and the impact on free speech.

increase the maximum fine we can sanction campaigners for breaking the rules, and strengthen our powers to obtain information outside of an investigation

Social media companies should:

- work with us to improve their policies on campaign material and advertising for elections and referendums in the UK
- label adverts about elections and referendums on their platforms to make the source clear
- make sure their political advert databases follow the UK's rules on elections and referendums

s should:

- be required to provide more detailed and meaningful invoices from their digital suppliers to improve transparency.
- We will make proposals to campaigners and each of the UK's governments about how to improve the rules and deadlines for reporting spending.
- We want information to be available to voters and us more quickly after a campaign, or during.

The rise of digital campaigning Good campaigns that communicate with voters are central to well-run elections and referendums. When campaigners clearly explain their policies and political views, voters are better able to exercise their right to vote in a meaningful and informed way.

In the UK, the evidence shows campaigners are increasingly using new ways of communicating to reach voters. In particular, they often use advertising services bought from digital and social media companies like Facebook, Google, YouTube, Snapchat, Twitter or Instagram.

The chart below shows that the proportion of money campaigners have reported spending on digital advertising has continued to increase during this decade.

Chart 1: Reported spending by campaigners on digital advertising as a percentage of total advertising spend

In 2011, spending by campaigners on digital advertising was 0.3% of total spend. This increased to 1.7% in 2014, 23.9% in 2015, 32.3% in 2016, and 42.8% in 2017.

Further information about the digital campaign spending chart

This chart shows spending that campaigners reported in their statutory spending returns for:

- UK general elections in 2015 and 2017
- Scottish Parliament elections in 2011 and 2016
- National Assembly for Wales elections in 2011 and 2016
- Northern Ireland Assembly elections in 2011, 2016 and 2017
- EU referendum in 2016
- Scottish Independence referendum in 2014
- Referendum on changing the UK's voting system in 2011

But this chart doesn't show the full picture of digital advertising at elections and referendums. It only contains spending data for the most well-known

digital platforms, which registered campaigners have reported to us. Advertising is not the only way campaigners communicate with voters on social and digital media. s can also ‘like’, ‘share’ and ‘post’ messages for free and potentially reach wide audiences. Digital campaign tools can make it easier and cheaper for legitimate campaigners to communicate with voters. It is a sign of a healthy democracy when campaigners tell voters about their policies and political views. However, we recognise that new techniques for reaching voters could reduce confidence in the integrity of elections and referendums. People may think the law doesn’t cover new techniques. These techniques can also be misused. For example, it could be easier for foreign individuals or regimes to try to influence voters online without any physical presence in the country. UK-based campaigners may also try to get round limits on spending through hidden digital activity. The rise of digital campaigning raises important issues for a number of regulators and organisations, as well as us. The Information Commissioner is investigating the use of personal data and analytics by political campaigns, parties, social media companies and other commercial organisations. Within the UK Parliament, the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee is continuing its inquiry into the impact of ‘fake news’ on modern democracy. Governments and legislators have expressed concerns about the wider misuse of digital communications in many countries. In the UK, the Prime Minister, Head of the Security Service and the Attorney General have all highlighted the risks of foreign governments mounting cyber espionage and disruption campaigns in the UK. This is not limited to interference in elections and is part of wider attempts to cause disruption. Voters, campaigners and law enforcement agencies have raised concerns about disruption, interference and misuse of digital campaigns at recent elections and referendums in the United States, France, Germany and Ireland. Legislators in the United States, France and the UK have set out proposals for statutory regulation of digital campaigns, and social media companies have begun to publish their own proposals for reform. These concerns have fed into a wider debate about reform of the rules for social media and digital communications, both here in the UK and in other countries around the world. Following its Internet Safety green paper, the UK Government has set out its Digital Charter, a programme of work to agree and put into practice norms and rules for the online world. It aims to ensure that the rights people have offline are protected online. This includes “limiting the spread and impact of disinformation intended to mislead for political, personal and/or financial gain”. Our role in regulating digital campaigns We have been looking at the risks and the challenges that digital campaigns bring to the UK’s election and referendum rules. As the regulator, our main role in this area is to monitor and enforce the rules about where the money behind campaigns comes from and how campaigners spend money. This includes money spent on digital campaigns intended to influence UK voters. We talked to political parties after the 2017 UK general election and looked at spending returns from campaigners at other recent elections and referendums. We have talked to the main social media companies that work in the UK. We have carried out research with the public to find out what they think about digital campaigns. The UK Parliament has given us a role to report on elections and referendums, to keep electoral law under review and to recommend changes where we think they’re needed. The Scottish Parliament and Government are responsible for Scotland-only elections. The Welsh Government and National Assembly for Wales are responsible for Wales-only elections. We work with all relevant governments on the changes to electoral law they are responsible for. This is why some of our recommendations are for each of the UK’s governments and legislatures, not just the UK Government and Parliament. A quote from

GfK on digital campaigning There was acknowledgement from some that although people may approach online messages with scepticism, there was a risk that unverified information could still have an influence to some degree. There was an acceptance that the nature of digital campaigns made it difficult to discern the source of all the materials that they receive. GfK, Political finance regulation and digital campaigning: a public perspective Who runs digital ads? Recommendation Each of the UK's governments and legislatures should change the law so that digital material must have an imprint saying who is behind the campaign and who created it. How campaigners use digital ads s use digital platforms to campaign during an election or referendum. These campaigners range from registered political parties to individual campaigners. Political parties must register with us to stand candidates in elections. Non-party campaigners and referendum campaigners that want to spend over a certain amount must also register with us. Only people who live in the UK or are registered to vote here, or organisations based here, are able to register. Who is behind online campaigns? Who is behind online campaigns? Printed campaign material must contain information about who is behind the campaign and who created the materials. Voters can see who is distributing this material by looking at the imprint on it. We have a role in ensuring that these rules on including an 'imprint' on campaign material are followed. But we don't regulate the other content or arguments used in campaign material. It may not be clear who is behind an online campaign because the law doesn't require campaigners to include an imprint on digital material. It may not be clear that something on social media is from a campaigner as social media posts can appear to come from individuals expressing their personal opinions. s can purchase 'bots' and pay people to spread their campaign messages, and this is misleading if voters cannot see that this has happened. A bot is an automated software program that mimics human behaviour on social media by posting, liking and talking to real people. A 'troll' is a real person who spends time on websites and social media posting divisive or irrelevant messages and comments to annoy or anger other people. Organisations or individuals can set up fake social media accounts. They pretend these accounts are held by real people and attempt to sway opinion by posting messages or liking and sharing the messages of others. Sometimes campaigners in other countries pay trolls to spread their messages and attack their opponents. The press has reported on instances of governing parties in other countries using bots, fake accounts and paid trolls to 'amplify' campaign messages when they are standing for re-election. This creates the appearance of grassroots support – a phenomenon known as 'astroturfing'. The aim is to make a campaign appear popular with the public. But the support isn't genuine because it hasn't come from real people. The party has manufactured it and paid money for it. Several academic research projects have looked at the use of bots and fake accounts to amplify campaign messages during the EU referendum and US election campaigns in 2016. Although they have identified that there were active networks of both bots and fake accounts during and after these campaigns, it's not clear how or if they affected the outcome. We do not think that there is anything wrong with campaigners using bots to post messages telling voters about their policies and political views. But it should be clear who is doing it. Similarly we do not think there is anything wrong with campaigners telling their staff to post campaign messages. But these forms of campaigning are a problem when they are used to deceive voters about a campaigner's identity or their true level of support, or used to abuse people. Imprints on digital material Imprints on digital material We have been recommending since 2003 that online campaign material should include an imprint. s would then have to identify who they are so that it is clear

who is campaigning. We currently advise campaigners to include an imprint, even though it is not required under law. This could include posts made by bots and paid trolls. Although posting on social media is free, it costs money to employ people and acquire bots. These costs count towards a campaigner's spending limit for an election or referendum. A campaigner who doesn't include an imprint would run the risk of a fine. Imprints on digital campaign messages would also help us enforce the spending rules. This is because we would have a better idea who may need to register and submit a spending return after an election or referendum. It was a legal requirement at the Scottish independence referendum for digital material to have an imprint. Overall it worked fairly well. There were some questions about what kinds of digital material the law applied to, including personal opinions. We can learn from this experience when considering any new requirement. The UK Government has said it will consult on whether to change the law so that digital material has to have an imprint. This consultation will be a good opportunity to hear from campaigners and others about how the new rules could work.

Truthfulness of digital campaign material and news

One of the main concerns about online information is whether it's true. During election and referendum campaigns, this concern applies to both the content of digital campaign material and the news that appears in voters' social media feeds. Fake news was a cause of considerable concern during and after the US presidential election. Our research with the public showed that they were less trusting of online materials. They were concerned about both the content and source. They considered that the internet gave less credible sources a greater ability to mislead people and spread false information. They viewed fake news as a spectrum from entirely false stories to real news that was distorted to fit a political agenda. We are not in a position to monitor the truthfulness of campaign claims, online or otherwise. However, changing the law so that digital material has to have an imprint will help voters to assess the credibility of campaign messages. Voters will know who the source is and be more able to decide how credible it is.

The role of others

The law does not require claims in campaign material to be truthful or factually accurate. But it is a crime to make or publish a false statement of fact about the personal character or conduct of a candidate. Campaign material must not incite others to commit crimes. The police investigate such allegations. The UK Statistics Authority can complain to campaigners if it thinks they have misused official statistics in their campaign material. The Advertising Standards Authority oversees campaign adverts about some political subjects, but does not have a role in election or referendum campaigns. The Committee on Standards in Public Life recently held an inquiry into intimidation in public life. It recommended that political parties should develop codes of conduct about intimidatory behaviour. We think that campaigners should also take more responsibility for the tone of their arguments and the claims they make in their campaign material. The Information Commissioner is responsible for the rules about how organisations in the UK use personal data. They are looking at how campaigners, social media companies and others use personal data for political purposes. We expect that the Information Commissioner will report later this year on whether campaigners need to change how they use voters' personal data. We will work with the Commissioner to give campaigners guidance to help them make any changes.

Spending on digital campaign activity

Recommendations should be required to provide more detailed and meaningful invoices from their digital suppliers to improve transparency. Each of the UK's governments and legislatures should amend the rules for reporting spending. They should divide their spending returns into different types of spending. These

categories should give more information about the money spent on digital campaigns UK election and referendum adverts on social media platforms should be labelled to make the source clear. Their online databases of political adverts should follow the UK's rules for elections and referendums Each of the UK's governments and legislatures should change the law so that campaign-related staff costs are included in the spending limits on political party election and referendum campaign spending We will make proposals to campaigners and each of the UK's governments about how to improve the rules and deadlines for reporting spending. We want information to be available to voters and us more quickly after a campaign, or during it We and the UK's governments and legislatures should look again at when the spending and funding controls should start to apply before a referendum Reporting spending on campaigning to us UK electoral law sets limits on the amount of money that campaigners can spend on campaign activity during the regulated period before elections and referendums. The regulated period is the period in which the spending rules apply. Money spent on digital campaigning carried out during that period counts towards campaigners' spending limits. For example, the regulated period lasts 12 months before a UK Parliament election and four months before a Scottish Parliament election. The regulated period before the EU referendum was ten weeks. Registered political parties, non-party campaigners and referendum campaigners must send details of their spending to us after the election or referendum. Candidates have to submit a spending return to the local election Returning Officer. We publish details about the spending on our website. Transparency of digital political advertising Transparency of digital political advertising s can use digital and social media tools to direct their messages to the people they most want to reach. s use the personal data they and social media platforms have to target voters. They target voters based on demographic factors like age and gender, on their interests and on their physical location. This is often called 'micro-targeting' because campaigners are able to send messages tailored to specific groups of voters based on this information. They can also adjust the messages they send very rapidly, to take account of what seems to work best with particular groups or individuals. Only the voter, the campaigner and the platform know who has been targeted with which messages. Only the company and campaigner know why a voter was targeted and how much was spent on a particular campaign. This is why the term 'dark ads' has been used to describe micro-targeting, although it is perfectly legal. People in our recent research said that targeted messages from campaigners could be helpful if it meant they got information that was more relevant and interesting to them. But they were worried about how their personal data had been gathered and used. They also said that they would be worried about targeted messages that spread false or misleading information. Other concerns have been raised about the transparency of spending on and targeting of digital political advertising as well. The UK's election rules set spending limits to stop campaigners being able to spend so much more money than their opponents that they would gain an unfair advantage. As part of this, campaigners must report how much they have spent to produce and send targeted messages to voters using digital channels. This includes messages targeted at specific groups of people in a particular constituency. Political parties should report the costs of many kinds of messages at elections. But if messages promote a particular candidate, the rules may require the candidate to report the cost of those messages instead. These rules do not work properly if candidates and political parties do not report the money they spend on targeted messages against the right limit. We want to check that campaigners have properly reported the money they spend against the right limit. It would be helpful if the law

said campaigners have to include an imprint on all their digital campaign material. More detailed invoices More detailed invoices It would help us if campaigners' invoices showed the detail of which groups of people they targeted with digital adverts. Although spending over £200 needs to be supported by an invoice, the law is not clear on the level of detail that should be included in the invoice. Some invoices contain very little detail, making it difficult or impossible to know what the money was spent on and where. For example, campaigners have given us invoices from Facebook which say only "campaign 1, campaign 2". However, other campaigners have given us more meaningful detail. Their invoices show the text of the campaign messages sent to voters or information about the area of the country they were targeted at. It should be required to provide invoices from their suppliers which contain more meaningful information about the details of their campaigns. This should include the messages used in those campaigns, which parts of the country they were targeted at, and how much was spent on each campaign. Revising the spending categories Revising the spending categories Spending on campaign activity is declared to us under broad categories such as 'advertising'. There is no specific legal category for digital campaigning. We can see from our records that different campaigners have declared it under different spending categories, but mostly as advertising. We recommended after the 2015 UK Parliament general election that the spending categories should be revised to provide more useful information about what campaigners have spent money on. This has not been acted on so far, but would be a valuable additional tool to track and check the spending on digital campaigning. We think it could be too simplistic to add a new 'digital' category alongside the existing ones. The existing categories focus on types of communication with voters, including 'unsolicited material to electors' or 'advertising' or 'events'. If a category was introduced for 'digital spending', it might displace all of that spending into one large category based on how it was done. The information would not be easy to use and it would not increase transparency. Instead, it would be better to create sub-categories to record what medium or format was used for the activity. The solution needs to be practical for campaigners to report their spending. It also needs to provide meaningful information for everyone who uses it. Database of political adverts Database of political adverts Social media companies have started to set out how they could make political adverts more transparent. Facebook, Google and Twitter have said that they will make sure that campaigners who pay to place political adverts with them will have to include labels showing who has paid for them. They also say that they plan to publish their own online databases of the political adverts that they have been paid to run. These will include information such as the targeting, actual reach and amount spent on those adverts. These companies are aiming to publish their databases in time for the November 2018 mid-term elections in the United States. Some of them also published data ahead of the May 2018 referendum in Ireland. Facebook has said it aims to publish similar data ahead of the local elections in England and Northern Ireland in May 2019. 'Who targets me?' is a citizen-led project which Sam Jeffers and Louis Knight-Webb set up shortly before the 2017 UK Parliament general election. They created software that voters could install on their web browsers. It tracked the political adverts they saw. The project recommended that social media companies publish all the adverts they run on a central website. Some organisations like the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising also support creating a central public register of online political adverts, rather than leaving it to the social media companies themselves. We welcome the intention of each of these proposals. Databases like these would bring greater

transparency for voters. They would also make it easier for us to enforce the spending rules. We would be able to see what adverts a campaigner has taken out and how much they paid. For example, if we could see that certain campaigners are targeting adverts to the same voters, it could indicate that they are working together. We expect the social media companies to make sure that their new databases of political adverts reflect the UK's election and referendum rules, and provide meaningful information for us and for voters. We want all the major social media companies that run election adverts in the UK to make sure they create such databases. We expect them to discuss with us whether they can publish their data in the same format. Paid-for adverts and organic reach Paid-for adverts and organic reach Digital campaigning costs campaigners money if they pay companies like Facebook to target their messages at voters. However, campaigners can also spread their messages for free by encouraging their supporters to share them with their friends and family. This is called 'organic' reach. Media reports claim that the Labour Party and Momentum did this effectively during the 2017 general election campaign. The current rules for election and referendum campaigns focus on the money campaigners spend. They don't cover the organic reach campaigners can harness. For example, the rules would cover the costs of targeting an advert or message at a campaigner's online supporters. But there would be no additional costs if the supporters share the message further with their online contacts. This can be particularly effective if messages have humorous or otherwise striking content. Some people might think that it is unfair if some campaigners have greater organic reach than others. But it could also give campaigners an incentive to attract more supporters to broaden their organic reach. In this respect digital campaigning is not different from more traditional forms of campaigning, where some campaigners are more effective than others. We consider that getting more voters to participate in election and referendum campaigns is good for those campaigns and for democracy itself. The current rules were developed in 2000. At that time, it was more difficult to spread messages widely and cheaply through organic reach. s now depend less on spending money for paid adverts to reach some voters directly. But money is still needed to make and manage databases of supporters and target the messages which can build organic reach. It will be important to keep considering whether it is enough to regulate the money that campaigners spend at elections and referendums. There is a question about whether the UK should regulate campaigning at elections and referendums in different ways. Unregulated spending on staffing Unregulated spending on staffing The money that political parties and referendum campaigners spend on staff they directly employ to work on their election and referendum campaigns doesn't count towards their spending limits. But it does count towards non-party campaigners' and candidates' spending limits. We held meetings with several political parties and a registered non-party campaigner after the 2017 UK Parliament general election to discuss how they used digital campaigning and social media as part of their campaigns. All of them told us that they had their own permanent staff working on their digital campaigns, and all took on additional staff or consultants for the election. All of the parties told us that digital was an increasingly important aspect of their campaigns. We have recommended since 2013 that the costs of directly employed staff working on election and referendum campaigns should count towards political parties' and referendum campaigners' spending limits. This would close an obvious gap and inconsistency in the rules that allows political parties and referendum campaigners to spend potentially large sums of money on campaigning without having to declare them. It would also make it more transparent how much

campaigners spend on digital campaigning. Improving understanding about regulated spending Improving understanding about regulated spending The UK's election rules cover the most important costs of campaigning, but some journalists and commentators seem unsure about which costs are covered. The rules cover the costs of distributing and targeting digital campaign materials or developing and using databases for digital campaigning. This applies even if the original purchase of hardware or software materials falls outside the regulated period for reporting spending.

Spending limits and rules to report spending apply to campaign spending on advertising. The same rules apply whether campaigners use long-standing techniques, such as printed mailshots or billboards, or newer ones, such as emails and online adverts. Statutory codes about election spending Statutory codes about election spending We are currently drafting statutory codes of practice for political parties and candidates. The codes are intended to add clarity and give examples about how the law applies to different kinds of spending. The draft codes outline how campaigners should report digital campaigning and use of data. We are preparing these codes for the UK Parliament to approve, so that there will be statutory guidance for campaigners about how the law on election spending. The Scottish and Welsh Governments are also interested in introducing codes for elections in Scotland and Wales. We aim to have them approved in time for the next major elections in 2021 and 2022. We are planning to consult on the statutory codes on election spending in the latter part of 2018. We encourage a wide range of responses to improve the draft Codes before they are presented to legislators. When and how we receive spending information When and how we receive spending information s that spend under £250,000 have three months after an election or referendum to submit their spending returns to us. s that spend £250,000 or more have six months. This is a long time after the campaigns have finished. During this time, voters have no information about how much money campaigners spent, or what they spent it on, to influence the result. Members of the public who took part in our research thought that submitting spending returns after a campaign was too late. Some thought that campaigners should have to report their spending during a campaign. Currently, campaigners can choose to submit their returns to us electronically or on paper. If we receive paper records, we have to use resources on data entry and that delays publication. It takes more time to check information in the paper spending returns and cross-check it with other information we hold before we can publish it. Voters should be able to see how campaigners have spent their money as soon as possible after an election or referendum while it is still a live issue. Earlier deadlines for campaigners to submit their spending returns would make it easier for voters to understand this. If campaigners had to submit electronic records to us, it would also mean that we could identify any possible problems more quickly after the election or referendum. When the spending and funding rules apply to campaigners When the spending and funding rules apply to campaigners UK electoral law sets limits on the amount of money that campaigners can spend on campaign activity during the regulated period before elections and referendums. The period of time when spending rules apply has been different for several referendums. For the Scottish independence referendum, the spending controls applied for 16 weeks. For the EU referendum it was ten weeks. There were also different lengths of time between the legislation for the referendum being passed and the spending rules coming into effect. s may use this gap to spend large sums of money that don't count towards their spending limits. There are similar issues about when the funding rules start to apply and whether campaigners can use this gap to raise money that is not covered by the rules. Who pays for digital campaigns?

Recommendations Social media companies should put in place new controls to check that people or organisations who want to pay to place political adverts about elections and referendums in the UK are actually based in the UK or registered to vote here. Each of the UK's governments and legislatures should clarify that spending on election or referendum campaigns by foreign organisations or individuals is not allowed. They would need to consider how it could be enforced and the impact on free speech. The UK Government and Parliament should make clear in law that campaigners cannot accept money from companies that have not made enough money in the UK to fund the amount of their donation or loan. The UK Government and Parliament should consider with us how to improve the controls on donations and loans to prevent foreign money being used in UK politics. Approaches for enhanced due diligence and risk assessment could be adapted from recent money laundering regulations. The UK Government and Parliament should amend the law so that all new parties and referendum campaigners with assets or liabilities over £500 have to submit a declaration that includes an estimate of the costs the campaigner has invested in buying or developing the data they hold when they register. Rules on spending at elections and referendums. Rules on spending at elections and referendums. The UK Parliament made rules so that only those with a real interest in the UK's politics can use their money to influence voters.

The only groups that can give money to parties or campaigners, or register as non-party campaigners are people who live in the UK or are registered to vote here, or organisations based here. But global digital communication tools are challenging these rules. Preventing spending from outside the UK. Preventing spending from outside the UK. Registered campaigners in the UK have been open about their use of digital campaigns to reach voters. However, anyone outside the UK can also pay for adverts on digital and social media platforms to target voters in the UK. This means that people who are not allowed to register as campaigners can still spend money to influence voters in the UK. This could be from foreign nation states or from private organisations and individuals. Although there is a general principle that funding from abroad is not allowed, the rules do not explicitly ban overseas spending. The UK's rules set minimum amounts for campaign spending before people or organisations have to register as a non-party campaigner. This means that a foreign individual or organisation that spends under these amounts would not have broken any specific electoral laws in the UK. These rules were meant to reduce the risk of too much spending by non-party campaigners and bring more transparency, while not limiting free speech. At the time when the rules were made in 2000, the UK Government and Parliament were worried about foreign donations to political parties. They had not seen the potential for foreign sources to directly purchase campaign advertising in the UK. The UK Government and security services have recently set out their view on foreign interference. They said that foreign sources are likely to have tried to disrupt and interfere with UK election and referendum campaigns using digital and social media tools. Academic research has also started to show that foreign sources appear to have carried out some social media activity in the UK. The current evidence available to us does not suggest that this has taken place in the UK on the scale alleged at the 2016 US Presidential election. We will continue talking to the UK Government and security services about any more evidence if it comes out. In any case such activity is unacceptable. The Government has informed us that it "is alert to the threat of subversion and other means of seeking to manipulate the electoral process or undermine democratic institutions". Facebook, Google and Twitter have said that they will put in place new controls to check that people or organisations who want to pay to place political adverts about elections in the United States are

actually based there. We would like to see similar controls introduced for elections and referendums in the UK. A specific ban on any campaign spending from abroad would further strengthen the UK's election and referendum rules. Digital and social media companies' own controls would be one set of tools to stop foreign spending on digital advertising or promotion. The UK would need to look carefully at the practical and legal implications of a ban on any campaign spending from abroad. This includes how a ban could be enforced and the impact on free speech. It should also look at the impact on UK citizens who live abroad who are registered to vote at UK elections and referendums. This includes changes that have been proposed in a Bill to the UK Parliament to allow any UK citizen living abroad to register to vote in the UK.

Preventing company funding from outside the UK Preventing company funding from outside the UK Companies that are registered in the UK or a European Union member state and that are carrying on business in the UK can give or lend money to campaigners in the UK. These companies can also register as campaigners. Companies do not have to show that they have made enough money in the UK to give or lend to campaigners. This means that campaigners could receive money which originally came from outside the UK. This could include goods or services that companies give to campaigners as a gift or at a discount, including digital campaign services. In 1998 and 2011, the Committee on Standards in Public Life said foreign companies should not be able to use subsidiaries in the UK just for the purpose of giving money to campaigners. Companies should show that they had made enough money in the UK to give or lend to campaigners. In 2013, we recommended that the UK Government and Parliament should look at whether the rules were strong enough to stop campaigners using money that comes from outside the UK. We said the rules should reflect more closely the Committee on Standards in Public Life's recommendation. We repeated this recommendation in our report on the 2016 EU referendum. The UK Parliament has not changed these rules yet, but the UK Government has said it will discuss it with us.

Improving controls on donations and loans Improving controls on donations and loans It would also help to look at other ways to improve the controls on the money that campaigners accept. The UK's money laundering rules require businesses to take steps to make sure that money does not have any obvious link with criminal activity. The UK Government updated these rules in 2017. We think that some of the tools that businesses use for risk assessment and due diligence on customers could also be considered as part of the rules for campaigners at elections and referendums in the UK. These kinds of changes could help to make sure that foreign money is not used in UK election and referendum campaigns, including in digital campaigns. New campaigners' assets and data New campaigners' assets and data The rules on donations and loans only apply to campaigners after they have registered with us. The rules do not require transparency about money or assets that campaigners have before they register. Even after a party has registered, the deadline for submitting the first statement of accounts may be 18 months away. These accounts provide information about a new party's finances. But the rules mean that voters and other campaigners will not have information about a campaigner's early financial position. It also means we have less information to plan and focus our monitoring and other regulatory work.

We recommended in 2013 that all new parties should submit a declaration of assets and liabilities over £500 upon registration. We also think that this requirement should apply to all referendum campaigners who have to register with us. Datasets and databases are an increasingly valuable asset for running targeted election campaigns. The declaration should include an estimate of the costs the campaigner has invested in buying or developing the data they hold when they register. Enforcing the rules

Recommendations Each of the UK's governments and legislatures should increase our powers to obtain information outside of an investigation Each of the UK's governments and legislatures should increase our powers for information sharing with other agencies when it is in the public interest Each of the UK's governments should increase the maximum fine we can sanction campaigners for breaking the rules Each of the UK's governments and legislatures should give us powers to investigate and sanction candidates for breaking the candidate rules Social media companies should work with us to improve their policies on campaign material and advertising for elections and referendums in the UK The law on funding and spending at elections and referendums UK electoral law sets requirements relating to funding and spending for election and referendum campaigns. There are criminal offences for not complying with the rules. As the regulator of political finance, we have powers to investigate breaches of the rules. We can impose a monetary penalty known as a civil sanction. The police can also investigate suspected breaches of the rules and refer cases for criminal prosecution in a court. Increasing our powers to obtain information Increasing our powers to obtain information Digital campaigning materials can be distributed instantaneously to large target audiences. It can have an immediate effect on an election or referendum campaign. It is therefore important that we are able to look into concerns about a campaign. We want to do this in 'real-time', as well as after a vote. We have wide powers to get evidence when we are investigating whether an offence has already been committed. Most of the offences we can investigate are about reporting to us. This can reveal issues about a campaigner's spending or funding during a campaign. By the time we receive the reports, the campaign has been over for months. Our preferred approach is to prevent the rules being broken, or to put a matter right as quickly as possible. Our powers are more limited where we need to make enquiries outside of an investigation. We may need to request information from suppliers of digital campaigning tools about the identity of the originating account. Or we may request that parties and campaigners provide rapid answers to our questions about the digital activity. Our statutory powers to compel the provision of evidence cover all organisations and individuals that are regulated under the law – including registered campaigners. However, our powers outside an investigation only cover material related to income and expenditure. Our powers do not extend to third parties such as suppliers of digital platforms. We recommend that our powers to compel the provision of documents, information and explanation outside of an investigation should be extended. We should have the power to request information from any person who may hold relevant material. The Information Commissioner recently asked for similar powers and the UK Parliament gave them to her organisation. If we had this power, we could make suppliers of digital services or platforms provide relevant information that they hold. This change would make things faster when we assess concerns that we identify or when allegations are made to us. It would also help us when gathering information about a campaign that involves a number of different campaigners and suppliers. Improving our powers to help enforce other laws Improving our powers to help enforce other laws Our main role is to ensure campaigners comply with the political finance rules. Sometimes we have information that relates to compliance with other legal frameworks, such as data protection law. However, it is not always clear whether we are able to share that information with the relevant regulator or law enforcement body. We have a clear power to share information that relates to electoral law matters with relevant bodies. But we are reliant on others' powers to allow us to share information that does not relate to our legal functions. This gap in our powers to share information applies both within

and outside UK. Fortunately, for matters of data protection, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has a power that enables us to provide and receive information relating to its functions. Without that we would not have the power to pass information relating to breaches of data protection to the ICO. However, the power relies on us having to determine that the information is necessary for the ICO's functions. This could slow down our ability to refer relevant information in future. We would prefer a general power enabling us to share information with other regulators or law enforcement bodies where we think it is in the public interest to do so. This would enable us to refer information more proactively where needed and streamline our processes. Strengthening our powers to enforce the rules Strengthening our powers to enforce the rules The maximum fine we can impose for breaking the UK's political finance rules is £20,000 for each offence. We have previously said that this is too low. s spend millions of pounds at UK elections and referendums, including on digital campaign activities. We are worried that a maximum fine of £20,000 risks becoming a cost of doing business for some campaigners. This penalty does not provide an effective deterrent to stop campaigners committing offences. Where offences have already taken place, this penalty is not proportionate to the impact that many of the offences could have. This is particularly the case when campaigners are not established political parties, for example in the context of a referendum. These campaigners may be less concerned about damaging their image or reputation in the future. We want the UK's governments and legislatures to change the law which limits our maximum fine. There should be a consultation about the level of fine. We think it should be similar to other regulators' fines. Currently, only the police and prosecutors can investigate if they suspect the candidate rules have been broken. We have previously recommended that we should be given powers to investigate breaches of the candidate spending and donation rules at major elections. This would be the same as our responsibility for party and other campaigner spending and donations. This change, and the others we've recommended, would help us find out if candidates and parties are correctly reporting digital spending against their own limits. What digital and social media companies can do What digital and social media companies can do We want digital and social media companies to do more to help improve confidence in digital campaigns. They have already shown that they can help to uphold specific laws in different countries. For example, they have developed tools to help make sure their users do not break copyright laws. They have also shown that it is possible to take action on political adverts. For American elections coming up in autumn 2018, Facebook, Google and Twitter have said they will check whether campaigners are based in the USA. s won't be allowed to if they aren't. We want them to make similar changes to their advertising policies in the UK. This would help improve compliance with the UK's rules before voters even see campaign adverts. Both Facebook and Google made changes to their policies on political adverts before the May 2018 referendum in Ireland. Facebook stopped campaigners outside Ireland from buying referendum adverts, and Google banned all paid adverts about the referendum. s and commentators criticised both companies for making these changes very close to referendum polling day. They did not consult publicly on their plans beforehand. We want digital and social media companies to make sure their policies on political adverts better reflect our election and referendum campaign rules. This could include removing campaign adverts or material that does not show clearly who is responsible for promoting it. It could include social media companies giving us information about campaigners we think have broken the rules. They could also look for campaigners they think have broken the rules and report them to us. We also want to make sure that

people in the UK can expect a consistent approach to political adverts from all the companies that operate here, rather than different individual policies from different companies. This means that they need to consult and work closely with us and also with campaigners in the UK. It also means we will need to check whether new companies are developing popular platforms or sites which campaigners are starting to use in the UK in future. We will monitor how well the digital and social media companies' voluntary proposals work at upcoming elections. If the proposals don't work well, the UK's governments and legislators should consider direct regulation.

Related content

[Transparency in digital campaigning: response to Cabinet Office technical consultation on digital imprints](#) [Response: Online Harms White Paper](#) [Read our response to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Online Harms White Paper](#)

[Response to the UK Government policy consultation: Protecting the Debate](#) [Read our response to the consultation about three proposed changes to electoral law to protect candidates and voters from intimidation](#) [Donations and loans](#) [Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation](#)

February 2023 Summary From November 2023, there will be changes that simplify and clarify the offence of undue influence. Undue influence is when someone uses, or threatens to use, force or violence to make someone vote a certain way or not vote at all. These changes will apply to local elections in England, Police and Crime

Commissioner elections in England and Wales, and general elections in the UK including recall petitions. Changes The changes will simplify and clarify the offence of undue influence and will define the types of illegal behaviour used to unfairly influence someone's vote. This should make it simpler for the police to take action when allegations of undue influence are made. This includes the offences of both

direct and indirect undue influence, and those taking place both before and after an election. The changes apply to all campaign activity, including printed materials, and would extend to anyone who seeks to intimidate a voter either inside or outside a polling station. There will be an extra sentencing option, in addition to imposing criminal penalties such as a prison sentence or fine, to strengthen the deterrent against the intimidation of candidates and campaigners. This covers hostility towards someone based on their relationship with a campaigner (for example, a family member of the campaigner) as well.

Our role We will support the electoral community by updating our guidance for electoral administrators, and polling station staff, setting out what behaviour is and is not allowed at polling stations. We also run public awareness campaigns ahead of elections. Our ' your vote is yours alone ' campaign, delivered in partnership with Crimestoppers, empowers voters to protect their vote. We provide a range of resources for local authorities to use in the run up to polling day, to help ensure no one feels pressurised to vote in a certain way.

We will update our Code of Conduct for campaigners on what they should consider when campaigning outside polling stations. We will also update our guidance for candidates and agents. We already publish joint guidance with the National Police Chiefs' Council, Crown Prosecution Service, and College of Policing to help candidates recognise and respond to intimidatory behaviour. We will continue, with those

partners, to keep this under review and update it appropriately. Related content

Elections Act about the UK Government's Elections Act and what it means for voting and campaigning About the Elections Act about the Elections Bill, including the measures it contains and which elections it applies to. Improving the accessibility of elections Read about the proposals to make it easier for people with disabilities to vote. Changes for EU Citizens about proposed changes to EU Citizens' rights to vote and stand in elections.

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Senior Leadership Team You are in the section Home On this page Electoral
Administration and Guidance Regulation Communications, Policy and Research Finance
and Corporate Services First published: 30 May 2019 Last updated: 5 December 2022
About our Senior Leadership Team Our Senior Leadership Team supports directors, and
ensures their teams are able to deliver our strategies and work effectively.
Electoral Administration and Guidance Melanie Davidson, Head of Support and
Improvement As the Head of Support and Improvement, Mel oversees the work of our
regional team. Charlene Hannon, Head of Guidance Charlene oversees the work of our
guidance teams. Cahir Hughes, Head of Electoral Commission, Northern Ireland Cahir is
the Head of Electoral Commission Northern Ireland, and represents the views of
stakeholders in Northern Ireland. Andy O'Neill, Head of Electoral Commission,
Scotland As Head of Electoral Commission Scotland, Andy ensures that the views of
Scottish stakeholders contribute to all aspects of our work. Rhydian Thomas, Head of
Electoral Commission, Wales As the Head of Electoral Commission Wales, Rhydian
focuses on the issues that affect Wales and ensures Wales is represented in our work.
Regulation and Digital Transformation Dan Adamson, Head of Monitoring and Enforcement
Dan leads the team carrying out investigations. Laura Douglas, Head of Regulatory
Support Laura heads the teams providing regulatory guidance and proactive support to
our regulated stakeholders. Majella La Praik, Head of Registration and Reporting
Majella oversees the registration of political parties and the reporting of
expenditure. Andrew Simpson, Head of Digital, Data, Technology and Facilities Andrew
oversees our IT team, as well as our information functions. Communications, Policy
and Research Tim Crowley, Head of Digital Communications and Voter Engagement Tim
leads the team responsible for our website, social media strategy, education and
partnership projects. Su Crown, Head of Campaigns and Corporate Identity Su
oversees the team responsible for our campaigns and internal communication. Tom
Hawthorn, Head of Policy As the Head of Policy, Tom leads the team carrying out our
policy work. Niki Nixon, Head of External Communications Niki oversees both the press
and public affairs teams. Phil Thompson, Head of Research Phil leads the team
carrying out our research projects. Finance and Corporate Services David Bailey, Head
of Strategic Planning and Performance As the Head of Strategic Planning and
Performance, David oversees our business support team. Tracey Blackman, Head of
Finance and Tracey manages the finance and procurement team. Denise Morgan, Head of
Human Resources Denise manages all aspects of HR from recruitment to wellbeing. Carol
Sweetenham, Head of Projects Carol oversees the delivery of our projects. Chief
Executive's Directorate Binnie Goh, General Counsel As General Counsel, Binnie
ensures our work is legally compliant. Binnie also oversees our governance team. Katy
Knock, Head of Legislation, Strategy and Coordination Katy heads the team which
coordinates our work to plan and implement changes to electoral law. Related content
Our Executive Team Meet our Executive Team, and find out more about them Interim
corporate plan 2020/21 - 2024/25 Our interim corporate plan was published following
the 2019 UK Parliament general election. It has now been replaced by our 2022/23 to
2026/27 plan. Our spending about our spending estimates, reports and accounts Our
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polls Board effectiveness review (EC 25/19) First published: 26 July 2019 Last

updated: 30 July 2019 Meeting overview Date: 24 April 2019 Time: 9:30am Location:

Boothroyd Room, 3 Bunhill Row, London Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting

John Holmes, Chair Anna Carragher Sarah Chambers Elan Closs Stephens Alasdair Morgan

Rob Vincent Stephen Gilbert Alastair Ross Joan Walley Sue Bruce (Video conference)

Bob Posner, Chief Executive Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and

Guidance Craig Westwood, Director, Communications and Research Kieran Rix, Director,

Finance and Corporate Services Dan Adamson, Head of Monitoring and Enforcement

Katharine Sparrow, Senior Executive Assistant Update on May polls Bob Posner reminded

the Board of the different electoral events that were to take place in May, including

the recall petition in Peterborough, the local elections on 2 May, and the European

Parliamentary election. He said the organisation had moved to delivery mode and where

possible other work had been paused or reprofiled to allow staff to focus on the

polls. Directors then provided an update on their team's work in supporting the

delivery of these polls. Ailsa Irvine said the recall petition in Peterborough seemed

to be going well, and there had been regular contact with the Petition Officer.

Initial anecdotal feedback was similar to North Antrim in that the six week period

for signing the petition felt too long. We had sought to collect more data to

evidence any recommendations we might want to make on the length of petition periods

and other aspects of the process. She also noted there was little in the legislation

about the timing of the count, but the result had to be announced within one day of

close of the petition, which meant the result was likely to be announced just as

people started going to the polls for the local elections. The Board heard that

preparations for the local elections were going well and we had engaged with all

authorities with elections taking place. Some issues were arising, but they were

relatively minor so far. However, compared to previous years, we were receiving

significantly more queries from administrators. This was partly due to the higher

number of areas with elections than last year, but also to the late change to the

legislation around candidate's home addresses on the ballot papers, which had led to

a significant number of queries around the nomination process. Ailsa Irvine said the

contingency planning we had undertaken through the Events Delivery Steering Group had

put us in a good place when preparing for the European Parliament election. We had

issued our guidance to administrators at the end of March, and we had also provided

additional guidance to authorities with local elections to help them manage the issue

of overlapping timetables. The Board was reminded that the administrative structure

for the European Parliament elections was different to other elections, with Regional

Returning Officers (RROs) coordinating across 11 electoral areas in Great Britain,

and Northern Ireland. There were risks to the delivery of the poll as local

authorities were stretched with this poll so close to the local elections, but we

were working with the RROs, through our Elections Coordination and Advisory Board

(ECAB), to mitigate the risks and there was nothing currently to suggest the polls

wouldn't be delivered successfully. Craig Westwood updated the Board on our public

awareness campaigns. The campaign for the local elections had finished on 12 April

and early data on applications showed we had exceeded our targets in both England and

Northern Ireland, with final numbers to be confirmed. The team had worked swiftly to

put together the campaign for the European Parliamentary election and this was now

being rolled out, initially on digital channels, to be followed shortly by

television. Craig Westwood said the teams had also put work in place for our post poll reporting. He noted we had been able to up-weight our public opinion survey for the local elections which has enabled us to gain more evidence on the Peterborough recall petition. This would help with our reporting and any recommendations we might want to make. Craig Westwood noted that the voter ID pilots had gone ahead and plans were in place to ensure we gathered as much feedback as we could to inform our reporting. The various polls were also generating a lot of media and public affairs enquiries. There was substantial reactive work underway to deal with these enquiries, but we were also taking a proactive approach to help minimise the number of questions. The Board received an update on preparations in the Regulation Directorate. A decision had been taken early in the year to make regulation guidance available and remind campaigners of the regulatory period should the European Parliamentary election be confirmed. Where it seemed appropriate we were now also arranging meetings with political parties and non-party campaigners to ensure they understood the rules. Dan Adamson said campaign monitoring was well underway, including for the first time use of the new social media tools. Our enforcement team would look to intervene quickly where necessary. We were conscious that there were some high profile new parties and some inexperienced candidates. We were therefore thinking about potential issues and what this might mean for the advice that should be given. Turning to budgets, Kieran Rix noted that in normal circumstances the budget for European Parliament elections would have been around £1.4M over two years, but in the current circumstances, we planned to stay within the £686K agreed in our 2018/19 budget. The Board heard that the Executive Team had looked at workloads, and empowered staff to make suggestions about what work could be stopped or rescheduled to give them the capacity to concentrate on the election related work. They were also thinking about staff resilience and what could be done to help support staff through these polls. The Board discussed the various electoral events in more detail. They requested that once both the recall petition in Peterborough and the petition due to commence shortly in Brecon and Radnorshire had closed, our statutory report not only consider recommendations around the length of time and cost and whether petitions could be used to trial other forms of voting, but also address the potential for a more fundamental review of the current framework. The Board requested a discussion on the findings from the voter ID pilots and any recommendations we might make. The Board noted some of the issues coming up around the European Parliament election, including the registration of EU27 citizens (i.e. citizens from the EU except for the UK), security concerns, and any cancellation of the poll. Actions: That a Board discussion be scheduled on the findings of the voter ID pilots, including any recommendations we might make in our statutory report. That our statutory report on the recall petitions in Peterborough and in Brecon and Radnorshire consider recommendations around the length of time and cost, and whether petitions could be used to trial other forms of voting, and address the potential for a more fundamental review of the current framework. Board effectiveness review (EC 25/19) The Chair introduced the item and said it was important the Board scrutinise themselves and the impact they have had over the last twelve months. He noted that the next review of effectiveness would need to involve an external independent facilitator. Bob Posner said that the paper laid out the responsibilities of the Board, its membership, core values, and code of conduct. The paper analysed two aspects of the Board's role as a non-executive body – supervisory and stewardship – and the types of decisions made by the Board. He noted that in 2018, two-thirds of the Board agenda items were supervisory in nature. Further, two-thirds of Board agenda items gave Commissioners

the opportunity to contribute to Commission business. The Chair invited Commissioners to think about the impact of the Board on what was happening in the organisation, the balance between support and challenge of staff, whether Commissioners were confident they were receiving the right information, and whether they were spending enough time on substance as well as due diligence issues. Overall the Board were satisfied there were no fundamental problems. However there were a number of areas Commissioners wanted to come back to at future meetings, including: Assurance on robustness of investigations and other key regulatory processes, including an opportunity for the Chair of the Audit Committee to review a completed investigation How diversity in the makeup of the Board might be more of a focus through future recruitment How to deal with England, including the possibility of a Commissioner with some responsibilities for England, and a consideration of the returning officer leadership structures in England assuming the European Parliamentary election regions would be lost Whether there was a need for the Commission to play a greater leadership role to enhance confidence in the electoral system Commissioners should hear more directly from stakeholders on some issues How to make better use of the knowledge and experience of all Commissioners How to assess the performance of Board Committees The annual effectiveness process for the Board and how a review with external facilitation might be carried out, plus an informal mid-year update Actions: That an item be brought to Board to confirm the actions arising from this discussion on Board effectiveness.

Enforcement Policy Investigations Make an allegation Summary Political parties, campaigners, members associations and elected officials such as MPs have to follow the Political Parties, Referendums and Elections Act (PPERA) when spending money or accepting donations and loans . Overview One of the rules means that they have to report spending, donations and loans above a certain amount to us. If they break the rules, we'll investigate and may take action under our enforcement policy . Where a breach involves a criminal offence, but we can't sanction or it's so serious that our sanctions wouldn't be strong enough, we'll pass investigations on to the police or prosecuting authority to take further action. Who and what we regulate We regulate the political finances of: Political parties Non-party campaigners Candidates standing for election Individual party members Those who hold an elected office, like MPs Referendum campaigners Members associations Unincorporated associations Looking for information about other offences? We don't regulate everything to do with elections, but can help you understand who does. Take a look How we regulate We use a robust and intelligence-led approach to regulating. Throughout the year, we proactively monitor everyone we regulate to make sure they're following the rules. If they break the rules, we may take action under our enforcement policy. Read our enforcement policy for more information on our enforcement powers. We publish the political finance information reported to us by all groups, including: donations and loans campaign spending annual accounts Have a look at the latest financial reports Related content Electoral law is out of date. Find out where we want to see improvements Political parties, campaigners and other groups have to report their finances to us. Find out about campaign spending, donations and loans and annual accounts.

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Corporate plan 2022/23 to 2026/27 You are in the Our plans and priorities section Home Our plans and priorities Sections 1. The electoral system Section 1 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan 2. The Electoral Commission Section 2 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan 3. Putting voters first Section 3 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan 4. Supporting and securing campaigner compliance with the law Section 4 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan 5. Supporting local electoral services delivery and resilience Section 5 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan 6. Making sure electoral law is fair and effective Section 6 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan 7. A modern and sustainable electoral system Section 7 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan 8. Underpinning this work Section 8 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan 9. Managing our costs Section 9 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan 10. Measuring our performance Section 10 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan 11. Managing risk and opportunities Section 11 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan 12. Our governance arrangements Section 12 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan Foreword This five-year Corporate Plan, for the period 2022/23 to 2026/27, replaces and develops our interim plan put in place after the December 2019 UK general election. The Electoral Commission works independent from governments to promote public confidence in the electoral system, ensuring the integrity of elections and the legitimacy of their results. We aim to deliver our responsibilities impartially, ensuring independence of thinking and decision making that can be trusted. We have UK wide responsibilities, are accountable to the UK Parliament, the Scottish Parliament and the Senedd, and our work is directed to meeting the needs of each of the four parts of the UK. Our statutory responsibilities are integral to the electoral system – whether regulating political finance laws; providing oversight, guidance, or support on the delivery of elections; supporting voters to engage with the democratic process with confidence; or providing evidence and insights to inform future improvement. Working with others, we constantly strive to improve the electoral system for the benefit of voters, campaigners and electoral administrators. Elections in the UK are well-run. Our survey work shows very high levels of public satisfaction in the processes in place for voters to register and cast their votes. We also have one of the most transparent systems of political finance in the world. However, there are pressures on the whole electoral system which need our attention. We will continue to seek to remove barriers that deter people from registering or casting their vote. Alongside our ongoing activities to encourage voter registration and protect against electoral fraud, we will work to retain voter confidence in political campaigning as it evolves. We will support parties and campaigners to comply with the law, while continuing to ensure political finance is transparent. We will support local authorities to meet the significant economic, social and environmental challenges they face in delivering well-run electoral services. We will also support electoral administrators to adapt to the increasingly diverse approach to the way elections are delivered, brought about by devolution and the changing needs of voters. During the period of this plan, we will work with others to secure changes in the law and in the operation of the electoral system that will ensure it is resilient to changes in society. Critical to this will be taking on board advances in digital technology, seeking sustainable solutions and improving the coherence and efficiency of how organisations involved in the electoral system work together. Underpinning the plan is the requirement to provide value for money and maintain a well-run organisation. The plan incorporates a renewed focus on equality, diversity and inclusion, and is designed to encourage staff engagement, development of skills

and use of the technology required to support effective ways of working and continuous learning and improvement. We look forward to working constructively with governments, parliaments, parties and campaigners, electoral administrators and other interested groups to maintain voter confidence in our electoral system. Download the corporate plan Corporate plan 2022/23 to 2026/27

Report on the May 2022 local elections in England | Electoral Commission Search Report on the May 2022 local elections in England You are in the England local council elections section Home England local council elections Currently reading: of 4 - Show page contents On this page Voting at the elections Campaigning at the elections Delivering the elections Supporting evidence Summary This report looks at how the May 2022 elections in England were run, how voters and campaigners found taking part, and what lessons can be learned for the future. We have reported separately on elections held in Northern Ireland , Scotland and Wales . On 5 May elections took place in many areas of England, including in all London boroughs. There were also six local mayoral elections and the South Yorkshire combined authority mayoral election. Overall, people were confident that these elections were well-run and were highly satisfied with the process of registering to vote and voting. Turnout at these elections was broadly consistent with previous elections, although it remains low. Almost everyone who voted was able to use their preferred method and found it easy to fill in their ballot paper, but we continue to see a small proportion of postal ballot packs rejected. s engaged with voters in a range of ways ahead of the elections and felt able to get their views across effectively. Voters generally found it easy to access information about the elections, but this did not necessarily translate to them feeling well-informed about the elections and who they could vote for. A notable proportion of candidates told us that they experienced some form of abuse or intimidation. Robust debate is an essential feature of election campaigns, but this must not lead to threats, abuse or intimidation that discourage candidates from standing for election or campaigning. We will work with the UK's governments and the wider electoral community to make sure we understand what is driving candidate abuse and intimidation, and to ensure this issue is addressed as a matter of urgency. The pattern of elections was less complex this year than in May 2021, with fewer combinations of elections and unscheduled elections. However, the resilience of electoral administration teams remains a concern, with staffing and booking venues posing a significant challenge in some areas. The range and scale of changes to be introduced by the Elections Act adds to this concern, with some significant changes intended to be delivered for the first time in England at the May 2023 local elections. Effective implementation will rely on the detailed secondary legislation being in place in time to allow the necessary preparations to be made. Voting at the elections The experience of voters at the May 2022 elections Most people were confident that these elections were well-run and were highly satisfied with the process of registering to vote, and 96% of voters were satisfied with the process of voting. This is consistent with findings from recent elections. Polling station voters felt confident that they could vote safely in person and almost everyone who voted was able to use their preferred method and found it easy to fill in their ballot paper. Almost everyone who voted by post said that they knew how to complete and return their postal vote, and found the postal voting instructions useful. However, we continue to see a small proportion of postal ballot packs rejected. Overview On 5 May 2022, there were elections for local councillors in many areas of England, including in all London boroughs. There was also a combined authority mayoral election in South Yorkshire and six local authority mayoral elections. A total of 22.4 million people across England were registered to vote in these elections. Voters continue to have positive views about how elections are run After each election we ask members of the public who were eligible to vote for their views on voting and elections, which helps us understand if views have changed since the last comparable set of elections. Satisfaction with the registration and voting

process remains high. People continue to have high levels of satisfaction with the process of registering to vote and voting. Our research shows that: 79% of people in England were satisfied with the process of registering to vote. This is consistent with the levels of satisfaction reported by people after the most recent comparable elections held in 2018. 96% of voters in England were satisfied with the process of voting. This is an increase from 2018 when 90% of people were satisfied. Older age groups are more likely to say that they are satisfied with the process of registering, while people who say that they have been 'limited a lot' by health or disability over the previous 12 months are slightly less likely to be satisfied with registering and with voting. Almost everyone (97%) who voted in person at a polling station felt safe voting with relevant Covid provisions in place. 1% said they felt fairly unsafe while the remaining 2% said they did not know. Most people were confident that the elections were well-run. More than seven-in-10 (73%) people said they were confident that the elections were well-run. Just under one-in-10 (9%) said they were not confident, and people who didn't vote were more likely to say they were not confident the elections were well-run than voters. When we asked people why they were not confident that the elections were well-run, the most commonly chosen reasons were: there wasn't enough information about the candidates (32%), there wasn't enough information about the elections (25%), I did not see any candidates campaigning / canvassing (25%), media / TV / press coverage was biased (23%). Campaigning was based on incorrect information / made untrue claims (21%). Views about the safety of voting and whether electoral fraud is a problem were also consistent with the most recent comparable elections. In 2022, 81% of people in England said they thought voting was safe from fraud and abuse. When asked if they thought electoral fraud was a problem, 19% of people in England said that they thought it was. This is consistent with the 21% who saw it as a problem after the 2018 elections. Concerns were raised before the elections in some areas that voters' rights to a secret ballot could be compromised. It is vital that voters can cast their vote in secret, and anyone attempting to interfere with how a person votes is breaking the law. We work closely with the police and the electoral community to ensure the secrecy of the ballot. Our guidance for Returning Officers and polling station staff makes clear that voters must go to polling booths individually so that their right to a secret vote is protected. We also have a role in raising public awareness; ahead of every election, in partnership with Crimestoppers and the Cabinet Office, we run the 'Your Vote Is Yours Alone' campaign. This targets areas with historic concerns around electoral integrity to empower people to protect their vote and encourage them to report any concerns. In Tower Hamlets, where specific concerns had been expressed about the risk of electoral fraud, the Returning Officer and the police took a range of additional actions to help ensure the secrecy of the ballot at this year's polls. This included assigning an additional member of staff to each polling station to help direct voters individually to polling booths and police officers being on duty at polling stations throughout the day, so that anyone with concerns about intimidation or fraud was able to raise these with the police. We worked closely with them to provide guidance and advice. A range of communications were sent to voters and campaigners, highlighting that everyone must be able to vote in secret and free from intimidation and undue influence. At all polling stations there were prominent posters displayed both outside of polling stations and at the point of issue of ballot papers to reinforce the message that voters must enter the polling booth alone. On polling day, we visited a selection of polling stations and observed a small number of cases where someone tried to go with a voter into the polling booth. We also saw polling station

staff stopping this happening, so that voters could cast their vote in secret. An accredited observer organisation, Democracy Volunteers, has reported that their observers 'saw several challenges to the electoral process' and 'once again these focused around the challenge of family voting, where more than one person attempts to vote together in a polling booth, or affect, direct, or oversee the vote of another', concluding that family voting 'continues to be a challenge, despite the many actions taken by polling staff to attempt to prevent it at these elections.'¹ It is completely unacceptable for anyone's vote to be watched or pressured inside a polling station, but concerns remain in this area. We are committed to tackling any such influence, working in partnership with polling station staff and the police. We will continue to work with the electoral community to identify opportunities to enhance our guidance and training for polling station staff to reinforce the importance of secrecy and the actions that should be taken to address any issues that arise on polling day. Throughout the year, all police forces across the UK send us data about allegations of electoral fraud that they receive and investigate. We will publish the full data in the spring, including the number, type, and outcome of any allegations relating to the May 2022 elections. Turnout at these elections was consistent with previous comparable elections Turnout at these elections (33.6%) was broadly consistent with previous comparable elections, although it remains low compared with some other types of elections. Overall, estimated turnout decreased by one percentage point compared to the last time there were comparable elections for district, metropolitan, unitary councils and London boroughs in 2018. There was a larger decline in turnout in elections in London, with a decrease of 3.4 percentage points. The most common reasons given by people who told us that they didn't vote were: lack of time / too busy / I was busy at work (18%) I'm just not interested in politics / fed up with politics (11%) there was no point in voting because it was obvious who would win / my vote wouldn't have made a difference to the outcome / my vote doesn't count (9%) I was away on 5 May / voting day (8%) I didn't like the candidates / parties / they didn't represent my views (7%) People were confident that they could vote using their preferred method In England, people can choose to vote in one of three ways: they can vote in person at their polling station, by post, or by proxy (asking someone they trust to vote on their behalf). If their situation changes close to an election due to work or disability, people can appoint an emergency proxy up to 5pm on polling day. Ahead of the 2021 elections, the law was changed so that anyone who had to self-isolate close to polling day because they had tested positive for Covid, or had been in close contact to someone who had tested positive, could also appoint an emergency proxy. This change remained in place for the 2022 elections in England. People knew that other options were available if they didn't want to vote in a polling station Most people said that they found it easy to find information on how to vote either in person at a polling station or remotely by post or proxy. Our research showed that: 73% of people said they found it easy to get information about the different methods of voting they could choose from 82% of people who voted in a polling station and 84% of people who voted by post said they found it easy to get information about different methods of voting 10% of postal voters told us that these elections were the first time they had voted by post. The most common reasons for choosing to do so were convenience and being too busy to go to the polling station, with most finding it easy to understand how to apply for their postal vote Voting using their preferred method was possible for most voters The majority of people (80.4%) were eligible to vote in person, while 19.5% were sent a postal vote and 0.1% (20,191) appointed a proxy, of which 1,417 were an emergency proxy. This represents a

slight increase in the number choosing a postal vote compared to the last time these elections took place in 2018, but is similar to the proportion who did so at the elections in 2021. Most people who voted were able to use their preferred method: 95% of voters said they were able to use their preferred method of voting, compared to 4% who said they were not voters aged under 34 were slightly less likely than other age groups to have used their preferred method to vote, while voters identifying as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic were less likely than white voters to have voted using their preferred method. Most people were confident they knew how to vote without making a mistake. Nearly all voters said that they found it easy to fill in their ballot paper or to complete their postal vote, but some votes continue to be rejected and not included in the count. Most voters found filling in the ballot paper very easy. Nearly all voters (97%) said that it was easy to fill in their ballot paper, with three-quarters (76%) saying they found it very easy. Only 1% of voters said that they found it difficult. Data from electoral administrators shows that 0.5% of all ballot papers (approximately 39,500) were rejected and not included in the count. The most common reason for ballot papers to be rejected was because they were unmarked, with this accounting for almost three-quarters (72%) of all rejected ballot papers.

Most people who voted by post were confident they knew how to vote without making a mistake. Almost everyone who voted by post said that they knew how to complete and return their postal vote and found the postal voting instructions useful. Our research showed that: 96% said that they found useful the written instructions included with their postal vote on how to vote and return the vote. 96% said it was easy to complete and return their postal vote, compared to 4% who said it was difficult. Data from electoral administrators shows that, in the metropolitan, London borough, unitary and district elections, 2.8% of returned postal votes (approximately 80,000 votes in total) were rejected and were not able to be included in the count. The most common reason for postal votes being rejected was that the personal identifiers (their signature and/or date of birth) that voters provided on the postal voting statement did not match those that they had previously provided to the Electoral Registration Officer. This is the same as the last time these elections took place. Other reasons for postal votes being rejected included where voters did not provide either or both of their personal identifiers, or where the ballot paper or postal voting statement was missing. The Elections Act includes a new requirement for voters to reapply for a postal vote every three years. This may help to ensure that voters' personal identifiers are up-to-date and accurate, and we will monitor whether this change has an impact on the number of rejected postal votes at future elections. We will also continue to explore ways of improving the electoral system to better meet voters' needs. As part of this, we will consider evidence about whether changes to postal voting documents or processes could help to reduce the number of postal ballot packs that are rejected at future elections.

Campaigning at the elections

The experience of campaigning at the May 2022 elections felt that they were able to get their views across to voters, using a range of face-to-face, online and printed campaign methods. Traditional campaigning methods (leafletting and canvassing) were the most popular. A notable proportion of candidates responding to our survey said that they experienced some form of abuse or intimidation. In most cases this involved verbal or online abuse, and the majority of instances came from members of the public. We will work with the UK's governments and the wider electoral community to make sure we understand what is driving candidate abuse and intimidation, and to ensure this issue is addressed as a matter of urgency. Although voters generally found it easy to access information about the elections, this did

not necessarily translate to them feeling well-informed about the elections and who they could vote for. A perceived lack of information also affected people's confidence that these elections were well-run. Transparency about who is responsible for political campaign activity online remains important for voters. New transparency requirements are expected to come into force for UK Parliament and local elections from the end of 2023. Campaigning at the elections overview More than 15,000 candidates stood for election to local authorities on 5 May 2022. Three quarters of those candidates stood for either the Conservative, Labour or Liberal Democrat parties, and 15% stood for the Green Party. Candidates standing for other parties represented 7% of the total. A further 3% of candidates were independents who did not stand for any political party. A total of 37 candidates stood for election as directly-elected mayors across the six local authorities where those positions were also contested. There were six candidates for the South Yorkshire combined authority mayoral election. 2 s were able to engage with voters but some raised concerns about intimidation s engaged with voters in a range of ways ahead of the elections and the majority felt able to get their views across effectively. Our research does, however, find that some campaigners raised concerns about intimidation. s used a variety of methods to communicate with voters At the 2022 elections, people continued to receive information about candidates and parties from a range of different sources, and in a variety of formats. The most common ways people reported seeing information on parties and candidates were: leaflet or flyer, either from a candidate / political party (49%) or another source (23%) word of mouth / mentioned by friends / family / carer (12%) social media (generic posts or adverts which did not seem targeted) (10%) newspapers (10%) posters or billboards (10%) I talked to a candidate / candidates directly (10%) Older age groups (65+) were more likely than the youngest age group (18 to 24) to say that they had seen a leaflet or flyer from a candidate or political party, and to say that they had spoken to a candidate or political party. Younger age groups were more likely to mention seeing information on social media. Findings from our survey of candidates were consistent with what voters reported, with traditional campaigning methods (leafletting and canvassing) being the most popular, specifically: over half of the candidates (51%) told us that their most used campaigning method was leaflets, newsletters or flyers, with 90% of candidates saying this was one of their top three campaigning methods door-to-door canvassing was second most popular, with three-quarters (76%) listing it in their top three methods Social media was the most popular digital campaigning tool, compared with targeted emails, website or in-app advertising or other types of digital campaigning. Around a third (35%) of candidates said social media was their third most used campaigning method, although it was primarily used to support more traditional campaigning methods. Free methods of digital campaigning were more popular than paid-for tools with candidates who responded to our survey. We found that: just under two-thirds of candidates (64%) said they posted on social media about their campaign a third (33%) said they asked supporters to share their posts almost a third (31%) said they emailed their supporters only 16% of respondents said that they paid for adverts on social media Most candidates did not experience problems campaigning, but some raised concerns about abuse and intimidation Just under three-quarters of candidates (74%) responding to our survey said that they felt able to get their views across to voters effectively. While not directly comparable, due to the different elections taking place and the sample not being representative of all candidates who stood at the elections, this is an improvement on 2021 when fewer than half of respondents to the survey said this. Due to the improved public health situation, official restrictions

on campaign activities were no longer in place, but Covid did continue to affect campaigners. Three-quarters (76%) of candidates who responded to our survey said that Covid affected at least one aspect of their campaign, with a quarter (26%) of respondents saying that it impacted a lot on their ability to enlist volunteers and get assistance with campaigning. When asked about whether they had experienced some kind of problem with threats, abuse or intimidation, more than half of the candidates (60%) told us that they did not have a problem at all. Our research with candidates did highlight some significant concerns about abuse towards campaigners, specifically: two-fifths of respondents (40%) said they experienced some kind of problem, rating this as a 2 or above on a scale from 1 to 5 just under one in 10 (8%) reported having a serious problem (rated 4 or 5 out of 5) nearly a fifth (18%) witnessed threats, abuse or intimidation towards those campaigning on their behalf of those that said they experienced some kind of abuse, the most common sources were verbal (62%) and online (52%), and most reported receiving it from members of the public (71%) one in 10 (10%) of those who said that they experienced threats or abuse told us that these would discourage them from standing as a candidate again in the future Evidence collected by the Local Government Association has also highlighted the democratic impacts of abuse and intimidation, including the impact on local councillors and candidates' willingness to stand for election. 3 This research also found that there is a growing feeling that abuse and intimidation, particularly online, are becoming normalised. The Elections Act 2022 introduces a new electoral sanction for those found guilty of intimidating candidates, campaigners and elected representatives. Banning someone from standing for elected office, as well as imposing criminal sanctions, such as a prison sentence or fine, will strengthen the deterrent against this intimidating behaviour. Robust debate is an essential feature of election campaigns, but this must not lead to threats, abuse or intimidation that discourage candidates from standing for election or campaigning. Recommendation 1: Urgent action needed to prevent abuse and intimidation Recommendation 1: Urgent action needed to prevent abuse and intimidation Urgent action is needed to tackle and prevent abuse and intimidation of candidates and campaigners at elections. Candidates and campaigners should be able to participate freely in the democratic process, ensuring that voters can hear from a range of voices during elections. Tackling these problems will require coordinated action from a range of partners, including central and local government, police forces, social media companies and political parties and campaigners themselves. We will work with the UK's governments and the wider electoral community to understand what is driving abuse and intimidation and to develop effective responses to protect candidates and campaigners at future elections. People want more information about candidates and campaign material Many voters found it easy to find information about these elections, but this did not necessarily mean that they felt they had enough information. Our research also confirmed that people continue to value transparency about who is responsible for political campaign activity online at elections. Most people find it easy to get information but some do not feel well-informed about candidates Our research after the election found that: just under two-thirds of people (64%) said that they found it easy to find information on what the election was about / for a similar proportion (61%) felt that they found it easy to find information on the candidates and parties running for election Although the majority of people asked said they found it easy to find information, this did not necessarily mean that they felt they had enough information. Our research found that: four in 10 (42%) people agreed that that they had enough information on candidates to make an informed choice, but almost a third

(32%) disagreed younger age groups (18-34) were less likely to agree they had enough information to make an informed decision compared to older age groups (65+) non-voters were more likely to say they did not have enough information to make an informed decision, with 46% of non-voters disagreeing that they had enough information, compared to 26% of voters four in 10 (43%) felt they knew what the local elections were about, but three in ten (30%) did not agree There is also evidence that a perceived lack of information affected people's confidence that these elections were well-run. Our research found that many of those who were not confident the elections were well-run said this was because there wasn't enough information about the candidates (mentioned by 32% of people who were not confident) or about the elections more generally (mentioned by 25%). Transparency about who is producing election campaign material is important to build trust Our research after the elections confirmed that people continue to value transparency about who is responsible for political campaign activity online at elections. We found: two-thirds of people (64%) agreed that it is important for them to know who has produced the political information they see online half (51%) said they would trust digital campaigning material more if they knew who produced it one-in-three (31%) said that they cannot find out who has produced the political information that they see online The UK Government has introduced legislation that will require most campaigners to include information to identify who has promoted or published their online campaign material in future. This new digital imprint requirement will help voters understand who is targeting them online with information at elections and referendums in future. These changes are expected to come into force from the end of 2023. We will monitor any impact of the new digital imprint requirement on people's levels of confidence in political information online. Candidates were able to access strengthened support to understand and comply with election law We increased the opportunities for candidates and parties to access our support to understand and comply with political finance law both before and after the elections. We continue to recommend that candidate nomination requirements should be proportionate to reduce barriers to standing for election. Increasing opportunities for supporting candidates and parties We provide guidance to candidates and agents to help them understand their obligations under political finance laws and campaign with confidence. As part of our commitment to delivering more proactive support for candidates and parties and ensuring those taking part in elections have the right information, we held pre-election webinars to explain the law. The event for candidates and agents in England was attended by 160 people and the feedback was positive, and we received a number of requests for webinars to be held more regularly. We also held virtual advice surgeries that allowed candidates and agents to book an appointment to speak to one of our expert advisers and discuss specific issues around the spending and donation law. Due to the take up and demand, particularly from new and independent candidates, we offered further advice surgeries after the elections and in advance of the reporting deadlines, to provide support with spending returns. Our approach has been informed and led by the evidence and feedback we received in our most recent survey of the regulated community. We will continue to focus on delivering more bespoke advice and guidance resources so that parties and campaigners can easily understand the political finance law, regardless of their size or experience. Candidate nomination requirements should be proportionate To minimise the travel and personal contact involved in completing nomination forms during the Covid pandemic, the Government legislated to reduce the number of subscribers required by candidates to stand in elections in England in 2021. This change did not remain in place for the May 2022

elections. Our survey of candidates at these elections found that most thought the nomination process was clear and well run, with 84% of respondents agreeing that it was easy to get the number of signatures required to secure their nomination. Despite this, some respondents questioned the purpose of having this requirement at all.

"Having to collect 10 signatures seems pretty pointless, it's high enough to be a task that takes time but not high enough to be a barrier to anyone standing (and I don't want any for local elections!)." "I suffer with disabilities meaning that going outside and getting 10 signatures was hard to do. We only needed 2 signatures last time, however, this has gone back up to 10. My agent had to collect the signatures instead. This was a barrier for me as a disabled person wanting to run for council."

Recommendation 2: Review subscriber requirements for nominating candidates

Recommendation 2: Review subscriber requirements for nominating candidates We continue to recommend that the Government should review whether the range of current subscriber requirements are proportionate for different elected offices, taking into account evidence from this year's elections and conclusions from our Standing for Election review in 2015 . This would help to ensure candidates do not face

unnecessary barriers to standing for election, giving voters a more diverse range of views to choose from. We are aware the Government intends to introduce legislation to reduce subscriber requirements for local elections ahead of the next scheduled elections in May 2023.

Delivering the elections The experience of electoral administration at the May 2022 elections The pattern of elections was less complex this year than in May 2021, with electoral administrators facing fewer combinations of elections and unscheduled elections. Our evidence indicates that these elections were relatively more straightforward to manage, with fewer issues emerging. However, the resilience of electoral administration teams remains a concern, with staffing and booking venues posing a significant challenge in some areas. Early clarity on legislative changes remains essential to allow Returning Officers and their teams sufficient time to plan for elections. The Elections Act makes a range of significant changes to how elections are run, and effective implementation will rely on the detailed secondary legislation being in place in time to allow the necessary preparations to be made. We continue to recommend that legislation is clear six months before it is required to be implemented or complied with by Electoral Registration Officers or Returning Officers.

Delivering the elections overview Elections took place in 165 local authorities in England with local elections to district council, metropolitan borough and unitary authorities as well as all 32 London boroughs. There were also six local mayoral elections. The South Yorkshire combined authority mayoral election covered four local authority areas, including two which would not otherwise have had elections. Elections were also held in over 1,000 town and parish councils. There were 167 local authorities that did not have elections this year and, compared to 2019 and 2021, the pattern of elections in England this year was less complex, with fewer combinations of elections and unscheduled elections taking place. Local authority elections teams were responsible for delivering electoral registration, nominations, absent voting, polling stations and the counting of votes for the elections. Our evidence shows that these elections were well-run, and voters and campaigners reported high levels of confidence.

However, underlying concerns relating to capacity and resilience remain, and there were a small number of issues that had an impact in some areas. The capacity and resilience of electoral administration teams remains a significant challenge We received feedback from around a quarter of local authorities after the elections.

This relatively low response rate combined with the comments received from electoral

administrators suggests that, in comparison with last year, these elections were more straightforward to manage. But the feedback also shows that elections teams still struggled to recruit staff and find suitable venues for polling stations and the count. Reduced complexity helped administrators to run the elections effectively. Alongside the continued effort and commitment of Returning Officers and electoral administrators, the less complex pattern of elections in England this year, with fewer combined polls, appears to have supported the delivery of well-run elections. There were a small number of minor errors with printed materials, but Returning Officers and their teams worked quickly to mitigate these and we will support them in learning any lessons for future polls. However, in one area there was a more significant issue at the count which had the potential to reduce the confidence of candidates, agents and voters in the count process and therefore the result. In the elections to Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, a significant number of postal votes were not included in the final result for one ward, which has led us to conclude that the Returning Officer did not meet elements of the performance standards. The issue had no impact on the overall result. The Returning Officer has since commissioned an independent report on the conduct of the election by the Association of s, to help ensure lessons can be learned ahead of future polls. We are also continuing to work with the Returning Officer to support them as they review their election processes. Despite this broadly positive picture, the capacity and resilience of the electoral system remains a concern. The range and scale of changes to be introduced by the Elections Act adds to this concern, with some significant changes intended to be delivered for the first time in England at the May 2023 local elections. We have previously highlighted concerns about the resilience and capacity of electoral administration structures in the UK, which are not helped by the challenges of delivering elections within an outdated and increasingly complex electoral law framework. We will continue to work in partnership with the electoral community, the UK Government and local authorities to develop and deliver proposals to support resilient electoral services. Alongside this, we continue to call on the Government to set out how it will simplify and modernise election law, building on the comprehensive and well-supported recommendations of the UK's Law Commissions. Some Returning Officers struggled to find enough staff to work on polling day and at the count Recruiting staff to work at the elections remained a problem. This was highlighted by many of the electoral administrators responding to our survey. Administrators highlighted problems around finding experienced polling station staff and a high number of recruits dropping out ahead of polling day. While Covid had less of an impact on the administration of elections this year than last, it still remained a factor, despite many of the restrictions required in 2021 being removed. "We had significant numbers of staff not taking up their positions again and this seems to be an increasing problem. We were lucky in that our neighbouring authority did not have elections and loaned us a number of staff. If they had also had elections we'd have been struggling to fill vacancies. We appointed many more Presiding Officers who had had no experience of working in a polling station than we are usually comfortable with" "Staffing was a big issue this year as we are still feeling the effects of the pandemic. A lot of our staff were taking holidays, had hospital appointments etc. that had previously been postponed. We also had around 30 polling station staff that had tested positive the week of the election and so had to pull out" "The delivery of this election was challenging even though Covid restrictions had been removed, with our main issue this year relating to staffing which is expected to present ongoing challenges in future with Elections Act

requirements for example staff additional responsibilities and more staff required to work in polling stations" The scale and pattern of elections taking place this year meant that some electoral administration teams could call on neighbouring local authorities for support. But this is not a sustainable long-term solution, particularly at future England-wide or UK-wide elections. The changes being introduced by the Elections Act have the potential to increase the challenge of recruiting and retaining skilled and trained polling station staff for future elections. This is due to the additional responsibilities that poll clerks and Presiding Officers will need to deliver, such as checking the identification of voters. We have formed a sub-group of the Electoral Coordination and Advisory Board (ECAB) to discuss and identify solutions to the staffing, resilience and capacity challenges experienced by Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and their teams. An immediate area of focus for the sub-group will be on addressing the challenges of recruitment of polling station staff. Fewer suitable venues were available for polling stations and the count Booking venues for polling stations and the count is another aspect of managing the elections that administrators highlighted as a continuing challenge. In part, this appears to be an ongoing impact of Covid, as some venues have permanently closed while others have increased hire fees. Comments suggest that the problem of securing appropriate venues is also exacerbated by difficulties with booking school buildings. "Schools are continually a problem, with school administrators fighting to not be used as polling stations. Some schools/headteachers are now being deliberately difficult and uncooperative in an attempt to force the Returning Officer away. Where we have to as a result move to either another building or a temporary mobile station, this is at significantly greater cost to the authority." The ability for administrators to be able to access suitable venues is key to ensuring the smooth delivery of the elections and a positive experience for all voters. The changes being introduced by the Elections Act will place additional demands on electoral administrators, as they will have to make sure polling station venues can be made suitable for disabled voters to support them to vote independently and in secret, as well as having space to allow voters to show their ID in private where required. We will continue to work closely with ECAB to explore options for addressing the challenges of finding suitable venues for polling stations and the count. "We are dealing with an ever-decreasing pool of available polling venues. Schools are down to the minimum and churches and other venues are either closing or becoming too expensive. The number of temporary buildings is likely to increase which is a concern in the light of the additional processes required at polling stations under the Elections Act." Early clarity on legislation is essential to support effective planning Early confirmation of legislative changes allowed Returning Officers to plan with certainty for the elections this year. The Elections Act makes a range of significant changes to how elections are run, and effective implementation will rely on the detailed secondary legislation being in place in time to allow the necessary preparations to be made. Legislative changes were made clear in good time to give Returning Officers the certainty they needed In 2021, owing to the uncertainty created by the public health situation, changes were made to nomination processes and emergency proxy rules shortly before the elections. This created additional challenges and risks to the delivery of those elections. In comparison to last year, feedback from administrators about changes to legislation was more positive. Confirmation of the changes to nomination processes and the extension of changes to the emergency proxy vote rules were communicated in good time. "The confirmation that Covid emergency proxy voting arrangements [were] to be

extended for 5th May was received in good time.” “[...] Reversion to 10 signatures on nomination papers and continuation of Covid emergency proxies was communicated in good time. [...]” We continue to recommend that the UK Government ensure that legislative changes are clear six months before they are required to be implemented or complied with by Electoral Registration Officers or Returning Officers in order to enable them to plan effectively. This is especially important given the range and scale of changes to be introduced by the Elections Act. Returning Officers need early clarity to be able to deliver significant changes introduced by the Elections Act

Significant new policies from the Elections Act are expected to be delivered for the first time at next year’s local elections in England, including introducing a requirement for voters to show identification before they can vote at polling stations. These will present new challenges for voters, campaigners and electoral administrators in England. There have been significant delays in the development and delivery of the secondary legislation that will set out the detail of how these changes will operate. Both the Commission and the wider electoral community need to undertake preparatory activity, which cannot be done without this detail. We are committed to supporting the effective implementation of voter ID and the other changes introduced by the Elections Act, but it remains vital that they are delivered in a way which ensures accessibility, security and workability. We know that electoral administrators are concerned about the short time now available before the new provisions are due to come into effect – whether they have scheduled polls in May 2023 or not – and that they will need to start taking steps soon to get ready for them. Given these delays, we are concerned about whether the voter ID requirement can be delivered in a way which is secure, accessible and workable, ahead of the next scheduled elections in May 2023 as planned. We are continuing to develop our plans for how we will support electoral administrators to prepare for and deliver the changes. We published some initial planning guidance in August to highlight key areas of planning that electoral administrators can take forward now, even in the absence of the detail on how the provisions will work. This guidance is based on our current knowledge of UK Government implementation plans.

Recommendation 3: Ensure that the electoral community have sufficient clarity and funding to effectively prepare for Elections Act changes

Electoral administrators need clarity and certainty in order to plan and prepare to deliver well-run elections in advance of the important polls that are scheduled to take place during the next two to three years. The UK Government should work with the electoral community to ensure they have clear and accurate information about how and when changes in the Elections Act are going to be implemented. This includes ensuring legislation is clear at least six months before any new changes are due to be implemented, so that Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and electoral administrators have enough time to prepare. The UK Government should also ensure that the changes in the Elections Act are supported with the necessary funding required for the electoral community to be able to continue to deliver well-run elections.

Supporting evidence England local elections May 2022 Public opinion research tables 2022 England Electoral data 1. Democracy Volunteers (2022), Final Report – UK Local and Assembly Elections 2022
(<https://democracyvolunteers.org/uk-2022-final/>) ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2.
Democracy Club (2022), Local Elections Briefing
(<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FsXy8lqwO7uWaRC8g-WAgiKpBDb9BMGK/view>); House of Commons Library (2022), Local Elections 2022: Results and analysis

(<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9545/CBP-9545.pdf>) ■

Back to content at footnote 2 3. Local Government Association (2022), Debate Not

Hate: The impact of abuse on local democracy

(<https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/debate-not-hate-impact-abuse-local-democracy>)

■ Back to content at footnote 3 Page history First published: 21 September 2022 Last updated: 21 September 2022 Related content Report on the May 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election Read our report on the May 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election Report on the May 2022 Scottish council elections Read our report on the May 2022 Scottish council elections. Report on the May 2022 elections in Wales Read our report on the May 2022 elections in Wales. Looking back at the May 2022 elections Read our latest blog post on looking back at the May 2022 elections.

10. Measuring our performance in Wales | Electoral Commission Search

10. Measuring our performance in Wales You are in the Corporate Plan for Wales 2022/23 to 2026/27 section Home Our plans and priorities Corporate Plan for Wales 2022/23 to 2026/27 On this page Measuring our performance The strategic objectives are underpinned by three key factors First published: 25 April 2022 Last updated: 25 April 2022 Summary Throughout our plan we identify improvements we will deliver. These aim to benefit the public, parties and campaigners, electoral administrators and parliaments. We will measure how well we realise these improvements over the course of our Corporate Plan using a range of indicators for Wales and across the UK. We will use a mix of quantitative and qualitative measures, using them to drive continuous improvements in our procedures and skills. This will include annual and five-year targets against key measures.

Measuring our performance Strategic objectives Improvements Performance indicators

- 1. Accessible registration and voting Increased ease of registering and voting Public satisfaction with the system of registering to vote Public satisfaction with the process of voting Accuracy of the electoral register Completeness of the electoral register Votes rejected and not included in the count for elections Public perception that the process of voting is easy Additions to electoral registers during our public awareness campaigns
- 2. Transparent political campaigning and compliant political finance Maintained availability of information Publish donation and loan reports within deadlines Publish statements of accounts within deadlines
- 2. Transparent political campaigning and compliant political finance Increased confidence in decision making Applicants are notified of the outcome of their registration application within the working day
- targets Decisions on final notices issued for representations within deadlines Progression and conclusion of investigations within targets for complexity
- 2. Transparent political campaigning and compliant political finance Increased compliance with electoral law Responses to requests for regulatory advice on financial reporting within targets Public perception that appropriate action will be taken by the authorities if a political party or a campaigner is caught breaking the rules on campaign funding
- 3. Resilient local electoral services Maintained quality of electoral services Formal Electoral Registration Officers and Returning Officers performance assessment of when standards are not met Guidance products for electoral administrators published on time with no substantive errors Confidence that elections are well run Election reports published within deadlines
- 3. Resilient local electoral services Maintained confidence in the electoral process Public confidence in knowing how to register to vote Public confidence in how to cast their vote
- 4. Fair and effective electoral law Increased accountability Election, referendum and other reports responded to by the relevant government within deadlines Responses to policy proposals and legislative consultations by the deadlines Responses to Members of the Senedd's correspondence responded to within deadlines
- 5. A modern and sustainable electoral system Improved security of the electoral system Public perception that voting in general is safe from fraud and abuse
- 5. A modern and sustainable electoral system Increased environmental sustainability Meeting requirements if existing and emerging or new environmental legislation The strategic objectives are underpinned by three key factors Key factors Improvements Performance indicators

 - 1. We demonstrate independence and integrity Improved reputation as an independent regulator Responses to oral and written Senedd questions within timeframes
 - 1. We demonstrate independence and integrity Improved reputation as an independent regulator Responses to requests for advice from Electoral Registration Officers and Returning Officers within deadlines
 - 1. We demonstrate independence and integrity Improved reputation as an

independent regulator Responses to requests for elections guidance from candidates and agents within deadlines 1. We demonstrate independence and integrity Improved reputation as an independent regulator Responses to requests and enquiries from the public within deadlines 2. We are a skilled organisation where diversity is valued Maintained staff well-being Staff engagement score from the annual employee survey 3. We are a learning organisation where improvement is continuous and resources are used efficiently Increased value for money Agreed auditors' recommendations that are implemented by the target date Navigation 9. Managing our costs in Wales Section 9 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan for Wales 11. Managing risks and opportunities in Wales Section 11 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan for Wales

Board notes: 18 April 2018 session on modernising electoral registration | Electoral Commission Search Board notes: 18 April 2018 session on modernising electoral registration You are in the Electoral Commission Board section Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Presentation from the Australian Electoral Commission Presentation from Peter Wildman – Scottish Assessors Organisation Informal Board discussion First published: 23 July 2019 Last updated: 23 July 2019 Summary Date: 18 April 2018 Time: 9:30am Location: Boothroyd Room, 3 Bunhill Row, London Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Sir John Holmes (JEH) Chair Sue Bruce (SB) Elan Closs Stephens (ECS) John Horam (JRH) David Howarth (DH) Alasdair Morgan (AM) Rob Vincent (RV), Bridget Prentice (BP) Sarah Chambers (SC) attending as an observer Claire Bassett (CB) Ailsa Irvine (AI) Robert Posner (RP) Craig Westwood (CW) Kieran Rix (KR) Charlene Hannon (CH) Melanie Davidson (MD) Mark Williams (MW) Renette Snyman (RS) Rupert Grist (RG) Nancy Bruseker (NB) Polly Wicks (PW) Phil Thompson (PT) Tom Hawthorn (TH) External speakers: Tom Rogers, (TR) Australian Electoral Commissioner, Australian Electoral Commission Andrew Gately, (AG) National Election Manager, Australian Electoral Commission Peter Wildman, Scottish Assessors Association (PeW) Presentation from the Australian Electoral Commission AG and TR provided the context in which the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) operates; and gave a brief history of the legislative framework in which it operates. The Australian system operates a continuous roll-update with a compulsory voting/registration process. With regard to modernisation and the electoral roll there have been two key changes to the process that have been implemented: Direct enrolment – this has been changed to an opt-out system Registration – online enrolment has been adopted The AEC have a completeness record of 96.3%. The Federal Direct Enrolment & Update (FDEU) process uses trusted data sources to gather information to identify those who should be enrolled and where circumstances may have changed. In response to a question on data security, the AEC advised that they are able to choose which data sources to use, and can therefore pick the most accurate and trusted sources. The AEC work with the Privacy Commissioner to ensure that best practice is followed in relation to privacy and security. The electoral roll is publicly available in local offices. Australia has a “silent voter” system whereby information is suppressed for vulnerable or sensitive members of the electorate, and the AEC do not share data with other agencies. The discussion touched on: The increase in security concerns and whether, in response to this, the AEC would move away from signature on glass to fingerprint recognition. The AEC advised they were looking for opportunities to improve biometric data and mitigate risks around security. Registration addresses, as the AEC confirmed that in the Australian system only one address can be registered. For those with multiple homes, they have to choose their primary address. Queueing at polling stations is a key issue raised by the Australian electorate and the AEC are delivering a project, including development of an app, to help manage queuing. It was confirmed that the AEC has always been responsible for federal elections. Presentation from Peter Wildman – Scottish Assessors Organisation PeW is the ERO and assessor for Central Scotland. The Scottish Assessors Organisation (SAO) is an independent body answerable to Councils and the Scottish Parliament. There are 15 EROs for Scotland. All 15 EROs are members of the Scottish Assessors Association (SAA) and members of the Electoral Administration Committee (SAA ERC). Discussion focused on: The use of paper-based system and move towards online registration and the importance of education records due to the lower voter age (16) in Scotland. Risks around a single register, such as data reliability, consistency and cyber-crime. Resource pressures on local

authorities, across the UK, as experienced EROs and ROs retired. In Scotland, training and support opportunities are identified for EROs and ROs to share knowledge and experience. Informal Board discussion AI reflected on the current landscape, and identified key features of how electoral registration works within the UK and highlighted key points from the presentations: online registration has opened up access; levels of registration correlate with electoral events – higher registration rates occur around national elections. Levels of accuracy have increased since transition towards online registration, and commented that further modernisation is required to support many wider reforms to the electoral system. Currently the policy and legislative responsibility for electoral registration rests with the UK Government, with registration for local elections being the responsibility of the Welsh and Scottish governments. Opportunities for change in the UK context are limited due to lack of parliamentary time and lack of appetite for long-term reform so it is likely that success will be achieved through secondary legislation. The canvass pilots test changes to existing canvass requirements focusing on household notification letters, e-mail, phone and data. Initial findings from the pilots suggest that while most changes trialed are less expensive, they are also less effective than the current canvass. Questions focused on what improvements could be made to the accuracy of data, and TH commented that recommendations that the electoral registers be joined up with other services and EROs would improve the position. We are reviewing the existing public data infrastructure that could be used and to understand how the flow of data works, whilst maintaining the balance of privacy with transparency. Commissioners noted it was important to be futureproof in our approach and identify emerging issues. CB commented on the need to be realistic about what we can achieve alone with online registration. She noted that other Electoral Commissions who have successfully moved to online registration rely on the support from government agencies. It is important that we bear in mind the risks posed by moving online, and keep our thinking proportionate to those. To start with, we should focus on short-term gains like improving accessibility for overseas voters. It was agreed that the Welsh roll out of a national register in 2019 will be a useful case study that will provide lessons for the rest of the UK, even though the scale will be different between Wales and the UK.

Board minutes: 24 April 2019 (extraordinary meeting) | Electoral Commission

Search Board minutes: 24 April 2019 (extraordinary meeting)

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Electoral Commission Board On this page Apologies and introductions Declarations of

interest Proposed changes to committee membership (EC 24/19) Any other business First

published: 26 July 2019 Last updated: 26 July 2019 Meeting overview Date: 24 April

2019 Time: 12:10pm to 12:17pm Location: Boothroyd Room, 3 Bunhill Row, London Date of

next scheduled meeting: Wednesday 13 March Who was at the meeting Who was at the

meeting John Holmes, Chair Alasdair Morgan Alastair Ross Anna Carragher Elan Closs

Stephens Joan Walley Rob Vincent Sarah Chambers Stephen Gilbert Sue Bruce (Video

conference) Bob Posner, Chief Executive Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral

Administration and Guidance Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services

Craig Westwood, Director, Communications and Research Dan Adamson, Head of Monitoring

and Enforcement Katharine Sparrow, Senior Executive Assistant Apologies and

introductions There were no apologies. Declarations of interest John Holmes noted he

was no longer Chair of CargoLogicAir advisory board as the board had been disbanded.

Proposed changes to committee membership (EC 24/19) John Holmes introduced the paper,

and explained that the maximum term for membership of a committee was normally six

years. Anna Carragher had just completed her seventh year on the Remuneration and

Human Resources Committee, after the Board had exceptionally agreed to extend her

term. It was now appropriate that she be replaced on the committee. The Chair

nominated Sarah Chambers. Resolved: That Sarah Chambers be appointed as a member of

the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee for a term of three years. Any other

business It was agreed that the Board would not meet as planned on 22 May 2019 as

this was the day before the European Parliamentary Election. A new date would be

found in early June. Resolved: That the Board meeting planned for 22 May 2019 be

rescheduled for early June.

Parliamentary Parties Panel minutes: 20 February 2018 | Electoral Commission

Search Parliamentary Parties Panel minutes: 20 February 2018

You are in the Party panels section Home How we make decisions Party panels On this page Minutes of the last meeting and actions arising (ECPPP 05/12/2017) New Codes of Practice Public awareness preparation, May 2018 local elections Feedback on replacement for integrity roundtables Commission update report Any other business Actions First published: 20 February 2018 Last updated: 2 September 2019 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Conservative Party: Andrew Stedman (AS) Anita Owusu (AO) Labour: Andrew Whyte (AW) Monique Shockness (MS) Liberal Democrats: David Allworthy (DA) Darren Briddock (DB) Scottish National Party: Scott Martin (SM) Electoral Commission: Claire Bassett, Chief Executive Craig Westwood, Director of Communications & Research (CW) Bob Posner, Director of Political Finance and Regulation & Legal Counsel (BP) Denise Bottom, Senior Guidance Adviser (DBM) Laura McLeod Public Affairs Manager (LM) Rob Vincent, Commissioner (RV) Minutes of the last meeting and actions arising (ECPPP 05/12/2017) The minutes from 5/12/2017 were agreed with no actions arising or amendments. New Codes of Practice CB outlined that after writing to the parties, the Commission is interested in hearing the views of the Panel on the proposed Codes of Practice (COP) and would welcome any input or questions at this stage. SM said that the COP deal with the existing schedule and asked whether there is a way can agree and amend the schedules of category spending. CB explained that there are ongoing discussions on this issue but clearly a challenge of available legislative time. BP agreed that it was worth considering and engaging with Cabinet Office. All sides were keen to continue constructive engagement. DA raised the issue of authorisation and reported parties only received correspondence from the Commission five days before the 2017 general election. DB asked if the Codes are going to address authorisation. DB reported the difficulties in authorisation when there is a snap election. DBM outlined there is only so much the COP can address. AW asked if authorisation was a COP issue or need to think of it separately in legislative terms. BP and CB agreed to look at how far the Commission can take guidance. CB suggested using COP to shine a light on authorisation. All sides agreed would be useful to put on agenda for a future meeting. AW asked if there was a compelling case to move away from guidance to COP. CB explained the COP would have stronger status. DBM explained there is a particularly compelling case to make digital campaigning clearer and more transparent. Public awareness preparation, May 2018 local elections CW outlined the Commission's public awareness preparation ahead of the local elections. CW highlighted the new campaigns: 'Got 5?' and 'Your vote is yours alone'. AS asked for an update on the Commission collating data on people moving house and producing standard artwork to target this group. CW explained the Commission is still consulting on this and agreed to keep the Panel informed. AS asked about the Commission's role in relation to voter ID pilots. CW outlined the Commission's role to carry out an independent evaluation and will report before summer recess. DB suggested often the perception of fraud was worse than the reality. DB highlighted the issue when legitimate things are perceived as a problem and there is a false perception you aren't allowed to campaign on polling day. DB asked if the Commission's fraud campaign could go too far and cause people to worry. CW explained the positive tone of 'Your vote is yours alone' and messaging on intimidation and bribery. CB said the campaign messaging is focused on the voter and empowering them to understand and report electoral fraud. Feedback on replacement for integrity roundtables BP explained the rational in trying to refresh arrangements and establish the best way to engage with political parties, electoral administrators and the

police. BP suggested more flexible, ad hoc events focusing on particular issue may be a better use of everyone's limited resources than a scheduled meeting every six months with a standing agenda. BP invited feedback from Panel members on what sort of event would be useful. DB said at SPOC seminar the format was particularly valuable and useful in helping to facilitate conversations with ERO officers and can't underestimate future value this has for collaborative working. CB explained the Commission had listened to feedback on having more emphasis on conversations and opportunities to share information but understands the need for different formats at different times. AS agreed. RV said he was struck by size and suggested the need for smaller groups. AS and DA agreed. DA said it was particularly useful to have a case study and a mix of participants round the table as it allowed for different viewpoints on the problem and constructive engagement. DA explained the importance of the networking. CB said this feedback was helpful. CB explained the different options available: workshops, smaller roundtables or specialised training sessions and asked views of the Panel. AS stated the benefit of smaller group discussion. DR outlined personal preference for big table discussions. Commission update report AS thanked the Commission for sending over dates of PFR publication dates for 2018. SM asked what the date would be for the General Election spending returns for the larger parties. SM said it would be useful to have in PDF format. CB agreed to see if possible to send in this format but indicated this might not be possible due to size. DBM explained guidance colleagues at the Commission could help give advice to the Panel on any issues relating to the publication of electoral registers where there are local government boundary changes. Any other business DA raised register of interests and the issue of the fundamental differences between the two reporting mechanisms. DA cited the example of new MPs having to report one year before and outlined if someone was looking at Commission records there could be the automatic assumption something is wrong. DA asked if future correspondence from the Commission on this issue could be more diplomatic and account for different reporting systems. CB said feedback will be taken on board. DA said the overlapping deadlines are hard to manage. AS explained there is the perception parties are huge but this is not the case. AS said between the Commission and the ICO, the regulatory burden is huge and said it would not be uncommon to need to double staff. CB explained the Commission was sympathetic to the pressures outlined and stated the Commission's commitment to not unnecessarily adding further to this. DA raised aggregation and stated DA and DB had come to two different interpretations of the guidance on 62(12). DA said there is a lack of examples in the Electoral Commission guidance to make it clear. CB acknowledged the helpful feedback and offered to direct Commission staff to the Panel to address this issue. DA and DB offered to provide examples. Actions Action Owner Status Add authorisation of spend to future PPP meeting agenda BP Complete To be included as an agenda item for meeting in September 2018 Investigate if feasible to share General Election spending returns for the larger parties in PDF format. BP Complete Guidance team to consider feedback on application and examples of 62(12) in Modern Guidance Project DBM Complete Fed into project Related content Party registration decisions View our decisions on political party names, descriptions and emblems View current applications View the political party names, descriptions and emblems which we are currently considering as part of our assessment process Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Registers of unincorporated associations Download and view the registers of unincorporated associations

2021 Senedd Cymru candidate spending | Electoral Commission Search
2021 Senedd Cymru candidate spending You are in the Campaign spending:
Candidates section Home Campaign spending: Candidates First published: 2 February 2022 Last updated: 27 October 2022 About the data At the May 2021 Senedd election, there were 311 constituency and independent regional candidates who had to submit a spending return, listing details of what they spent during the election campaign. The dataset includes the headline figures for the spending incurred and donations received by candidates at the 2021 Senedd election. We publish these figures to enhance transparency and to provide voters with information on donations to candidates' election campaigns and their spending and to ensure that this information can be seen together in one place. The full individual candidate returns are available for public scrutiny from the relevant Returning Officers for a period of two years after an election. The returns include the total the candidate spent, as well as a breakdown of how much they spent on things like advertising, transport and public meetings. They also include any donations the candidate received above £50 during the regulated period. The data taken from the spending returns reflects what candidates and their agents submitted to Returning Officers in Wales. We publish this information exactly as it appears on the candidate's return so that there is an accurate record of what was reported. Spending limits vary between constituencies. The vast majority of Returning Officers have sent us the returns submitted to them for inclusion in this dataset. Where information is missing, this may be because the Returning Officer didn't send them on to us, or because the candidate didn't submit their return to the Returning Officer. Under the law spending on promoting regional party list candidates counts as party spending, and was therefore reportable by the party in its election spending return. Information about candidate spending data for previous devolved elections is available online in the National Archive. 2021 Senedd Cymru candidate spending Download the data 2021 Senedd Cymru candidate spending

Completeness in Great Britain You are in the Accuracy and completeness of electoral registers section Home Our research Accuracy and completeness of electoral registers On this page Urban/rural Local authority type Length of residence Tenure Age Ethnicity Nationality Gender Disability status Socio-economic group Highest qualification Number of adults in household Attitudes towards registration and voting

Turnout at recent national electoral events First published: 2 September 2019 Last updated: 26 September 2019 Key findings The local government registers in Great Britain were 83% complete, and the parliamentary registers were 85% complete The study found that the main drivers of lower completeness are being younger, recent home movement and whether someone rents their home from a private landlord. These drivers of lower registration are in line with our findings in previous accuracy and completeness studies Other factors associated with lower rates of registration include ethnicity, nationality and attitudes towards registration and voting Overview The parliamentary registers for Great Britain were found to be 85% complete, and the local government registers 83% complete overall. Except where stated, the figures outlined relate to the local government registers as these include the larger proportion of the electorate. Where comparisons made in the text are not statistically significant this is acknowledged. Urban/rural classification In Great

Britain there is a slight difference (two percentage points) between levels of completeness in urban and rural areas. Registers in urban areas are now 83% complete (from 84% in 2015), while in rural areas completeness is 85% (86% in 2015). The changes from 2015 are not statistically significant. Local authority type The most notable change in completeness across local authority types has been in London boroughs, where completeness has fallen from 81% in 2015 to 76% in 2018. There has also been a decline in district authorities from 86% in 2015 to 84% in 2018.

Completeness in unitary authorities (83%) has stayed at a similar level to 2015 (84%), while there has been a small increase in completeness for metropolitan boroughs (from 83% to 86%). The lower completeness in London boroughs is likely to be reflective of high population mobility, associated with the large private rented sector in London. Completeness of local government electoral registers by local authority type, 2015 and 2018 Local authority type 2015 2018 District 86% 84% London borough 81% 76% Metropolitan borough 83% 86% Unitary authorities 84% 83% Length of residence Previous research into the registers has found a connection between home movement and completeness. As registration is residence-based, greater mobility is associated with lower levels of completeness, while the longer an individual has been resident at their property, the more likely they are to appear on the electoral register. This pattern continues in the local government registers for Great Britain, with completeness at: 36% (an increase from 27% in 2015) among those who have lived at their address for up to a year 71% among those who have lived at their address for one to two years 84% among those who lived at their address for two to five years 90% for those who have lived at their address between five and 10 years 88% for those who have lived at their address for 10 to 16 years 92% among those who have lived at their address for more than 16 years This pattern is consistent throughout our research. That's why we want to see changes to allow EROs to access national-level public data. This will help them to focus resources on addresses where they know a change has occurred. We also want to see greater integration of electoral registration into other public sector transactions, such as applying for or updating a drivers' licence, in order to encourage voters to update their electoral registration as part of another administrative task associated with moving house.

Tenure Tenure is a variable that has previously been strongly associated with levels of completeness and this research reconfirms that finding. In Great Britain, homeowners are more likely to be registered than people in other types of tenure. There has been a small decline in completeness for those living in households owned outright (from 95% to 91%), and a similar-sized decline for those in households buying their home with a mortgage (from 89% to 86%). Over the same period, completeness for those who rent their homes in the social rented sector has increased. For those who rent their home from a local authority it has risen from 79% to 83%, while those renting from a housing association have seen completeness increase from 78% to 82%. Private renters remain the least likely to have complete register entries and have stayed at the same level recorded in 2015. The lower levels of completeness among private renters is associated with population mobility as private renters tend to move more frequently than those in other tenures. For example, the Housing Survey 2017-18 shows that in England 27% of private renters have lived in their home for less than one year compared to 6% of social renters and 4% of owner occupiers. A similar pattern exists in Scotland and Wales. The 2017 Scottish Household Survey found 35% of residents in the private rented sector have been resident less than a year (6% for owner occupiers and 9% in the social rented sector) and the 2017-18 National Survey of Wales found that 33% of private renters had been resident for less than a year (5% for owner occupiers and 10% for social renters). Completeness by tenure in December 2015 and December 2018 Age Levels of completeness were found to vary by age group, with older groups more likely to be registered. This is a finding that has been consistent throughout our research. In Great Britain, the highest level of completeness is seen for those aged 65+ (94%) and the lowest level is recorded for attainers (16 and 17 year olds, 25%), which has dropped from 45% in 2015. In England and Wales, the age at which citizens become entitled to vote is currently 18, but the electoral registers also include records of 'attainers' - 16 and 17 year olds who will turn 18 within the twelve month period starting on the 1 December after they make their application. In Scotland, the voting age for Scottish Parliamentary and local council elections is 16. This means that all 16 and 17 year olds in Scotland are entitled to be on the local government register and that attainers are 14 and 15 year olds who will turn 16 during the twelve month period starting on the 1 December after they make their application. However, entitlement for the parliamentary register in Scotland has not been affected by the change to the franchise so 16 and 17 year olds are attainers on the parliamentary register. Proposed franchise changes in Wales would mean that those aged 16 and 17 in Wales will have an equivalent entitlement as in Scotland. The number of attainers has fallen significantly over the last few years. Before 2015 attainers could be registered by a parent or guardian via a household canvass form. Individual electoral registration (IER) was introduced in 2014 and from this point attainers (and those of any age registering to vote for the first time) have been required to register themselves, providing 'identifying information', namely date of birth and national insurance number. This information is then verified before a name is added to the register. After the introduction of IER there was a significant decline in the number of attainers on both the parliamentary and local government registers. Our previous analysis in 2016 showed that there was a 40% drop in attainers on the local government registers between February/March 2014 and December 2015. Subsequently, between December 2015 and 2016, the number of attainers increased by 17% for local government registers and 22% for parliamentary registers. However the number of attainers on the electoral registers has yet to return to the same level as seen

under household registration. We have previously recommended that the registration of attainers presents an opportunity for the development of a more automatic approach to registration, for example, at the point when individuals receive their National Insurance number (NINO). NINOs are allocated automatically just before eligible people turn 16, and a letter containing details of the NINO are sent to individuals at the address held by HM Revenue and Customs. This information could be shared with EROs, enabling 16 year olds who have been issued with a NINO to be added to electoral registers provided that the ERO is satisfied that the individual is eligible and meets the residence requirements for registration. The falling number of attainers emphasises the importance of exploring such reforms. We believe that reform in this area is important, particularly as proposed changes to the franchise in Wales will allow 16 and 17 year to vote on the same basis as electors of the same age in Scotland. In the interim, we believe that making data sets, such as the pupil database, available to EROs would help them to identify attainers more easily. Number of attainers on the parliamentary and local government registers, December 2013 to December 2018 Register 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 England Local 387,292 260,715 244,781 293,430 279,388 268,396 Parliamentary 379,284 254,838 239,019 284,522 269,092 257,938 Scotland Local 64,299 39,513 21,343 22,035 20,788 20,232 Parliamentary 63,471 38,963 24,827 41,561 43,357 41,296 Wales Local 18,807 14,223 12,462 13,810 13,001 13,127 Parliamentary 18,595 14,065 12,339 13,651 12,794 12,948 Great Britain Local 470,398 314,451 278,586 329,275 313,177 301,755 Parliamentary 461,350 307,864 276,185 339,734 325,243 312,182 The levels of completeness by age group have remained steady since 2015, with little to no change. The 35-44 age group are closest to the overall average of 83%, on 82%. Above this point all age groups have broadly similar levels of completeness (around 90%), while completeness drops with every age group before it. Completeness for 25-34 year olds is 74%, among 20-24 year olds it is 68%, and it is 66% among 18-19 year olds. Ethnicity Completeness is highest among those from a white ethnic background at 84%. The lowest level of completeness was observed among those from "other" ethnic backgrounds, at 62%. Those from Asian and Black ethnic backgrounds each have a similar level of completeness (76% and 75% respectively), while completeness stands at 69% among those from mixed backgrounds. All of the apparent declines in completeness from 2015 presented below were not statistically significant. This demonstrates that the same patterns of difference in registration by ethnicity persist in 2018. Nationality Findings corroborate previous research which show that registration rates are lower among eligible non-UK nationals than among UK or Irish nationals. UK and Irish citizens remain most likely to have complete electoral register entries, at 86%, which is the same as in 2015. Completeness for Commonwealth nationals is 62% (61% in 2015), while it is 54% for those with EU nationalities (53% in 2015). None of the apparent changes since 2015 are statistically significant. Gender While past studies have noted that women are more likely to be registered than men, in this study we have found no difference by gender. Completeness is 83% for both men and women. Disability status People with a long standing physical condition or disability are more likely to be registered (92%) than those without a disability (82%), or those with a longstanding mental condition or disability (83%). Socio-economic group Levels of completeness are affected by social groupings: 86% for AB households 85% for C1 households 80% for C2 households 80% for DE households Since 2015 there has been a decline in the level of completeness among those in C2 households (from 86%), meaning that this group are as likely to have complete register entries as those from social grades DE. The level of completeness in AB households has fallen from 88% in 2015 while there has been an

increase of two percentage points among those in C1 households (from 83%). Highest qualification Those with A Levels, Scottish Highers (81%) or GCSEs (81%) as their highest form of academic qualification are groups least likely to have complete register entries. Completeness is highest among those with degrees, or further qualifications such as BTECs, as well as those with other types of qualifications, or none at all (perhaps related to age). This reflects the pattern observed in 2015, when this question was first asked. Across other qualifications the levels of completeness do not vary much between highest level of attainment. Completeness of local government registers by education in Great Britain, 2015 and 2018

Qualification	2015 (%)	2018 (%)
Higher degree	87%	84%
Degree	86%	83%
BTEC	84%	86%
A level/Higher	80%	81%
GCSE	83%	81%
Other	83%	85%
None	87%	85%

Number of adults in household Completeness among single adult households has risen by four percentage points since 2015, to 86%, making this among the most likely household type to have a complete register entry alongside two-adult households (84%). Completeness for households with six or more adults is 78% (75% in 2015), while for households with between three and five adults it's 81% (83% in 2015). Attitudes towards registration and voting The person we spoke to in each household was also asked some questions around their attitudes to registering to vote and voting itself. While this means it is not a nationally representative sample of the population, the results provide another angle to consider the relationship between registration and attitudes towards elections. As in 2015, completeness is lower among participants with more negative views of registering to vote. Those who agree it is only worth registering to vote to secure better credit references have the lowest level of completeness, at 68%, while completeness stands at 72% among those who say it is not really worth registering to vote at all. While both these groups had the lowest levels in 2015, their order has switched (see figure below). Completeness stands at 79% among those who think people should only register to vote if they care who wins an election and 85% among those who say it is everyone's duty to register to vote. Attitudes towards voting show a similar pattern, with those who feel it's everyone's duty to vote having the highest level of completeness (84%) compared to those who feel it's not worth voting (78%) and those who say people should only vote if they care who wins an election (79%). Turnout at recent national electoral events Although the distance between the December 2018 electoral registers and the most recent national election (the 2017 UK Parliamentary general election) is greater than it was for the December 2015 registers, the same relationship can be observed. Those who reported voting at the most recent UK general election showed higher levels of completeness. In 2015 the level was 92%, and in 2018 it was 88%. Completeness was lower among those who said they did not vote (although eligible to do so), at 72%. Completeness for those who were not eligible to vote (predominantly EU citizens) stood at 50%. The 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union was notable for its higher turnout compared with the UK general election which preceded it. As this is the first survey of accuracy and completeness since the referendum occurred, we asked a question to understand the relationship between participating in that referendum and the completeness of the registers. It revealed a very similar pattern to participation in the 2017 UK general election, with completeness highest among those who said they voted in the referendum (88%). For those who did not vote, completeness stood at 71%, while among those not eligible the level of completeness was 53%.

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programme "Brexit, Dark Money and the DUP" First published: 7 June 2019 Last updated:
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Members and other stakeholders to set out our views. about our letters and read them
in full Topic Date To Collection of data on numbers turned away outside of polling
station due to lack of voter ID 27 April 2023 Mr Clive Betts MP Secrecy of voting in
polling stations 29 March 2022 The Rt Hon Kemi Badenoch MP Strategy and Policy
Statement measures in the Elections Bill 21 February 2022 The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP,
the Rt Hon Kemi Badenoch MP, the Rt Hon Lord True CBE Response to Recommendation 5 of
the Child Sexual Abuse Westminster Investigation Report 3 July 2020 Martin Smith,
Solicitor to the Enquiry Coronavirus and its impact on the May polls 12 March 2020
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– May 2019 8 July 2019 Karen Bradley MP The BBC NI Spotlight programme "Brexit, Dark
Money and the DUP" 2 August 2018 Mr Jim Fitzpatrick Complaint regarding EU Referendum
campaigners 2 August 2018 Priti Patel MP To the Chair of the Police and Crime
Committee at the Greater London Assembly 7 February 2018 Steve O'Connell AM, Chairman
Spending by Britain Stronger in Europe at the 2016 EU referendum 15 January 2018
Priti Patel MP To Google about digital campaigning at the EU referendum 16 November
2017 Mr Dave Skelton To Twitter about digital campaigning at the EU referendum 16
November 2017 Mr Nick Pickles To Facebook about digital campaigning at the EU
referendum 16 November 2017 Mr Gareth Lambe Electoral Commission investigations in
respect of Leave.EU 16 November 2016 Mr Arron Banks

Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Who was at the meeting Apologies and welcomes Declarations of interest Minutes of the previous Board meeting (EC 41/21) Corporate Plan 2022/23-2026/27 (Presentation) Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21 (EC 42/21) Governance matter (EC 43/21) Update from the Audit and Risk Committee Chair (Oral) Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee to the Commission Board (EC 45/21) Annual Report of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee to the Commission Board (EC 45/21) Chief Executive's update (EC 46/21) Commission Board action tracker (EC 47/21) Forward Plan of Board business (EC 48/21)

First published: 14 October 2021 Last updated: 5 May 2022 Meeting summary Date: Wednesday 23 June 2021 Time: 9:30am to 12:00pm Location: By video conference Date of next scheduled meeting: Wednesday 21 July 2021 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Pullinger, Chair Sue Bruce (for item 3, 5, 7, 8 and 9) Rob Vincent (for item 3, 7, 8 and 9) Alex Attwood Sarah Chambers Elan Closs Stephens Stephen Gilbert Alasdair Morgan Joan Walley In attendance: Bob Posner, Chief Executive Craig Westwood, Director, Communications, Policy and Research Director, Regulation Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation Alisa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services Binnie Goh, General Council Zena Khan, Senior Advisor, Governance Hannah Kavanagh, Legal Officer (for all items) Alicia Diaz, Legal and Governance Officer (for all items) David Bailey, Head of Strategic Planning and Performance (for item 4) Tracey Blackman, Head of Finance and (for item 5) Apologies and welcomes The Chair welcomed all to the meeting advising that business items would be slightly reordered to accommodate Commissioner availability. The Board noted that former Commissioner Anna Carragher was awarded an OBE, in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for her services to the arts in Northern Ireland. The Board congratulated Anna on her award. Declarations of interest

Commissioner Joan Walley declared a new appointment as Chair of the NHS Midlands Greener Delivery Board as of June 2021. The Board noted that this would be included in the Commissioners Register of interests and uploaded onto the Commissions external website in line with Commissioners Code of Conduct. Minutes of the previous Board

meeting (EC 41/21) Resolved: That the minutes of the Commission Board meeting on 19 May 2021 be agreed. Corporate Plan 2022/23-2026/27 (Presentation) The Board received a presentation on the Commission's financial strategy following discussions at the Board meeting in April. The presentation also covered our planning assumptions, work priorities and choices for the period of the Corporate Plan 2022/23 to 2026/27. The Director, Finance and Corporate Services presented on the financial strategy for 2022/23 – 2026/27 focussing on the fiscal environment, core budgets and options. The Chief Executive presented on the work priorities focussing on strategic planning assumptions and choices. The Board discussed the need to focus on the things that we want to get done and then think about long term development. The Board further discussed and noted being ambitious in our core and events work, emphasising forward looking matters relating to electoral law reforms; and noting the impacts of increased complexity and divergence in electoral law across the nations of the UK.

This emphasised making best use of our budgets whilst ensuring probity and responsible spending. Resolved: That the Board discussed, noted and agreed the financial strategy and related work priorities for 2022/23 – 2026/27 Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21 (EC 42/21) The Board received a final draft of the Commission's Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21 following inputs provided at the May meeting on the performance review content. The Board noted that the Audit and Risk Committee

reviewed the Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21 including the governance statement at their meeting on the 22 June, and that the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee recommended to the Board: that it adopted the accounts and, the accounting officer approved the governance statement and signed the accounts as appropriate Resolved: That the Board approved and adopted the Annual Report and Accounts for 2020/21, subject to final NAO approval, to be signed by the Accounting Officer and submitted to the Comptroller and Auditor General for certification. Governance matter (EC 43/21) The Board received a report recommending that e-business be removed from the Forward Plan of Board business except for exceptional matters, the CMIS board portal be not proceeded with, rollout of Commission laptops to Commissioners and when possible returning to in person or partly so meetings. Resolved: That the Board agreed to drop e-business meetings for routine board matters and reserved for exceptional matters Resolved: That the Board agreed for the CMIS online platform not to be rolled out to Board Resolved: That the Board noted Commission laptops to be issued to those Commissioners who would want them Resolved: That the Board noted to return to in-person or part in-person meetings possibly in September 2021 once Government relaxation of workplace social distancing Update from the Audit and Risk Committee Chair (Oral) The Board received an oral update from the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) of their meeting held on the 22 June 2021, thanking fellow Commissioner Elan Closs Stephens for chairing the meeting in her unavoidable absence. The Board noted that the Committee had received the Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21 and found them to be a sound set of accounts, along with the schedule of audit recommendations that have come a long way in closing down actions. The Board further noted that the Head of Projects updated the Committee on the follow up recommendations of the Committee's effectiveness review and thanked the Head of Projects and staff for the significant work done so far. The Board noted that the National Audit Office (NAO) provided a positive report and congratulated the Director, Finance and Corporate Services and the team for their work. The Board were advised that a recommendation on a deep dive topic for training and development of Commissioners would be included onto the Forward Plan of Committee business and form part of the discussions at the October Board meeting on how ARC could best serve the Board. Action: To include onto the Forward Plan of Audit and Risk Committee business. Resolved: That the Board noted the oral update. Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee to the Commission Board (EC 45/21) The Board received a report summarising the work of the Audit and Risk Committee during the financial year, providing assurance to the Commission Board in support of the 2020/21 governance statement prepared by the Accounting Officer. Resolved: That the Board noted the work of the Audit and Risk Committee over the past 12 Months. Annual Report of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee to the Commission Board (EC 45/21) The Board received a report summarising the work of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee during the financial year, providing assurance to the Commission Board in support of the 2020/21 governance statement prepared by the Accounting Officer. The Board discussed ongoing debates in relation to diversity on the Board and would welcome a discussion about equality, diversity and inclusion at an upcoming meeting in 2021. Action: To include a topic for discussion on equality, diversity and inclusion on the Board onto the Forward Plan of Board business. Resolved: That the Board noted the work of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee over the past 12 Months. Chief Executive's update (EC 46/21) The Chief Executive introduced the report providing the Board with updates on operations and matters arising. Commissioners noted the Committee for Standards in Public Life (CSPL) report is due to be published on July 7, with

recommendations on aspects of the regulation of political finance law. The Board noted that the Minister for the Constitution had written to all Commissioners on aspects of the UK Government planned Elections Bill as such impacted on the role and oversight of the Commission. The Board agreed that the Chair would respond in writing to the Minister on behalf of the Commission, welcoming parliamentary scrutiny but also summarising key concerns related to the necessary independence of the Commission from operational controls by government. Resolved: That the Board noted the updates, thanked staff for their work and welcomed further discussion on the Electoral Integrity Bill at the next Board meeting. Commission Board action tracker (EC 47/21) Resolved: That the Board noted progress against actions requested by the Board. Forward Plan of Board business (EC 48/21) Resolved: That the Board reviewed and noted the Forward Plan of Board business scheduling further topics for the next few meetings.

Results and turnout at the 2018 May England local elections | Electoral Commission Search Results and turnout at the 2018 May England local elections You are in the England local council elections section Home England local council elections On this page Introduction Electorate Turnout Rejected ballot papers Postal voting Proxies and waivers Mayoral elections First published: 5 May 2019 Last updated: 5 May 2019 Download You can download our: full data set as an XLS Introduction This report provides analysis on participation in and the administration of the local government elections in England, held on 3 May 2018. For this, data were collected from Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers. This comprised the Form K 'Statement as to Postal Ballot Papers' and an additional data form, specified by the Commission, which included data relating to electoral registration, turnout, absent voting and rejected ballots. Local elections were scheduled in 67 district, 17 unitary and 34 metropolitan authorities on 3 May 2018. There were also local elections in all 32 London Boroughs. There were also city mayoral elections in Hackney, Lewisham, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Watford and combined authority mayoral elections for the Sheffield City Region in Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield. In just 3 wards were candidates elected unopposed. Electorate 21.5 million Turnout Ballot box: 34.7% Postal vote: 67.0% In-person: 28.6% Rejected ballots Ballots at the count: 0.4% Postal votes: 2.7% Proxies appointed 23,724 (0.1% of the electorate) 793 emergency proxies Electorate The local government elections gave 21.5 million registered electors the opportunity to vote; 5.2 million in district councils, 10.3 million in unitary and metropolitan authorities and 5.9 million in London Boroughs. A total of 198,003 electors (0.9% of the electorate in contested wards) were added to the electoral register during the weeks leading up to the elections. A total of 351,271 applications to register were received in the weeks leading up to the election. Almost a quarter (24%) of these was recorded as duplicates 1 . In addition, 76,036 individuals applied to register to vote after the registration deadline. 1,325 individuals were recorded as trying to vote on polling day despite not being registered. Votes were cast at 14,381 polling stations as well as by post. Turnout The measure of turnout referred to in this report, 'ballot box turnout', includes all valid votes cast ('valid vote turnout') and votes rejected at the count. Total turnout refers to valid votes cast, votes rejected at the count and those rejected at the postal ballot verification stage before the count. Table 3.1 confirms that only a small fraction of the total votes cast are not valid. Electorate Valid vote turnout Ballot box turnout Total turnout Difference valid vote - total (pp) 2018 21.5m 34.6% 34.7% 35.0% 0.4 Districts 5.2m 34.8% 34.9% 35.2% 0.3 Unitary 2.3m 32.8% 32.9% 33.2% 0.4 Metropolitan 8.1m 31.8% 31.9% 32.3% 0.5 London Borough 5.9m 38.9% 39.0% 39.3% 0.4 Electorate Valid vote turnout Ballot box turnout Total turnout Difference valid vote - total (pp) 2014 22.2m 35.5% 35.7% 36.2% 0.7 Districts 5.3m 36.6% 36.9% 37.4% 0.5 Unitary 2.6m 33.8% 34.0% 34.6% 0.8 Metropolitan 8.4m 33.3% 33.5% 34.1% 0.8 London borough 5.8m 38.2% 38.5% 38.9% 0.7 Ballot box turnout was 34.7%, which is lower than the turnout at the most comparable local government elections in 2014 (35.7%). There are variations from the overall mean turnout when turnout is examined at the local authority level. The highest turnout was observed across London boroughs and district councils, while turnout was lower across unitary and metropolitan councils. Table 3.2 shows the highest and lowest turnouts across each type of local authority. The highest turnout observed was in Richmond upon Thames where 51.4% of registered electors cast a ballot. The lowest turnout was in Hartlepool where 24.0% cast a ballot. Table 3.2: Turnout 2018 Highest Lowest Districts Districts South Lakeland 47.4% Havant 28.6% Winchester 44.2% Cannock Chase

27.9% Mole Valley 43.2% Broxbourne 27.2% Unitary 39.7% Wokingham 26.3% Halton
 Swindon 39.4% Hull 25.0% Derby 38.7% Hartlepool 24.0% Metropolitan
 Trafford 43.0% Salford 26.1% Calderdale 40.7% Barnsley 25.0% Newcastle Upon Tyne
 38.9% Knowsley 25.0% London borough 33.6% London borough Richmond upon Thames 51.4% Lambeth
 34.0% Kingston Upon Thames 47.3% Southwark 33.6% Barnet 43.8% Barking and Dagenham
 29.7% Rejected ballot papers The proportion of ballots rejected at official counts
 was 0.4 %. This compares with 0.6% at the 2014 local elections. The rejection rate at
 6 metropolitan council elections was lower than at elections for other types of local
 authority (0.3% compared with 0.4%). The majority of rejected ballots (64.9%) were
 rejected due to being unmarked or wholly void for uncertainty. More than a quarter
 (28.4%) were rejected due to voting for more candidates than allowed. Table 3.3:
 Reasons for rejected ballots, 2018

Reason	Districts	22.3%
Mark by which voter could be identified	0.4%	
Unmarked	74.2%	0.4%
Unitary	1.2%	30.6%
3.1%	64.6%	0.5%
Metropolitan	0.8%	28.0%
66.1%	4.2%	
London borough	1.1%	32.6%
3.2%	57.3%	5.8%
Total	0.9%	28.4%
3.4%	64.9%	2.7%

 Postal voting The total number of postal votes issued for these elections was 3.6
 million, representing 16.7% of all electors with a contested election in their ward.
 This compares with 15.8% at the 2014 local elections. At a local authority level,
 electors registered for a postal vote ranged from 41.8% in Sunderland to 8.8% in
 Halton. Postal voting was more common in metropolitan authorities where 18.1 % of the
 electorate (1.5 million electors) were issued with a postal ballot paper compared
 with 16.6% in districts, 15.5% in London boroughs and 15.4% in unitary authorities.
 Table 4.1: Highest and lowest proportions of postal voters

Highest	Sunderland	41.8%
Newcastle Upon Tyne	36.1%	
Stevenage	33.6%	
Lowest	Epping Forest	10.1%
Oxford	9.4%	
Halton	8.8%	

 The proportion of postal voters returning their ballot papers always
 exceeds the turnout among ‘in person’ voters. This year, 67.0% 2 postal electors used
 their postal vote compared with 28.6% who turned up to vote in person 3 . Postal
 votes accounted for 31.4% of all votes included at the count. This compares with
 29.3% in 2014. Rejected postal ballots

Rejected postal ballots	Postal voting packs (PV)																																	
Postal voting packs (PV)	require voters to provide their signature and date of birth (DOB). These identifiers are then matched against those provided at the time of application. If the signature or date of birth is missing or does not match, the postal vote is rejected and is not included at the count. Since 2014, Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) have been required to notify electors if their postal vote has been rejected and give the reason(s) for rejection. They can also request the elector to provide an up-to-date signature. The total rate of rejection across elections was 2.7%, which represents a decrease from 4.7% in 2014 4 . The overall fall in levels of rejected postal votes suggests that the new policy may be having a positive impact overall. Table 4.2: Rejected postal ballots as % of envelopes returned 2014 2018 <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Overall</th> <th>4.7%</th> <th>2.7%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Districts</td> <td>4.9%</td> <td>1.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Unitary</td> <td>4.6%</td> <td>2.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Metropolitan</td> <td>5.7%</td> <td>3.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>London borough</td> <td>4.2%</td> <td>2.9%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> About two-thirds (64.5%) of rejected ballots were rejected due to mismatched information. In over a quarter of cases (26.1%) postal ballots were rejected due to missing information, and about a fifth (19.4%) of rejected postal ballots were rejected as voters failed to include either the ballot paper itself or the verification statement or both. Table 4.4: Reasons for postal vote statement rejection returned, 2018 <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Reason</th> <th>Both</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Missing information</td> <td>10.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Signature</td> <td>6.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Date of birth</td> <td>9.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mismatched information</td> <td>27.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Signature</td> <td>26.6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Date of birth</td> <td>10.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Both</td> <td>11.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PV statement</td> <td>8.3%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> These figures are percentages of the total, small number of rejected ballots. For example, although 64.5% of rejected postal votes were rejected due to mismatched information, this represents 1.7% of	Overall	4.7%	2.7%	Districts	4.9%	1.9%	Unitary	4.6%	2.5%	Metropolitan	5.7%	3.2%	London borough	4.2%	2.9%	Reason	Both	Missing information	10.0%	Signature	6.7%	Date of birth	9.4%	Mismatched information	27.5%	Signature	26.6%	Date of birth	10.4%	Both	11.1%	PV statement	8.3%
Overall	4.7%	2.7%																																
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London borough	4.2%	2.9%																																
Reason	Both																																	
Missing information	10.0%																																	
Signature	6.7%																																	
Date of birth	9.4%																																	
Mismatched information	27.5%																																	
Signature	26.6%																																	
Date of birth	10.4%																																	
Both	11.1%																																	
PV statement	8.3%																																	

covering envelopes received and 0.5% of all votes cast. The vast majority of postal voters did cast their vote correctly. Proxies and waivers A total of 23,724 electors appointed a proxy (0.1 % of the electorate) for the local government elections. This is consistent with levels in 2014. The number of emergency proxies issued was 793. This is higher than in 2014, 530 emergency proxies were issued. A concession granted under the terms of the EAA 2006 was that postal electors who either had a disability, or were illiterate, or were unable to furnish a consistent signature could apply for a waiver to use their date of birth as their sole identifier. A total of 18,256 waivers were granted, representing 0.5% of postal electors. Mayoral elections Together with the local government elections there were city mayoral elections in Hackney, Lewisham, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Watford. There was also a Combined Authority Mayoral Election for the Sheffield City Region in Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield. Details of turnout, rejected ballots and postal voting can be found in Table 6.1.

	Rejected ballots	Postal votes issued	Postal vote turnout
Mayoral	38.2%	2.2%	15.4%
Hackney	62.7%	36.9%	1.9%
Lewisham	37.9%	17.9%	59.3%
Newham	1.3%	13.0%	61.9%
Tower Hamlet	35.8%	2.4%	13.9%
Doncaster	59.6%	42.0%	3.2%
Rotherham	16.2%	47.7%	67.4%
Watford	25.0%	1.7%	39.3%
Sheffield City region	18.0%	68.0%	25.8%
Barnsley	21.7%	1.8%	25.0%
Doncaster	57.0%	26.4%	1.5%
Rotherham	21.3%	47.7%	17.3%
Sheffield	1.3%	24.9%	51.7%
Barnsley	31.6%	1.5%	31.6%
Doncaster	2.3%	17.3%	2.3%
Rotherham	19.6%	62.3%	51.7%
Sheffield	60.3%	20.1%	31.6%
Barnsley	Appendices	1.1%	31.6%
Doncaster	Appendix A	26.4%	2.3%
Rotherham	All information	47.7%	19.6%
Sheffield	contained within this report and the accompanying dataset is based on data received from Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers. There remain inconsistencies in the ways in which local authorities record and report information. We continue to notice differences in the coding of information by different electoral management software. For example, customers of one electoral management software supplier consistently report a higher proportion of 'mismatching' than others. Inconsistencies relating to the reasons for and total number of postal vote rejections on the Form K appear to result from the potential for differences in interpretation and treatment. For example, in the treatment of the numbers of covering envelopes and ballot papers returned, covering envelopes may be sent in without the A envelope or postal voting statement enclosed, while the missing document may or may not be sent in a separate covering envelope later, or multiple ballots may be returned in one envelope. When local authorities are contacted about such anomalies they are often unable to provide revised figures or clarify why the data were coded in that way. In practice, we use a calculation of field B6 minus field C18 as a surrogate for the total number of postal votes rejected regardless of whether or not it is the same as recorded in field C19. The different breakdown of reasons for rejection collected on the additional data form does not always match this B6 minus C18 calculation. However, the discrepancies seem less severe and the categories have the advantage of being embedded in software and of having greater 'common sense' meaning. It would seem sensible to consider replacing fields B15-17 on Form K with three other aggregated categories: rejections for mismatching; rejections for missing identifier information; rejections for absent documentation. As it is, field B15 is largely redundant given that almost all authorities now verify 100% of postal vote returns. There is no field that captures the number of postal voting statements received by the Returning Officer or at a polling station before the close of poll. In practice, we use field B6, 'Number of covering envelopes received by the Returning Officer or at a polling station before the close of poll' as a surrogate but we know that, as mentioned, electors can return multiple postal ballots in one envelope or return envelopes without any ballots Appendix B Form K: STATEMENT AS TO POSTAL BALLOT PAPERS REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE ACTS LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELEC	59.3%	16.2%

Ward: Date of Poll: A. Issue of postal ballot papers 1. Total number of postal ballot papers issued under regulation 71 2. Total number of postal ballot papers issued under regulation 77 (spoilt and returned for cancellation), regulation 78 (lost or not received) and regulation 78A (cancelled due to change of address) 3. Total number of postal ballot papers cancelled under regulation 86A (where the first ballot paper was cancelled and retrieved) 4. Total number of postal ballot papers issued (1 to 3) 5. Total number of ballot papers cancelled under regulation 78A B (1). Receipt of and replacement postal ballot papers 6. Number of covering envelopes received by the Returning Officer or at a polling station before the close of poll (excluding any undelivered or returned under regulation 77(1) (spoilt), regulation 78(1) (lost) and regulation 86A (cancelled ballot papers)) 7. Number of covering envelopes received by the returning officer after the close of poll, excluding any returned as undelivered 8. Number of postal ballot papers returned spoilt for cancellation in time for another ballot paper to be issued 9. Number of postal ballot papers identified as lost or not received in time for another ballot paper to be issued 10. Number of ballot papers cancelled and retrieved in time for another ballot paper to be issued 11. Number of postal ballot papers returned as spoilt too late for another ballot paper to be issued 12. Number of covering envelopes returned as undelivered (up to the 25th day after the date of poll) 13. Number of covering envelopes not received by the Returning Officer (by the 25th day after the date of poll) 14. Total numbers 6 to 13 (this should be the same as that in 4 above) B (2). Receipt of postal ballot papers – Personal Identifiers 15. Number of covering envelopes set aside for the verification of personal identifiers on postal voting statements 16. Number of postal voting statements subject to verification procedure rejected as not completed (excluding prior cancellations) 17. Number of postal voting statements rejected following verification procedures due to the personal identifiers on the postal voting statement not matching those in the personal identifiers record (excluding prior cancellations) C. Count of postal ballot papers 18. Number of ballot papers returned by postal voters which were included in the count of ballot papers 19. Number of cases in which a covering envelope or its contents were marked "Rejected" (cancellations under regulations 77, 78, 78A and 86A are not rejections and should be included in items 2, 3, 5, 8, 9 and 10 above) Date: Signed: Returning Officer Authority: Additional data form 1) Number of proxies appointed for these elections 2) Number of emergency proxies appointed for these elections 3) Number of waivers granted for these elections 4) Number of postal votes rejected for: a) Want of a signature b) Want of a date of birth c) Want of both d) Mismatched signature e) Mismatched DoB f) Both mismatched g) Ballot paper unreturned h) Postal voting statement unreturned 5) Number of polling stations used for these elections 6) Number of postal ballot papers returned on polling day before 10pm 7) Number of postal ballot papers returned on the day after polling day before 10pm 8) Number of new electors added to the register between 01/12/17 - 26/03/18 inclusive 9) Number of new electors added to the register between 27/03/18 and 17/04/18 inclusive 10) Number of applications received after the registration deadline 11) Number of applications received between 23/11/17 and 26/03/18 inclusive 12) Number of duplicate applications received between the 23/11/17 and 26/03/18 inclusive 13) Number of applications received between 27/03/18 and 17/04/18 inclusive 14) Number of duplicate applications received between 27/03/18 and 17/04/18 inclusive 15) Number of people who tried to vote on polling day and were found not to be registered 1. 10 local authorities were unable to provide information on applications. 16 were unable to provide information on duplicate applications. ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. This calculation omits

Blackburn with Darwen as the number of postal ballots received had not been submitted at time of writing. ■ Back to content at footnote 2 3. There is no statutory field that captures the number of postal voting statements received by the Returning Officer. In practice, we use field B6, 'Number of covering envelopes received by the Returning Officer or at a polling station before the close of poll' as a surrogate but we know that, as mentioned, electors can return multiple postal ballots in one envelope or return envelopes without any ballots. ■ Back to content at footnote 3 4. As figures reported for the postal votes rejected field were inconsistent, we used a calculation of covering envelopes received minus field postal votes included in the count as a surrogate for the total number of postal votes rejected. This approach is consistent with previous years. ■ Back to content at footnote 4 Related content Results and turnout at the May 2017 England local elections View the results and turnout of the 2017 local elections in England Past elections and referendums Read our reports and view data about past elections and referendums Local councils Find out about local councils and how to vote in local council elections. Types of elections about the types of elections in the UK.

Policy You are in the section Home Currently reading: of 9 - Show page contents On this page About this guidance How enforcement fits into our approach to regulation Our supervisory powers Our investigatory powers Other powers Assessments and investigations The civil sanctions decision-making framework The civil sanctions available to the Commission Appendix About this guidance The Electoral Commission is the independent body which oversees elections and regulates political finance in the United Kingdom. We are accountable to the UK Parliament, the Scottish Parliament, and the Senedd. The Political Parties , Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) requires us to prepare and publish guidance as to the use of our powers to investigate and sanction potential offences and contraventions of PPERA. This Enforcement Policy fulfils that requirement. We are then required to have regard to this published guidance when exercising our enforcement functions. This guidance sets out our enforcement approach, and how we will normally use our supervisory, investigation and sanctioning powers. It also sets out how we assess and investigate potential offences or contraventions of PPERA, and our approach to the forfeiture of funds from impermissible donors. This guidance does not cover our enforcement approach to the controls on information to be included with electronic material (imprints) in the Elections Act 2022. We are required to provide separate guidance, approved by Parliament, for that element of the regime. The content of this Policy (except the Appendix) is a statutory requirement and we are required to consult before making changes. The previous policy is applicable to any offences identified which took place between 5 April 2016 and 1 September 2023, when this policy came into effect.

How enforcement fits into our approach to regulation Proportionate enforcement as part of regulation We aim to ensure an increasingly trusted and transparent system of regulation in political finance, monitoring and securing compliance, promoting understanding amongst those regulated and proactively pursuing potential offences or contraventions of political finance law. To do this we provide proactive or reactive support in order to secure compliance and to give those we regulate a clear understanding of their responsibilities and how to meet them. We will also take enforcement action, including using investigatory powers and sanctions, but only where we are satisfied that it is necessary and proportionate to do so in order to achieve our corporate objective. This means that: where we are satisfied we can resolve a matter and achieve our aim without enforcement action, we will do so where we do take enforcement action, we will do so in a way that is objective, impartial, consistent, effective, proportionate and fair we will seek to conduct enforcement action as quickly as possible and efficiently, and with due regard for those involved we will take the facts of each situation into account

Working with the police, prosecutors, and other regulators The Commission's role as regulator includes monitoring and securing compliance with all the political finance laws in PPERA. However, we may investigate and impose sanctions only in relation to certain offences and contraventions of the law in PPERA. These offences fall into our enforcement remit, which is narrower than our regulatory remit. All PPERA offences are criminal offences and may be investigated by the police. There is a different regime for candidates in elections under the Representation of the People Act 1983. The offences set out in that regime may only be investigated by the police. We cannot investigate or sanction these offences. We have agreements in place with the police and prosecutors in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Where we become aware of a potential criminal offence within our regulatory role but not our enforcement remit, or which we consider to be so serious that our civil sanctions may

not be an adequate response, we may notify the police so that they can consider investigating. It will be a matter for the relevant police force whether or not they decide to investigate. We work with other regulatory bodies and share information with them where we are able to and it is appropriate to do so. We may also notify any relevant authority, including the police, of potential offences we become aware of which sit outside our regulatory remit where we consider it appropriate to do so.

Where a matter under investigation includes an offence or offences where more than one enforcement body has an interest, we will liaise with other regulatory bodies or the police at the earliest possible stage to minimise duplication of investigative work. Police investigations will always take primacy over our civil investigations.

Our supervisory powers

Our supervisory powers are powers we can use where we do not have reasonable grounds to suspect an offence and we are not conducting an investigation. They enable us to monitor and check on those who are regulated under PPERA, such as registered parties or officers of those parties, registered non-party campaigners, registered referendum campaigners, candidates and their agents. The powers extend only to information about the income and expenditure of the person or organisation concerned. These powers support monitoring compliance by regulated organisations and individuals with the requirements set down in law. As part of our statutory role monitoring compliance with these laws, we may need to obtain information from, or visit premises used by, those we regulate. Where appropriate this is done on a voluntary basis and with advance notice. However, Schedule 19 B of PPERA provides us with the power to ensure that information can be obtained where it is necessary for our functions. These are separate from the powers available to us to investigate potential breaches and offences under PPERA.

Disclosure notices

We may issue a disclosure notice requiring a regulated organisation or individual to provide us with specific documents and/or information. These documents or information must be related to the income and expenditure of the organisation or individual, and must be reasonably required by us for the purpose of carrying out our functions. A disclosure notice may be issued, for example, where we need to be certain of ascertaining compliance by a regulated organisation or individual within a particular timeframe, or where there are public interest issues. We may also use this power where a regulated organisation or individual has failed to comply with a request for voluntary cooperation. The disclosure of material can occur in different ways. For the convenience of all concerned we will normally request that material be sent to us for consideration. However, in some circumstances we may examine the material or information to be made available to us on the premises of the regulated organisation or individual. This may be, for example, because we need to review information storage systems on site. It is a criminal offence to fail to comply with a disclosure notice by the deadline set without reasonable excuse. We will consider requests for extensions to deadlines where there are reasonable grounds for the request. It is also a criminal offence to intentionally obstruct us in carrying out our functions in issuing the notice, or to knowingly or recklessly provide false information in purported compliance with a disclosure notice.

Inspection warrants

Where we are unreasonably refused access to documents following a request - including during a voluntary inspection of premises - we may ask a justice of the peace or, in Scotland, a sheriff, to issue an inspection warrant. To obtain a warrant we must be able to show all of the following:

- There are reasonable grounds for believing that there are documents relating to the income and expenditure of the regulated organisation or individual on the premises in question.
- We need to inspect these documents for the purposes of carrying out our (non-investigatory) functions.

We have requested

permission to inspect the documents on the premises and it has been unreasonably refused. We may only ask for an inspection warrant when exercising our supervisory functions, as separate powers exist to seek information for our investigatory functions. Failing to comply with the warrant, or otherwise obstructing it or providing false information under it, is a criminal offence. Our investigatory powers Our investigatory powers are set out in Schedule 19B of PPERA and extend to any person – including individuals and organisations. We may use these powers when we have reasonable grounds to suspect an offence or offences under the political finance laws, and we are investigating the matter. Our investigatory powers may be used and enforced in respect of any person who holds relevant documents or information. As a UK regulator, our powers are however limited to the borders of the UK. We are not therefore able to use our investigatory powers in relation to any person outside the UK. We will use these powers where it is appropriate and proportionate to do so, including to ensure the investigation is conducted as quickly and efficiently as possible. Investigation notice We may issue an investigation notice requiring a person to produce documents or provide information or explanation that is reasonably required for the purpose of our investigation into a suspected offence or contravention. The investigation notice will specify the documents, information or explanation that is required, and set out when and where it must be produced. We can issue an investigation notice to any person – either an individual or an organisation – who we consider holds relevant documents or information. This includes the subject of an investigation or a potential witness or other third party. The disclosure of material can occur in different ways. For the convenience of all concerned we will normally request that material be sent to us for consideration. However, in some circumstances we may examine the material or information to be made available to us on the premises of the person. It is a criminal offence to fail to comply with an investigation notice without reasonable excuse, or to intentionally obstruct us in carrying out our functions in issuing the notice. It is also a criminal offence to knowingly or recklessly provide false information in purported compliance with an investigation notice. Any penalty sought for a failure to comply will depend on the circumstances and any mitigating factors. If the recipient of an investigation notice does not possess or have access to the documents or information specified in the investigation notice, they must let us know as quickly as possible. Disclosure order Where an investigation notice is not complied with we will normally seek to enforce it by applying to the High Court or, in Scotland, the Court of Session for a disclosure order. To obtain a disclosure order we must demonstrate that: We have reasonable grounds to suspect a person (whether or not the recipient of the investigation notice) has committed an offence or contravention under PPERA. There are documents, information or explanations that have not been produced in compliance with an investigation notice. Those documents, information or explanations are reasonably required by us for the purpose of investigating the suspected offence or contravention and those documents, information or explanations are in the custody or under the control of the respondent. We may retain documents delivered in accordance with a disclosure order for three months, unless proceedings have commenced in relation to a criminal offence or the documents are relevant to our issuing an initial notice proposing a monetary penalty. In practice, documents will be returned more quickly if they are of no relevance to an investigation. Where documents are retained for the purpose of proceedings against a person, and there is an appeal against the outcome of the proceedings, we will endeavour to return the documents as soon as it is practical after the appeal process ending. We may make copies or

records of the information contained in documents provided to us. It is a criminal offence to fail to comply, without reasonable excuse, with a disclosure order. It is also an offence to obstruct us, or knowingly or intentionally provide false information in purported compliance with a disclosure order. Where this occurs we may seek prosecution, or seek to have the disclosure order enforced as contempt of court.

Statutory interview We may require an individual to attend a statutory interview. The individual – who may be the subject of the investigation or a potential witness or other third party holding relevant information – must attend the statutory interview at a specified time and place and must answer any question that we reasonably consider to be relevant to the investigation. Statutory interviews will usually be recorded. The individual may bring another person to the interview, such as a legal representative. However, we may refuse to allow a particular person to accompany the individual if the presence of that person is likely to compromise the integrity of the investigation. It is a criminal offence to fail to comply, without reasonable excuse, with a requirement to attend a statutory interview or answer the questions asked during it. It is also a criminal offence to obstruct us in carrying out our functions this way, or to knowingly or intentionally provide us with false information in purported compliance with the statutory interview. Any penalty sought for a failure to comply will depend on the circumstances and any mitigating factors.

No evidence obtained from a person under these powers is admissible in criminal proceedings against that person, if they are subsequently charged with an offence.

Other powers Stop Notices A stop notice under Schedule 19B of PPERA enables us to order a regulated organisation or individual not to do, or to stop doing, something, even if an offence may not yet have been committed. We can only use a stop notice where we reasonably believe: the activity we are seeking to stop is likely to involve an offence or contravention under PPERA; and the action we are seeking to stop is seriously damaging, or poses a significant risk of seriously damaging, public confidence in the PPERA regime as it relates to the income and expenditure of registered political parties and others. The stop notice will set out the steps the recipient must take to comply with it, as well as the grounds under which it has been made, the consequences for failing to comply and the rights of appeal. The recipient of a stop notice may appeal to a county court or, in Scotland, the sheriff against the decision to serve the notice. It is a criminal offence to fail to comply with a stop notice. Any penalty sought for a failure to comply will depend on the circumstances and any mitigating factors. The recipient of a stop notice should apply to us for a completion certificate to verify their compliance with the notice. We will make a decision within 14 days of receipt of an application as to whether to issue it. We will only issue a completion certificate if we are satisfied that the applicant has complied with the stop notice. The applicant may appeal a decision not to issue a completion certificate within 28 days of being notified of our decision.

Forfeiture One of the key purposes of PPERA is to ensure that the sources of donations are controlled and to prevent unlawful overseas funding of UK politics. PPERA sections 54-57 define ‘permissible’ donors, requires recipients to establish that all donors are permissible and return any funds that are not from permissible donors within 30 days of receipt. It is an offence, for which the Commission can impose civil sanctions, to retain such a donation beyond 30 days after receipt. It is a defence if the recipient can show that: they took all reasonable steps to establish that the donor was permissible; and as a result they believed the donor was permissible We will decide whether to investigate and impose sanctions for that offence in accordance with this policy. In addition to the potential offence and

possible sanctions, PPERA also includes ‘forfeiture’ provisions in sections 58-60 which enable the Commission to apply to a court to forfeit funds received from impermissible donors. Recipients must therefore return funds within 30 days unless they have established that the donor is permissible. If the necessary checks are not completed within 30 days, the donation should be returned. As with every area of our regulatory work, we encourage compliance by publishing guidance and providing advice where requested. We apply the following approach in dealing with funds received from impermissible donors and retained beyond 30 days: We will investigate all instances of donations from impermissible donors being retained beyond 30 days – this is to ensure we have all of the relevant facts before taking any decisions. We expect impermissible funds to be returned within 30 days. Where in exceptional circumstances this is not possible, we expect the funds to be retained for as short a time as possible beyond 30 days, minimising any benefit to the recipient, and that the recipient will notify the Commission of any such funds being retained as soon as it becomes aware of them. Where funds have been returned, even outside 30 days, we may seek forfeiture, but we will take into account relevant factors in making our decision such as how long the donation was retained, any benefit to the recipient and whether it was returned as soon as practicable. Where the funds have not been returned, we will apply to court to seek forfeiture unless it is not reasonable, rational or proportionate to do so. We will, wherever possible and appropriate, invite the recipient to voluntarily forfeit such funds before applying to the court, to avoid unnecessary court time and costs for all involved. Where an individual donor was not permissible but was or may have been entitled to appear on an electoral register at the time of the donation, we will consider the appropriate level of voluntary forfeiture accordingly. We will consider separately whether to impose sanctions. In some cases we may seek forfeiture without imposing any sanction, or vice versa.

Assessments

We monitor compliance with the rules in PPERA, and potential offences may be uncovered by that monitoring. We may also receive allegations that the law has been broken, or identify indications of an offence and/or contravention of the law, including through a press report or referral from another regulator. To decide whether to open an investigation, we look at the evidence and circumstances as part of a process called an assessment. The purpose of an assessment

Assessments are a consideration of the issues and evidence to determine whether to investigate, or whether an issue can be dealt with another way such as through the provision of guidance. We may investigate where we have reasonable grounds to suspect that a person has committed an offence or contravened a restriction or requirement under PPERA, and where we are satisfied it is in the public interest to take such action. The assessment process

We check all potential breaches of the PPERA rules to determine if they should be assessed. We will not assess potential issues if they are not within our regulatory remit. We may also decide not to assess an issue if:

- It does not disclose any failure to comply with the PPERA rules
- It is not supported by any credible evidence
- In the case of a complaint, the complainant refuses to provide details of the issue and any supporting evidence in writing
- We have already assessed it and no new evidence has come to light
- We have already taken enforcement action in respect of the issue
- We do not consider it in the public interest or justifies the use of our resources

Assessments may include:

- Reviewing documents provided to us
- Reviewing documents we already have
- Seeking further information or clarification from a complainant
- Making initial inquiries of the subject of the allegation or other persons
- In the case of an assessment initiated by a complaint, we will notify the complainant of the outcome of the assessment as

quickly as possible – and within 21 calendar days – after acknowledging receipt of the complaint. A complainant can ask us to review a decision not to open an assessment or investigation. The request must be made within 14 days of notification of the decision.

Investigations

Opening an investigation

If we are satisfied that there are reasonable grounds to suspect an offence or contravention has occurred, we will consider whether to investigate. We will only open an investigation where we consider that investigating the suspected offence or contravention is in the public interest and justifies the use of our resources in this way. Whether or not a matter is in the public interest and justifies the use of our resources will depend on a number of factors. These factors may be different and/or differently weighted depending on the circumstances. We will consider the relevant factors before deciding whether to open an investigation, and may review the continued relevance of the factors during an investigation. A non-exhaustive list is below:

- Our regulatory aims and objectives , and whether an investigation is the most appropriate way to achieve them in the particular case
- Effective and efficient prioritisation in the use of our resources
- The seriousness of the suspected offence or contravention including the magnitude and potential harm caused by it
- The strength of the evidence
- The frequency or duration of the suspected offence or contravention
- The impact, including the deterrence effect, of an investigation and/or any sanction that might be imposed
- The compliance history of the person(s) who may have committed the suspected offence or contravention
- Any steps already taken to rectify the breach

Any relevant circumstances of the individuals involved

Timescales for investigations

The time taken to complete an investigation varies on a case by case basis. Where there is a great deal of evidence to collect and assess, or where the issue relates to a particularly complex area of the law, the investigation may take longer. We manage investigations differently depending on the complexity of the case, volume of evidence involved, or number of potential offences under consideration. We will always gather all relevant evidence we can obtain and record this in a way that ensures it can be disclosed effectively. We recognise that it is important to conclude investigations as quickly as possible. This is both in the public interest and in the interest of justice for those involved. We will therefore ensure a review of any case approaching 12 months in duration, by someone independent of the investigation, to determine whether it remains in the public interest to continue the investigation. However, our first priority is always to conduct a fair and thorough investigation, and this will take priority over speed or duration where the two conflict.

Notifying subjects

We will normally inform the subject of an investigation as soon as possible after the investigation is opened, unless doing so would frustrate the investigation. We will provide details of the matters under investigation and ensure that the subject has the opportunity to respond to them.

Gathering evidence

In order to determine if an offence or contravention under PPERA has occurred, we may need to make enquiries of persons that we believe can provide relevant information. We will ask for documents, information and explanations on a voluntary basis or by using our investigatory powers, as appropriate. We may do this in writing or by phone, or by arranging statutory or voluntary interviews, depending on the circumstances.

Recognising the impact on those involved

We understand that being involved in an investigation, whether as a subject or a witness, can be a stressful and even upsetting experience. We will always treat everyone involved in an investigation with respect, and be mindful of the impact the investigation may have. We will make all reasonable efforts to conduct the investigation in a way that minimises the impact on those involved. We will provide the subject of an

investigation on an expected timescale in any situation where there has not been any other communication to the subject for a period of 8 weeks. We will conduct our investigations in a way that recognises diversity and is compliant with equalities and human rights legislation. Where we develop concerns, or are made aware of any concerns over a person's ability to take part for any reason, we will review the position and consider alternative ways to progress.

Investigations outcomes

There are three possible investigations outcomes:

- there is no or insufficient evidence to determine an offence or contravention has been committed we are satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that an offence or contravention has been committed we decide, having revisited the factors in paragraph 6.9 above, that it is no longer in the public interest to continue to investigate a suspected offence or contravention.
- Where we are satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that an offence or contravention has been committed, we will consider what further action to take. In most cases this will involve deciding whether to impose a sanction. If appropriate we may decide to refer the matter to the police or relevant prosecuting authority at this stage. A number of offences in PPERA include a reference to 'reasonable excuse': where we are satisfied that a reasonable excuse exists for the failure to comply with the requirements no offence is committed. 'Reasonable excuse' is not defined in PPERA but it does not mean any excuse. Whether 'reasonable excuse' is made out in any case depends on the facts and context of each case. It may be made out where the failure to comply occurred due to circumstances beyond the control of the person that may have committed the offence, and which could not reasonably have been anticipated and mitigated by them.

The civil sanctions decision-making framework

When we can sanction

We can impose civil sanctions under Schedule 19C for most, but not all, offences under PPERA. To determine an offence or contravention has been committed, we must be satisfied beyond reasonable doubt and only then can we impose a civil sanction. In order to start civil court proceedings for forfeiture the standard of proof that applies is the balance of probabilities.

When we will or will not sanction

We will generally sanction where we consider it appropriate to do so to meet our regulatory aim and objectives, and when it is proportionate and in the public interest to do so. We may decide not to impose a sanction where these conditions have not been met.

The type and/or size of a sanction

Where we decide to sanction, we will consider the appropriate sanction, and in the case of a monetary penalty, the level of that penalty. A number of factors will be considered, which those are and the weight given to each will depend on the circumstances. In general, we will attach greater weight to factors relating to the offence itself and how it occurred, and the nature and compliance history of the person or organisation, than to actions taken after the event. These factors include, but are not limited to, the following (we refer to 'person' in the legal sense, including organisations):

- The seriousness of the offence or contravention
- The harm caused by the offence or contravention
- The extent to which the offence or contravention was inadvertent, reckless, or deliberate
- Any financial gain or other advantage to the person concerned as a result of the offence or contravention
- The frequency or duration of the offence or contravention
- The compliance history of the person concerned
- The level of cooperation with us shown by the person concerned during the investigation
- Any previous written or documented oral advice from us to the person concerned on relevant statutory requirements
- Any deliberateness, dishonesty, deception or misrepresentation by the person concerned when committing the offence or contravention
- The level of insight as to reasons for the offence or contravention or the consequences of it
- Acceptance or otherwise of responsibility for the offence or contravention
- Action taken to eliminate, reduce or

rectify the harm resulting from the offence or contravention Action taken to reduce the likelihood of a recurrence of the offence or contravention Whether the matter was voluntarily reported by the person concerned Adherence to any enforcement undertakings agreed with us Substantiated evidence that the person's actions were affected by ill-health Process for imposing a sanction We treat the process for imposing a sanction as confidential, in the same way we treat an investigation. We will not make public information about the process whilst it is ongoing. If we seek to impose a penalty or a compliance or restoration notice, we will follow this process: Issue a notice proposing the sanction Allow a period of time for written representations or objections from the person concerned (only the person to whom the notice is issued has the right to make representations though we may consider representations from others where appropriate) Consider any representations or objections Either close the matter or issue a notice imposing a sanction (either that originally proposed, or a revised sanction) The notice proposing a sanction will always contain details of the proposed sanction and the reasons for it, as well as how written representations or objections can be made and the deadline for doing so. We will provide the evidence relied on (unless we know it is already in the possession of the recipient) in reaching our decision to assist the recipient in making representations. We will also explain the basis for the type of sanction and the level of any penalty proposed. Certain types of notice may contain additional information, which is explained in the next section. When making representations or objections recipients can put forward any information they consider relevant. In particular, if they have not already done so, the recipient may want to put forward any defence to the offence or contravention. They can also make representations on our proposed reasons for a sanction, or the factors we have taken into account when determining the type and size of a sanction. Finally, and separate to those factors, the person concerned may want to comment on their ability to pay a financial penalty and/or the cost to them of any non-financial requirement that might be imposed. We may consider terms for payment where we are satisfied that the level of fine will place a very significant burden on the organisation or individual. This will not however be a factor taken into account as to the level of penalty. Where possible, representations or objections should be accompanied by supporting evidence. In exceptional circumstances we will consider representations that we receive after the legal deadline for them. However, we have no legal power to extend this deadline. Any representations or objections will be considered by a senior officer of the Commission who was not involved in the decision to issue the notice proposing a sanction. Whether representations are made or not, the officer will apply the same decision-making framework. This involves reviewing the case to determine if we remain satisfied that an offence took place and, if so, that the proposed sanction is reasonable and appropriate. If, as a result, we are no longer satisfied that an offence or contravention occurred, the matter will be closed. Otherwise, the senior officer will decide whether to issue a notice imposing a penalty, either reflecting the initial decision or varying it. The civil sanctions available to the Commission Fixed monetary penalties A fixed monetary penalty is a fixed fine of £200. Notice of proposal The notice proposing the penalty will include: The grounds for the proposal to impose the fixed monetary penalty The right to make representations and objections The circumstances in which the Commission may not impose the fixed monetary penalty The period within which liability for the fixed monetary penalty may be discharged, and The period within which representations and objections may be made In addition to the information above the notice of proposal will also explain that the recipient may

discharge the penalty by paying the sum of the proposed penalty within 14 days of receiving the notice of proposal, and the matter will be concluded at that stage. It will also set out the circumstances in which we may not impose the penalty. If the recipient does not make payment within 14 days of receiving the notice of proposal, then once the deadline for making representations has passed and any representations have been considered, we will decide whether to issue a notice imposing the penalty.

A fixed monetary penalty cannot be varied after the notice of proposed penalty has been issued. It can only be withdrawn or imposed. Notice imposing penalty The notice imposing the penalty will contain the following information:

- The grounds for imposing the penalty
- How to make payment
- How to appeal the decision to issue the Final Notice
- The deadline for any appeal
- The deadline for making payment (28 days from the date of the Final Notice)
- The deadline and size of late payment charges
- The circumstances when we may instigate civil debt recovery proceedings if the penalty is not paid
- Late payment penalties If a fixed monetary penalty has not been paid within 28 days of service of the final notice, a late payment charge of £50 will be added. If the penalty and late payment charge has not been paid within 56 days of the date of the final notice, the late payment charge will increase to £100.

Right of appeal The recipient may appeal to a county court or, in Scotland, the sheriff against the decision to impose a fixed monetary penalty. Any appeal must be made within 28 days of the date the notice imposing penalty was served.

Convictions Where we have issued a notice of a proposed fixed monetary penalty to a person, criminal proceedings for the offence may not be instituted until the 14 day period for discharging liability has expired. If liability has been discharged, the person cannot be convicted of that offence. Once we have issued a notice imposing the penalty, the person cannot at any time be convicted of the offence that gave rise to the penalty.

Variable monetary penalties A variable monetary penalty is a variable fine that is calculated according to the nature of the offence. It may be used on its own or in combination with a compliance notice and/or a restoration notice. When determining the level of a variable monetary penalty we will take into account the factors set out in paragraph 7.4. The Political Parties, Elections and Referendums (Civil Sanctions) Order 2010 makes the maximum variable monetary penalty we can impose in any circumstances £20,000, but this is subject to other limitations that may apply in different parts of the UK.

Notice proposing penalty The notice proposing the penalty will include:

The grounds for the proposal to impose the discretionary requirement

The right to make representations and objections

The circumstances in which the Commission may not impose the discretionary requirement

The period within which representations and objections may be made.

Notice imposing penalty The notice imposing the penalty will contain the following information:

- The grounds for imposing the penalty
- How to make payment
- How to appeal the decision to issue the notice
- The deadline for any appeal
- The deadline for making payment (28 days from the date of the notice imposing the penalty, after which the penalty will increase)
- The circumstances when we may instigate civil debt recovery proceedings or other action if the penalty is not paid
- Late payment penalties If a variable monetary penalty has not been paid within 28 days of service of the notice imposing it, a late payment charge of 25% of the penalty will be added. If the penalty and late payment charge has not been paid within 56 days of the date of the notice, the late payment charge will increase to 50% of the original penalty.

Right of appeal The recipient may appeal to a county court or, in Scotland, the sheriff against the decision to impose the variable monetary penalty. Any appeal must be made within 28 days from the date of service of the notice imposing the penalty.

Convictions Once we have issued a notice imposing a

variable monetary penalty, the recipient cannot at any time be convicted of the offence that gave rise to the penalty. Compliance notices A compliance notice sets out action that must be taken by a regulated organisation or individual who has breached the law, so that the breach does not continue or recur. A compliance notice may be used on its own, or in combination with a variable monetary penalty. Notice of proposal Where we propose to issue a compliance notice we will send the person concerned a notice of proposal. This will explain the grounds for imposing the compliance notice, and set out the action we propose to require the person to take. It will also set out how the recipient may make written representations about the decision. Once the deadline for making representations has passed and any representations have been considered, we will decide whether to issue a compliance notice. Compliance notice The notice will contain the following information: The actions and timeframe for their completion The consequences of non-compliance How to appeal the decision to issue the notice The deadline for any appeal Right of appeal The recipient may appeal to a county court or, in Scotland, the sheriff against the decision to impose a compliance notice. Any appeal must be made within 28 days of the date of service of the notice. Monetary penalties for failing to comply with a compliance notice We will impose any penalty for non-compliance by issuing a non-compliance penalty notice. This will set out the grounds for imposing the penalty, the amount, the deadline for payment and the consequences of non-payment. It will also explain how to appeal the decision and the deadline for any appeal (28 days from the date the notice is received). Completion certificate Once the recipient considers they have complied with the terms of the compliance notice, they should notify us in writing and apply for a completion certificate. They will need to provide information demonstrating compliance with the terms of the notice. We will consider an application for a completion certificate within 28 days, provided we have all the information we need to assess whether the terms of the notice have been met. We will confirm our decision in writing and, if appropriate, issue a completion certificate. We may revoke a completion certificate if it was granted on the basis of inaccurate, incomplete or misleading information. If this happens, the compliance notice continues to have effect as if the completion certificate had not been issued. Convictions Where a compliance notice is imposed and a person fails to comply with it, they could be convicted of an offence in respect of the act or omission that led to the notice. Once we have issued a final notice imposing a variable monetary penalty, the person cannot at any time be convicted of the offence that gave rise to the penalty. Restoration notices A restoration notice sets out action that must be taken by a regulated organisation or individual who has breached the law to restore the position, as far as possible, to what it would have been had no breach occurred. A restoration notice may be used on its own, in combination with a variable monetary penalty. Notice of proposal Where we propose to issue a restoration notice we will send the person concerned a notice of proposal. This will explain the grounds for imposing the restoration notice, and set out the action we propose to require the person to take. It will also set out how the recipient may make written representations about the decision to impose the sanction. Once the deadline for making representations has passed and any representations have been considered, we will decide whether to issue a restoration notice. Restoration notice The notice will contain the following information: The actions and timeframe for their completion The consequences of non-compliance How to appeal the decision to issue the notice The deadline for any appeal Right of appeal The recipient may appeal to a county court or, in Scotland, the sheriff against the decision to impose a compliance and/or

restoration notice. Any appeal must be made within 28 days of the date of service of the notice. Penalties for failing to comply with a restoration notice We will impose any penalty for non-compliance by issuing a non-compliance penalty notice. This will set out the grounds for imposing the penalty, the amount, the deadline for payment and the consequences of non-payment. It will also explain how to appeal the decision and the deadline for any appeal (28 days from the date the notice is received).

Completion certificate Once the recipient considers they have complied with the terms of the restoration notice, they should notify us in writing and apply for a completion certificate. They will need to provide information demonstrating compliance with the terms of the notice. We will consider an application for a completion certificate within 28 days, provided we have all the information we need to assess whether the terms of the notice have been met. We will confirm our decision in writing and, if appropriate, issue a completion certificate. We may revoke a completion certificate if it was granted on the basis of inaccurate, incomplete or misleading information. If this happens, the compliance or restoration notice continues to have effect as if the completion certificate had not been issued.

Convictions Where a restoration notice is imposed and a person fails to comply with it, they could be convicted of an offence in respect of the act or omission that led to the notice. Once we have issued a final notice imposing a variable monetary penalty, the person cannot at any time be convicted of the offence that gave rise to the penalty.

Enforcement undertakings Where the Commission has reasonable grounds to suspect an offence may have occurred, a regulated organisation or individual may offer to enter into an enforcement undertaking. An enforcement undertaking involves the organisation or individual offering to take action to ensure that any non-compliance does not continue or recur, or that a position is restored as far as possible to what it would have been had the non-compliance not occurred. We will consider carefully all reasonable offers. But we are not obliged to accept an enforcement undertaking, and we will not agree to any until we have a full understanding of the nature and severity of the non-compliance. When considering whether to accept an enforcement undertaking we will take into account the following, non-exhaustive, list of factors:

The seriousness of the offence or contravention

Whether the matter was voluntarily reported

Whether there was any dishonesty, deception or misrepresentation in the offence or contravention

The cost of a full investigation

The need to deter non-compliance

Any advice given to the regulated organisation or individual on the relevant statutory requirements

The compliance history of the regulated organisation or individual, including whether enforcement

undertakings have been given in the past

The likelihood of the proposed enforcement undertakings to prevent further offences or contraventions

The likelihood of the proposed enforcement undertakings to restore the position of those involved to what

it would have been had the offence or contravention not taken place

The level of insight shown by the regulated organisation or individual as to why the offence or

contravention occurred

Whether any apology or contrition has been expressed for the offence or contravention

Where enforcement undertakings are agreed but not carried out, we may impose a penalty or consider prosecution in respect of the original offence and/or contravention. Depending on the reasons for the failure to carry out the enforcement undertakings, this may be an aggravating factor in any decision as to the level of a penalty.

Appendix: Disclosure of information This appendix does not form part of the statutory guidance, and may be amended without consultation. We

recognise that both the public and those we regulate have an interest in how we carry out our statutory monitoring and investigatory role. They also have an interest in

knowing that regulated organisations and individuals are complying with the law on party and election finance, and that non-compliance will be dealt with appropriately.

While we are conducting assessments and investigations or imposing sanctions, we must make sure that our processes are fair. We will not disclose any information that might frustrate or undermine this fairness.

Public disclosure of assessments

We will not routinely publicise that any assessment has begun or is ongoing, or when it is concluded. If we are satisfied that it is in the public interest to do so, we may correct or confirm information about an assessment to ensure accurate information is in the public domain. This may include confirming the name of the individual or organisation and the potential offence or contravention being assessed. It may also include confirming the outcome of an assessment. We will notify the subject of the assessment before confirming their identity to anyone else.

Public disclosure of investigations and sanctions

In some circumstances, we may publicly disclose the opening of an investigation, including the subject and its expected scope. This includes, but is not limited to, when the matter has been the subject of public interest or reporting in the press, and by publishing we can advance the accuracy of information. We will not generally comment further while the investigation is ongoing, or provide public updates as to do so may hinder the conduct of the investigation. Once a month, the Commission publishes information on concluded investigations. This includes the subject and offences under investigation, whether an offence or contravention was established, and whether a sanction was issued. We will update the information to show when monetary penalties are paid. In certain instances, we will publish a more detailed investigation report, and/or media statement when a case concludes. When deciding whether to do so, we will take into account relevant factors, including: whether there is significant public interest in the case whether it is a particularly complex case that requires further explanation to the public whether publishing the details would help those we regulate to better understand PPERA requirements if a media statement was issued at the commencement of the investigation

We will notify the subject of the investigation prior to publication. Where appropriate and more commonly with detailed reports, the subject will have the opportunity to check the factual accuracy of the information to be published. Where a sanction imposed by the Commission is subject to an appeal, we will update the information on our website to include the outcome of the appeal. All of the above is subject to any legal restrictions which may affect disclosure. For example, we are prohibited from the disclosure of any information related to a donation received by a Northern Ireland recipient before 1 July 2017, except for the purposes of any criminal or civil proceedings. As a UK public body, we are subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). We will consider requests for information about assessments, investigations and sanctions made under the FOIA in accordance with that legislation. For further information see our Freedom of Information page . Annual report on the use of powers and sanctions

Under Schedules 19B and 19C of PPERA we are required to report annually on the use of our supervisory and investigatory powers, and civil sanctions. We include this information in our Annual Report.

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Letter: To Twitter about digital campaigning at the EU referendum | Electoral Commission Search Letter: To Twitter about digital campaigning at the EU referendum You are in the Key correspondence section Home Key correspondence On this page Letter summary Read our letter in full First published: 16 November 2017 Last updated: 20 December 2019 Summary of the letter Date: 16 November 2017 To: Mr Nick Pickles, Head of Public Policy and Govt, UK and Israel, Twitter From: Louise Edwards, Head of Regulation Format: Sent by email Full letter Dear Mr Pickles Political campaign finance transparency I write in advance of our meeting on 30 November. We look forward to engaging with Twitter on the important issues arising from digital political campaigning. The Electoral Commission is responsible for regulating and enforcing the rules - set out in the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) - that govern political campaign finance in the UK. These rules cover the funding of and spending on campaign activity, and include provisions and offences about acting as an agent for donations, and arrangements to evade the rules on donations. You will be aware of concerns that individuals or organisations from outside the UK, and notably from or on behalf of Russia, may have been campaigning via social media platforms in the June 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the EU. Further, concerns have been raised that the individuals and funds behind such campaigning, if it occurred, were hidden from those viewing the campaign material. EU referendum campaign activity Campaign activity in the context of the EU Referendum included activities that were intended to, or were otherwise in connection with, promoting or bringing about a particular outcome in the referendum. This included campaign broadcasts, advertising of any kind, unsolicited material sent to voters and market research or other methods of finding out how people intended to vote. Further clarification on what constituted campaign activity was given in our guidance on referendum spending. The referendum was preceded by a regulated period, which ran from 15 April to 23 June 2016. During this period the rules stated campaign activities carried out by referendum campaigners – any individual or entity engaged in campaign activity, whether registered with the Commission or not – could only be financed from permissible donations. This excluded individuals not on the UK or Gibraltar electoral roll and companies not carrying out a business in the UK or Gibraltar. Request for information The Commission's legal duties include taking all reasonable steps to secure compliance with the campaign finance rules (see section 145 of PPERA). In furtherance of this duty, please provide us with the following information: Any evidence you hold of campaign activity conducted via Twitter during the regulated period for the June 2016 EU Referendum (15 April to 23 June 2016) that was funded from Russia. Please provide any such evidence to us by 8 December 2017. In anticipation of this, thank you for your prompt assistance on this important matter. June 2017 UK parliamentary general election Our work in respect of the June general election is ongoing. We may, as part of our assurance work in respect of the election spending returns, wish to contact you at a later date regarding campaign activity on your platform during the general election campaign. Please contact me if you have any questions regarding this request. Related content Letter: Coronavirus and its impact on the May polls Read our letter to Chloe Smith MP (Minister for the Constitution and Devolution) from March 2020 Letter: Spending by Britain Stronger in Europe at the 2016 EU referendum Read our letter to the Rt Hon Priti Patel MP from January 2018 Letter: To Google about digital campaigning at the EU referendum Read our letter to Google from November 2017 Letter: To Facebook about digital campaigning at the EU referendum Read our letter to Facebook from November 2017

Results and turnout at the 2016 Police and Crime Commissioner elections | Electoral Commission Search Results and turnout at the 2016 Police and Crime Commissioner elections You are in the Police and Crime Commissioner elections section Home Police and Crime Commissioner elections First published: 11 July 2019 Last updated: 6 August 2019 Download You can download the: full dataset as an XLS full dataset as a CSV (zip file) You can also download our full report , written by Colin Rallings and Michael Thrasher (Elections Centre, Plymouth University, Drake Circus, Plymouth, PL4 8AA). Summary Of the 36 Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) contests in England, 20 were won by the Conservatives, 13 by Labour and 3 by Independent candidates. In Wales, Labour and Plaid Cymru won two posts each. The electorate for the PCC contests was nearly 33.7 million –31.4 million in England and 2.25 million in Wales. The names of some 3.0% of those on the ‘final’ register were added between December 2015 and 13 March 2016, and a further 1.5% between 13 March and the deadline of 16 April. Nearly 9.2 million votes were cast, making the overall turnout 27.3%. This is much higher than in 2012 but clearly influenced by combining the PCC contests with other elections in both England and Wales. The proportion of ballots rejected at the count (3.4%) was higher than at any other nationwide electoral event in recent years. The large majority of those rejected were deemed either ‘unmarked’ or ‘void for uncertainty’, but in more than a quarter of cases more than one candidate had been chosen in the first preference column. Some 24% of ballots were rejected at the count of second votes. In over 80% of cases this was because voters had failed to record any such second preference. More than 5.5 million postal votes were issued - 16.4% of the entire eligible electorate. In five counting areas more than 30% of the electorate had a postal vote. In England, more than 60% of those with a postal ballot returned it. By way of contrast, however, fewer than 20% of those electors required to vote ‘in person’ did so. The proportion of postal votes rejected or otherwise not included in the count was 4.4% – 4.4% in England and 5% in Wales. Rejection following a mismatch of signature and/or date of birth was more common than rejection for incomplete information. Failing to include either the ballot paper itself or the verification statement or both was the cause of nearly a third of rejections in England but more than a half in Wales. More than one half of one percent of electors with a postal vote were granted a waiver to use their date of birth as their sole identifier. Just 27,500 electors (0.08% of the total) appointed proxies. 3 Summary – combined elections In Wales every elector had the opportunity to vote in both National Assembly and PCC contests. In England 114 local authorities had both council and PCC elections and 169 had PCC contests only. The ballot box turnout was 32.8% in those areas of England with combined local and PCC elections; 20.2% in those places with standalone PCC contests. 4.0% of PCC ballots cast at combined elections were rejected at the count; 2.0% of those at standalone contests. In areas with combined elections 67.2% of postal electors returned their ballots; in PCC only areas 54.7% did so. Of those required to vote ‘in person’ the turnout was 26.6% where local elections were also being held; 14.0% where they were not. Some 5.4% of the ‘votes’ of those returning postal ballots at combined elections were not sent to the count because of documentation errors compared with 3.2% of those where only a PCC election was being held. Related content Report: How the 2012 Police and Crime Commissioner elections were run Read our report about how the 2012 Police and Crime Commissioner elections were run Report: How the 2016 Police and Crime Commissioner elections were run Read our report about how the 2016 Police and Crime Commissioner elections were run Past elections and referendums Read our reports and view data about past elections and

referendums Types of elections about the types of elections in the UK.

Board notes: 5 December 2018 session on simplifying and modernising electoral law across the UK | Electoral Commission Search Board notes: 5 December 2018 session on simplifying and modernising electoral law across the UK You are in the Electoral Commission Board section Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board First published: 18 July 2019 Last updated: 23 July 2019 Overview Date: 5 December Time: After the board meeting Location: Boothroyd Room, 3 Bunhill Row, London Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Holmes (JH), Chair Anna Carragher (AC) Sarah Chambers (SC) Elan Closs Stephens (ECS) Alasdair Morgan (AM) Rob Vincent (RV) Stephen Gilbert (SG) Alastair Ross (AR) Joan Walley (JW) Claire Bassett (CB), Chief Executive Ailsa Irvine (AI), Director, Electoral Administration Bob Posner (BP), Director, Political Finance and Regulation Craig Westwood (CW), Director, Communications and Research Kieran Rix (KR), Director, Finance and Corporate Services David Meek (DM), Senior Adviser, Governance Tom Hawthorn (TH), Head of Policy Niki Nixon (NN), Head of External Communications David Hampson (DH), Lawyer Laura Mcleod (LM), Public Affairs Manager Petra Crees (PC), Planning, Performance and Governance Manager Notes BP explained that the Commission had called for reform of electoral law since 2003, but this had not been a priority for successive governments. There had been targeted initiatives for change but these had merely tended to add complexity. The underlying framework was not fit for purpose, and the courts were struggling with interpreting the law. It might be that real change would only come in the context of an electoral or political crisis of some kind. A government with a large majority might also be needed to push through major change. TH provided a short introduction to the background paper. Modifying electoral legislation was one of our identified policy priorities. We wanted fewer pieces of legislation, which were better drafted and fit-for-purpose. We also wanted to focus on areas of greatest need, including definitions of offences, and ways to challenge elections. Ideally, a single bill would address the necessary changes, but the current environment was not conducive to this. We wanted to focus on seizing opportunities to promote reform as a good thing, and for people to think that the case for reform had become "irresistible". We would look for opportunities to promote this, but we needed to be careful about timing this well. JH thanked the team for the useful presentation and agreed the chances of achieving significant change before upcoming elections was small. AM noted that addressing only one or two areas would exacerbate the existing problem of complexity. This approach might also give governments the opportunity to feel that they had done enough in the reform area. JH agreed that there was a risk with piecemeal change, but there was also a risk in not taking all opportunities for significant improvements. In any case there were not currently enough advocates for change. SC suggested that future political developments might force people to ask questions about wider constitutional issues, which we might then be able to take advantage of. AR suggested we should work with government officials to build support. We also needed legal organisations to lead the campaign to simplify the statute book. AC agreed that we should not ignore low-hanging fruit if opportunities offered. On the question of advocates, we needed a politician or politicians who made reform their particular passion. We should also not ignore the possibilities of a successful Private Member's Bill at some stage. CB identified two distinct questions; what did we want to happen, and how should we try to make this happen? We needed to be clear about what was necessary to resolve the challenge; did we need a complete overhaul, or could piecemeal changes over time be enough? We should then focus on how it should be handled. JW suggested opportunities for major change only came along very rarely, so we needed to be ready with an

ambitious programme when any opportunities did arise. We also needed public awareness to push politicians to act. A Speaker's Lecture could be an opportunity to push for change. SG agreed the law had become too complex, made worse for practitioners when long-established practices appeared to be challenged by the courts. We should work with political parties for major reform. For example we could get the compliance teams in political parties and lawyers in this area together to agree a proper, comprehensive reform proposal. SG also suggested using retired practitioners in the House of Lords to support this. ECS agreed with JW and SG and thanked the team for preparing the paper, but noted the lack of firepower in governments, including the devolved administrations, to push through reforms in this area. Nevertheless political parties were nervous about the digital world, and the implications of it for their work. JH agreed that digital nervousness might help motivate parties to support change. BP noted that government officials were in principle supportive of change but he had concerns about their capacity to deliver significant reform. The Law Commission had done a good job at one stage of identifying and working with advocates for change, for example by organising appropriate conferences and seminars. We could resurrect this approach at some stage, to help generate useful noise, but there was a timing issue – it was probably not appropriate to do this at this time. JH noted again the risk that real change would only happen through a crisis. CB noted that developments could sometimes move very fast. We needed to be prepared with a well-defined solution. CB asked if we wanted to push for campaign finance reform in addition to what the Law Commissioners had recommended. This was the other area where change was certainly needed. Should we push for this now, and suggest the Law Commissions should do work in this area too? But we could not commission the Law Commissions directly ourselves, and would need to persuade the government to do this. ECS noted that the recent disputes had all been in the financial sphere. This was the area most requiring simplification. SG said there would be disagreement between political parties about sources of funding, as there had always been, but there could be areas of agreement too, for example about the party/candidate split. CB said it was not for a regulator alone to say what the law should be in detail; there needed to be a collaborative process. CB said that if there was enthusiasm for more work in this area, for example though a new project, there would be a need for additional capacity in the policy team to undertake this work and the Board would need to indicate whether we should build it into the business plan. JH concluded that the enthusiasm was there for an ambitious approach, including in the area of campaign finance, and the broad case for more resources was accepted. We needed to work on this as a long-term project, without ignoring short-term opportunities that came along. The current Law Commission work needed to be implemented. CB suggested that as part of medium to longer term forward planning a project initiation document could be produced to scope/define the problem, using the Executive Team as a sounding board, before bringing the item back to the Board. A steering group including Board members could be very helpful in this area. This was agreed.

Putting voters first You are in the Corporate plan 2022/23 to 2026/27 section

Home Our plans and priorities Corporate plan 2022/23 to 2026/27 On this page Raising public awareness Focus on Wales and on Scotland Removing barriers to registering and voting Focus on Northern Ireland and on England Ensuring laws for parties and campaigners are clear and followed Ensuring the electoral system works effectively

First published: 25 April 2022 Last updated: 25 April 2022 Introduction To have a healthy democracy, voters need to be engaged in our electoral process, and confident that elections are free and fair. We will work to increase voter engagement and confidence by: raising public awareness of the electoral process removing barriers to registering and voting ensuring laws for parties and campaigners are clear and followed ensuring the electoral system works effectively Raising public awareness Public awareness of the electoral system – including how to register and vote – is key to voter engagement and confidence. Our research demonstrates that public awareness of how to register and vote is currently high. In February 2021, 93% of those surveyed as part of our annual public opinion tracking survey stated they knew how to register to vote, and 92% were confident they knew how to cast their vote. It is important that we continue to maintain and increase this awareness, and we will continue to refine and deliver effective public awareness activity ahead of elections. We will develop and expand our learning work, producing political literacy resources to help people understand how to get involved in our democracy. And we will ensure the information we provide to voters is accessible and transparent, keeping pace with developments in digital communications, and ensuring our public information services are tailored to voters' needs.

Focus in Wales and Scotland Focus on Scotland: Raising public awareness In Scotland, our public awareness work will include ensuring voters understand the differences between the various voting systems in use for different elections. It also includes supporting voter understanding of the different franchises for UK and Scottish elections. For example, we will work to raise public awareness of the Single Transferable Vote system which will be used for the Scottish Council elections in May 2022, and will ensure people are aware of who is eligible to vote in each election type, through to the next Scottish Parliament election in 2026.

Focus on Wales: Our learning work Following the extension of the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds and foreign nationals resident in Wales, we will continue to undertake public awareness campaigns and work with the wider electoral community and partner organisations. We will work to ensure new voters understand their eligibility and can confidently participate in the 2022 local government

elections and 2026 Senedd election. We will also continue to work alongside all relevant partners to promote greater consistency in political education, and increase political knowledge and understanding amongst young people to ensure they can fully engage in our democratic system in Wales. This will include developing the good work already achieved with the publication of education resources and the further development of an education and learning programme in Wales. Removing barriers to registering and voting Our research shows that the current electoral system could be improved to meet the needs of all eligible voters. Results from our 2021 public opinion tracking survey show that people with a disability are more likely to be dissatisfied with the process of voting (10%) than those without a disability (6%).

We already know what many of the barriers people experience are, but we will do further work to identify issues with registering and voting, and will then take action to address them. We will broaden the range of third sector organisations we work with to understand the challenges, and will collaborate with policy makers and

other partners to identify solutions. This includes influencing the development of new policies, to ensure additional barriers are not introduced. We will deliver effective targeted voter awareness activities for the groups identified, and will specifically support under-registered groups to engage in the democratic process. We will also continue to explore the feasibility of modernising the voting process itself, aware of the changing needs of voters in our digital age.

Focus of Northern Ireland and England

Focus on Northern Ireland: Reaching people who are unregistered

The 2021 electoral registration canvass in Northern Ireland provided an important opportunity to ensure that everyone's details are up to date and accurate on the electoral roll. Following publication of the revised register in December 2021 we will be able to use up to date data to focus our efforts on reaching out and engaging with those groups who have not registered or are less likely to do so. This work has begun as we prepare for the May 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election and we will continue to build on it ahead of the local government elections in May 2023. We will also carry out an assessment of the accuracy and completeness of the electoral registers in Northern Ireland in December 2022, which will provide us with an updated evidence base to inform the detail of our registration activity.

Focus on England: Supporting local authorities to engage with their residents

We know that local authorities already do a lot of good work to target different groups within their area and encourage them to register, as part of their work to maintain accurate and complete electoral registers. We want to do more to capture the learning from this activity and to share the good practice that exists, helping other local authorities to benefit from practices that have been shown to be effective.

Ensuring laws for parties and campaigners are clear and followed

The legitimacy of elections is dependent on clear laws which are understood and respected by parties and campaigners. We will ensure voters have accessible information about parties and campaigners participating in elections, including transparency on how they are funded and what they spend. We will raise public awareness of the rules on party and campaigner registration, donations, and campaign spending, and will help voters take action if they see something which concerns them. We will continue to maintain the official registers of parties and non-party campaigners, and will seek to remove barriers to campaigning to ensure that voters hear from a wide and diverse range of campaigners. We will improve voter access to our Political Finance Online database by updating and upgrading the search functionality. Where political financial data is incomplete, we will continue to enforce the law to ensure transparency and increased voter confidence in the system. We provide more details on how we will support parties and campaigners to comply with the law in Section 4 of this Corporate Plan.

Ensuring the electoral system works effectively

Key to voter confidence is an electoral system that works effectively. People should be confident elections are well-run, and should trust in the legitimacy of the results. Our 2021 public opinion tracking survey shows that 80% of people are confident that elections are well-run. We will continue to conduct significant research to report on how elections have been run, including detailed understanding of voters' experiences. This will enable us to raise concerns and make evidence-based recommendations where appropriate, with the ultimate aim of maintaining public confidence in the electoral system. We outline our plans to ensure the delivery of free and fair elections in Section 5, including our work to support resilient local electoral services.

Navigation 2. The Electoral Commission

Section 2 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan

4. Supporting and securing campaigner compliance with the law

Section 4 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan

Reforming electoral law You are in the section Home Overview Electoral law is out of date. Some of the laws that govern our democracy go back as far as 1872 and don't work for a digital age. These laws are at the heart of trust and confidence in politics. It's vital they're right today and the future. We're calling on the UK's governments to reform electoral law and make it simpler, up-to-date and future proof.

Outdated laws There are currently over 100 pieces of electoral legislation. Every type of election has its own legislation. We have to write hundreds of pages of guidance to explain the rules to candidates, political parties, electoral administrators, and voters. People who run elections may have to refer to multiple documents to make sure they're following the law. This is costly and time consuming.

Electoral law doesn't allow many simple processes to be done online, despite this being what people expect. Latest developments The Elections Act 2022 and its associated secondary legislation have substantially increased the size of the UK's body of electoral law. The UK's Law Commissions have already provided a blueprint for reform of electoral law that's widely supported by people who run, regulate and campaign at elections. The House of Commons Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC) also highlighted the clear need for electoral law to be consolidated and simplified . The Committee on Standards in Public Life also support the case for consolidating and simplifying electoral law . The UK's governments should now prioritise the time and resources needed to create meaningful improvement.

Changes we want to see It's time for governments to take this seriously and commit to significant change. We want the UK's governments to modernise these laws. Electoral law that's fit for today and the future will make sure that: elections can be run better and more efficiently candidates, political parties, and voters can easily understand and follow the rules simple actions can be done online, improving services for voters and campaigners and reducing waste it's easy to update as things change we have stronger powers and the right tools to adapt to changes, like regulating spending on new channels Related content A modern electoral register Find out about the changes we want to see to the electoral registration system in the UK Transparent digital campaigning Find out about digital campaigning and the changes we want to see of elections Find out about the accessibility of elections and the changes we want to see Elections Act about the UK Government's Elections Act and what it means for voting and campaigning

2021 Scottish Parliament candidate spending | Electoral Commission Search
2021 Scottish Parliament candidate spending You are in the Campaign spending:
Candidates section Home Campaign spending: Candidates First published: 2 February
2022 Last updated: 27 October 2022 About the data At the May 2021 Scottish Parliament
election, there were 369 constituency and independent regional candidates who had to
submit a spending return, listing details of what they spent during the election
campaign. The dataset includes the headline figures for the spending incurred and
donations received by candidates at the 2021 Scottish Parliament election. We publish
these figures to enhance transparency and provide voters with information on
donations to candidates' election campaigns and their spending and to ensure that
this information can be seen together in one place. The full individual candidate
returns are available for public scrutiny from the relevant Returning Officers for a
period of two years after an election. The returns include the total the candidate
spent, as well as a breakdown of how much they spent on things like advertising,
transport and public meetings. They also include any donations the candidate received
above £50 during the short campaign. The data taken from the spending returns
reflects what candidates and their agents submitted to Returning Officers in
Scotland. We publish this information exactly as it appears on the candidate's return
so that there is an accurate record of what was reported. Spending limits vary
between constituencies. The vast majority of Returning Officers have sent us the
returns submitted to them for inclusion in this dataset. Where information is
missing, this may be because the Returning Officer didn't send them on to us, or
because the candidate didn't submit their return to the Returning Officer. Under the
law spending on promoting regional party list candidates counts as party spending,
and was therefore reportable by the party in its election spending return.
Information about candidate spending data for previous devolved elections is
available online in the National Archive. 2021 Scottish Parliament candidate spending
Download the data 2021 Scottish Parliament candidate spending

Donations and loans | Electoral Commission Search Donations and loans You are in the section Home Permissible sources View donations and loans Public funding for political parties On this page Giving a donation or loan Receiving a donation or loan When we publish information First published: 10 July 2019 Last updated: 14 June 2023 Summary box Political parties, campaigners and other groups and individuals have to report relevant donations they've accepted and loans they've entered into. We publish all of the information we receive on Political Finance Online . The rules for publishing this information are different in Northern Ireland. At the moment, the legislation doesn't allow us to publish any information about donations and loans from before 1 July 2017. Data in this section Donations accepted View data about donations accepted by parties and campaigners Public funds View data about public funds received by parties Donations reported late View data about donations reported late by parties Borrowing View data about borrowing by parties Registers of unincorporated associations Download and view the registers of unincorporated associations Donations and loans to regulated organisations and individuals View data about donations and loans to regulated individuals Giving a donation or loan Political parties, campaigners and other groups and individuals can only accept donations from and enter into loans with permissible sources. There is no limit on the value of donations and loans that can be accepted. It is up to the political party, individual or other organisation to check if the donation or loan is from a permissible source , and if they can accept it or not. When political parties, campaigners or other organisations and individuals receive a donation or loan, they have to: record information about the donation or loan, such as the amount and who it was from check the source of the donation or loan, and decide if it comes from a permissible source decide whether to keep or return the donation or loan, depending on its source report it to us, if it's over the reportable amount or if they returned it Some political parties can also receive a grant payment from us, and funding from parliamentary bodies. This is known as public funding. about the public funding political parties can receive. Reporting a donation or loan Political parties Political parties have to report donations and loans to us if they are above or aggregate to over: £7,500 to the central party (or over £1,500 if the donor or lender gives further during the calendar year) £1,500 to accounting units (sections of a party whose finances aren't managed directly by the party's headquarters) Individuals Individuals who are members of political parties or are holders of elected offices must report donations and loans to us if they are above or aggregate to over £1,500 Members of Parliament and Members of Scottish Parliament have their own processes for reporting donations and loans they have accepted. However, if they return a donation or loan as it's not from a permissible source, they have to report it directly to us. Members of the Senedd and Northern Ireland Assembly Members and any other regulated individuals must report donations and loans they have both accepted or returned to us. Other organisations Members Associations report donations and loans they receive above £7,500 to us. Unincorporated associations that donate more than £25,000 to a political party, individual or other organisation in a year have to register with us, and report what they give. When we publish information Donations and loans to political parties We publish information about donations and loans to political parties four times a year, usually at the beginning of: March June September December This information includes: the political party who accepted the donation or loan the amount of the donation or loan who made the donation, including their name and status (such as individual or company), or if it was public funding. Donations and loans to individuals and other regulated organisations Individuals and other regulated

organisations have to report to us within 30 days of accepting a donation or loan. We publish the information every month on Political Finance Online . Related content

Campaign spending: Candidates Find out about how candidates spend money on election campaigns

Campaign spending: Political parties and non-party campaigners Find out about campaign spending for political parties and non-party campaigners

Annual accounts Find out about political parties' annual accounts Political Finance Online

Find out how political parties are spending their money, and the donations they're receiving on Political Finance Online

Speaker's Committee | Electoral Commission Search Speaker's Committee You are in the How we make decisions section Home How we make decisions On this page Selecting our commissioners Approving our plans and budgets Our MP about the Speaker's Committee First published: 30 May 2019 Last updated: 30 July 2020 About the Speaker's Committee The Speaker's Committee is a committee in the House of Commons, made up of members of parliament (MPs). It looks at what we do, and makes recommendations and decisions about some areas of our work. Selecting our commissioners The Speaker's Committee is involved in selecting our commissioners. It considers the candidates, and makes recommendations to the House of Commons. about how we select our commissioners . Approving our plans and budgets After a new UK Parliament is elected we submit a five-year corporate plan to the Speaker's Committee for approval. Once agreed, it is laid in Parliament. For each year of the corporate plan, we submit an annual budget and corporate plan to the Speaker's Committee. This includes an estimate of our income and spending for the year. The Speaker's Committee reviews these documents and makes any necessary changes before presenting them to the House of Commons for approval. Our MP The Speaker nominates an MP to answer questions from other MPs about our work. about the Speaker's Committee Find out: about the Speaker's Committee who's part of the Speaker's Committee Related content Our Commissioners Interim corporate plan 2020/21 - 2024/25 Our interim corporate plan was published following the 2019 UK Parliament general election. It has now been replaced by our 2022/23 to 2026/27 plan. Our spending about our spending estimates, reports and accounts Register to vote All you need to register to vote is 5 minutes and your National Insurance number.

Public attitudes towards voting in the context of COVID-19 | Electoral Commission Search Public attitudes towards voting in the context of COVID-19 You are in the Our research section Home Our research In this section Public attitudes towards voting in England in the context of COVID-19 Public attitudes towards voting in Wales in the context of COVID-19 Public attitudes towards voting in Scotland in the context of COVID-19 Context During the pandemic we have conducted public opinion research, looking at attitudes towards polling station and postal voting in the context of Covid-19. This was undertaken in order to support preparations for the elections scheduled for 6 May 2021. Research was carried out at the following points across Great Britain: Scotland: August 2020, November 2020, February 2021. Wales and England: December 2020, February 2021. Related content 2019 electoral fraud data about electoral fraud in 2019 and view the data Public attitudes Read our reports about public attitudes towards voting Analysis of electoral registration data about electoral registration data Modernising elections research This qualitative research looks at public attitudes to voting and the information available around elections.

role as a regulator, our work on elections and referendums, how we make decisions, and how our budget is set. Our role and responsibilities What we do in elections about what we do in elections What we do in referendums about what we do in referendums Our role as a regulator about our role as a regulator Our power to make Regulations Read about our power to make Regulations, and download the Regulations we have created. How we make decisions Our plans and priorities Find out about what's important to us, and what we plan to achieve in the future How we make decisions Find out about our Board, committees and groups Our spending about our spending estimates, reports and accounts Annual Report and Accounts Read our annual report and accounts including performance reports, an accountability report and our financial statements Our Commissioners and teams Commissioners Find out about our Commissioners Executive Team and Senior Leadership Team Find out about our Executive Team and Senior Leadership Group Latest research and reports Related content What we do in elections about what we do in elections What we do in referendums about what we do in referendums Interim corporate plan 2020/21 - 2024/25 Our interim corporate plan was published following the 2019 UK Parliament general election. It has now been replaced by our 2022/23 to 2026/27 plan. Elections in your area Enter your postcode to find your electoral services team at your local council. You need to send your postal and proxy vote application forms to them.

Report on the May 2022 Scottish council elections | Electoral Commission Search Report on the May 2022 Scottish council elections You are in the Scotland local council elections section Home Scotland local council elections Currently reading: of 4 - Show page contents On this page Voting at the elections Campaigning at the elections Delivering the elections Supporting evidence Summary This report looks at how the May 2022 Scottish council elections were run, how voters and campaigners found taking part, and what lessons can be learned for the future. We have reported separately on elections held this year in England , Northern Ireland and Wales . On 5 May 2022 elections were held across Scotland's 32 councils. Voters used the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system to elect their councillors, numbering the candidates in order of preference. We found that the vast majority of voters were satisfied with the process of voting and almost all were able to use their preferred method. Polling station voters felt confident that they could vote safely in person. Most voters said they found it easy to fill in their ballot paper. However, while the level of spoilt ballots across Scotland has declined since the 2017 council elections, they increased in some wards and further targeted action is needed to address this. Some voters felt able to get their views across to voters, but many voters said they needed more information on the candidates in order to make an informed choice when they came to vote. Some candidates reported experiences of intimidation and abuse at these elections, which is not acceptable. We will work with the UK's governments, Police Scotland and the wider electoral community to make sure we understand what is driving candidate abuse and intimidation, and to ensure this issue is addressed as a matter of urgency. While the elections were well-run the resilience of electoral administration teams remains a concern. Adequate staffing for polling stations proved a challenge in many areas. We found that Returning Officers took all the necessary steps set out in law to support disabled voters at the poll, and our public opinion research found increased levels of satisfaction amongst disabled voters. The Scottish Government has committed to a public consultation on ideas for future electoral reform in Scotland in the coming months. We hope that our report helps to inform that debate. Voting at the elections The experience of voters at the May 2022 elections The vast majority of voters (97%) were satisfied with the process of voting. This is consistent with findings at recent elections. Almost everyone who voted was able to use their preferred method and found it easy to fill in their ballot paper. Polling station voters felt confident that they could vote safely in person. While the level of spoilt ballots across Scotland has declined since the 2017 council elections, they increased in some wards; further action is needed to address this. Overview On 5 May 2022, elections were held to Scotland's 32 councils. Voters used the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system to elect their councillors, numbering the candidates in order of preference. Six wards out of the 355 across Scotland were uncontested, meaning that the number of candidates nominated was equal to or fewer than the total number of seats available. In these wards no poll went ahead and the nominated candidates were declared elected on polling day. In three of these wards the number of candidates was less than the number of seats available and, following 5 May, by-elections took place to fill the outstanding vacancies. A total of 4,222,332 people were registered to vote at the council elections. Voters continue to have positive views about how elections are run After each election we ask members of the public who were eligible to vote for their views on voting and elections. This enables us to understand whether there have been changes in the views of voters between comparable sets of elections. People remain satisfied with the registration and voting process People had high levels of satisfaction with the process of registering to vote and

voting. Our research shows that: nearly all voters (97%) said that they were satisfied with the process of voting. This is consistent with the levels of satisfaction at the 2021 Scottish Parliament election (95%). Levels of satisfaction with the voting process were consistent across all age groups 82% of respondents said they were satisfied with the process of registering to vote. This is a slight fall from the 89% who expressed satisfaction after the 2021 Scottish Parliament election. Of the 10% of respondents who expressed dissatisfaction with the process, the main reason given was that they thought voter registration should be automatic (32%) or that it should be compulsory (23%) the vast majority of Scottish voters (94%) found participating in the election easy, and four out of five (81%) felt casting their vote was secret and that the elections were secure nearly all voters in Scotland (97%) felt safe voting in polling stations with the Covid measures in place Most people were confident the elections were well-run Nearly four in five (77%) people said they were confident the elections were well-run, with one in 10 (10%) saying that they were not confident. People aged 25 to 34 were the most likely to say that they were not confident (14%). When we asked people why they were not confident the elections were well-run, the most commonly given reasons related to a lack of information about candidates or the elections in general. Most people think that voting is safe from fraud Nearly nine in 10 (86%) people think that voting in Scotland is safe from fraud and abuse, which is an increase from the 80% who said so after the 2017 council elections. However, one in five (21%) said that they thought that either a 'lot' or 'a little' electoral fraud had taken place at the 5 May elections. We asked those people who thought fraud had taken place why they thought this, and the most cited reason was the lack of ID requirements when voting (45%). Other reasons given focused on things people had read or heard rather than anything they had directly experienced. Turnout at these elections was broadly consistent with the 2017 council elections Turnout at these elections was 44.8% which was a slight decrease from the turnout in 2017 (46.9%). People who told us that they didn't vote were most likely to say that this was because they did not have time (21%), they had medical or health reasons (11%) or they were not interested in politics (12%). People were confident that they could vote using their preferred method At each election people can vote in person, by post or by proxy (asking someone they trust to vote on their behalf). If a voter's situation changes close to polling day (for work or health reasons) then they may be eligible to appoint an emergency proxy up to 5pm on polling day. Ahead of the 2021 elections, the law was changed so that anyone who had to self-isolate close to polling day because they had tested positive for Covid, or had been in close contact with someone who had tested positive, could also appoint an emergency proxy. This change remained in place for the 2022 elections. In February 2022, the majority of Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) in Scotland wrote out to all households to remind them of who was registered to vote at that address, and whether they had a postal or proxy vote in place. Voting using their preferred method was possible for most people Most people who voted were able to use their preferred method: 78% of people said that they found it easy to get information on the different methods of voting available. nearly all people said they were able to vote using their preferred method with 96% of polling station voters and 94% of postal voters saying they had used their preferred method. Nearly four in 10 votes counted were cast by post Nearly 1 million (976,108) people were registered as postal voters at these elections, amounting to 23% of the electorate. This is a very slight decrease from the 2021 Scottish Parliament election but a substantial increase from the Scottish council elections in 2017 (17.8%). Over three-quarters (76%) of postal

voters cast their vote, amounting to 38.4% of all votes included in the count. The vast majority (97%) of people who voted by post told us that they found it easy to understand what to do, with 96% finding the postal voting instructions useful. Rates of postal vote rejection remain consistent with recent elections. When a postal ballot pack is returned to the Returning Officer (RO), the signature and date of birth are checked against those provided previously. Where these details are missing or do not match, the postal vote is rejected and not included in the count. Data collected from ROs indicates that 18,557 postal votes were not included in the count due to missing or mismatched signatures and/or dates of birth. This amounts to 2.5% of all postal ballots returned. This is comparable to the 2.4% that were rejected at the 2021 Scottish Parliament election. We will continue to explore ways of improving the electoral system to meet voters' needs. As part of this, we will consider evidence about whether changes to postal voting documents or processes could help to reduce the number of postal ballot packs that are rejected at future elections. Emergency proxy voting remains an important safeguard to enable people to vote. There were 4,840 proxy voters appointed for these elections, amounting to 0.11% of the electorate. Of these, 550 people were issued with an emergency proxy as a result of medical or work emergency, including 242 for Covid reasons. Some Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) continue to raise concerns that eligibility for an emergency proxy does not extend to carers. This is of particular concern in the Scottish island communities where patients may be transferred to the mainland for medical treatment. In this case the patient would be eligible for an emergency proxy, but not any family member accompanying them. Recommendation 1

We continue to recommend that the Scottish Government work with the electoral community to explore ways to extend the provisions for emergency proxies to cover carers. Voters said that they found the ballot paper easy to fill in but concerns remain about levels of rejection in some wards. Nearly all voters (95%) said that they found the ballot paper easy to fill in, with 4% saying that they found it difficult. People aged 25-34 were the most likely to say that they found the ballot paper difficult to fill in (9%). Rejection rates for ballot papers remain high in some wards. Data from ROs indicates that 1.85% of all ballots were rejected at the count. This is slightly down from the 1.95% which were rejected in 2017. However, there is significant variation in rejection rates both across Scotland and within specific council areas, and in some wards the rejection rates have increased since the last set of council elections in 2017.

Wards	2022 Ward Rejection rate (%)	2022 Rejection rate (%)	2017 Rejection rate (%)
Glasgow – Canal Ward	5.64	5.36	
West Dunbartonshire – Kilpatrick	4.51	3.71	
West Dunbartonshire – Clydebank Central	4.21	3.66	
North Lanarkshire – Coatbridge South	4.13	3.91	
Dundee – Coldside	4.08	3.91	

Of those votes that were rejected, the data shows that the majority (64%) were rejected because there was more than one first preference expressed. Our observations at the counts and feedback from campaigners and electoral administrators suggests that these are largely where someone has placed an 'X' or a '1' next to multiple candidates from the same party. The Electoral Commission has previously carried out research which indicated that the wards with the highest levels of rejection were more likely to have higher levels of deprivation and unemployment. However, we also found that these wards were more likely to have more than one candidate standing from a particular party, thereby increasing the risk of voters placing 'Xs' against their preferred party's candidates on the ballot paper. We will repeat our ward level analysis when the new Scottish census data is available in 2023. The Electoral Commission will work with the Electoral Management Board for Scotland (EMB) and Returning Officers to improve voter communications in

polling stations and postal ballot packs to reinforce messaging about how to complete the ballot paper. Further work to identify the wards at risk of a higher rate of rejected ballots will also support the targeting of election communication activity, to help minimise voter errors on the ballot paper. Some prisoners were entitled to register and vote at the elections. The 2022 elections were the second in which prisoners serving a sentence of 12 months or less in a UK prison, who would usually be resident in Scotland, had the right to vote, following the introduction of the Scottish Elections (Franchise and Representation) Act 2020. Data from EROs indicates that 49 eligible prisoners were registered to vote ahead of the council elections in 2022. EROs worked with the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) to ensure that they received notification where any eligible individuals entered the prison system so that they could invite them to register to vote. The Commission also worked with the SPS to develop and circulate a guide for prison staff and a poster to raise awareness amongst prisoners. The Scottish Government is required to review the arrangements for prisoner voting by March 2023. Ahead of this review, we are committed to continuing to work with EROs, the SPS and the EMB to ensure that prisoners who have the right to vote understand how to register and vote, and can access information and support as required. Work continued to support recently enfranchised voters to participate. The Commission continued to work in partnership with the electoral community and Scottish civic society to support young people and qualifying foreign nationals to engage in the elections. To encourage schools to run political education sessions and raise awareness amongst young people, we worked with partners across the education sector to run Welcome to Your Vote week in January 2022. Ahead of the awareness week, the Commission launched new education resources, including lesson plans, a template assembly on the council elections, and short interactive activities. We also delivered information sessions for teachers and care providers working with young people, in partnership with West of Scotland Development Education Centre (WOSDEC) and the Care Inspectorate. The Commission worked with a number of partners to distribute information to qualifying foreign nationals, including consulates, regional equality councils and charities. In collaboration with EROs and civil society organisations, we ran Welcome to Your Vote Day on 10 March, providing communication resources to support partners to raise awareness and running online information events. Civil society organisations which work with a range of under-registered audiences have highlighted a frustration that work to increase registration is only carried out ahead of elections. Whilst we have strong relationships with organisations across the third sector, there is a high level of staff turnover in charities, and a shift towards ongoing engagement work would reduce the need to rebuild relationships ahead of each election. The Electoral Commission will embed work to increase registration amongst under-registered groups outside of election periods. Existing partnerships will be maintained and strengthened through ongoing collaboration, and the Commission will scope opportunities for new partnerships to reach under-registered groups. Campaigning at the elections. The experience of campaigning at the May 2022 elections. The majority of candidates responding to our survey (69%) felt they were able to get their views across to voters, with printed material, social media and door-to-door canvassing the most popular methods. Just over half of voters said they had enough information on who to vote for, but a substantial minority (26%) disagreed. A notable minority of candidates who responded to our survey reported experiences of intimidation and abuse at these elections and action is needed to tackle this. We will work with the UK's governments, Police Scotland and the wider electoral community to make sure we

understand what is driving candidate abuse and intimidation, and to ensure this issue is addressed as a matter of urgency. While most candidates found election law easy to understand, there was an increased demand for advice and guidance on the law.

Introduction

A total of 2,548 candidates were nominated to contest the 1,226 councillor vacancies at the 2022 council elections. This was broadly equivalent to the numbers standing in 2017 (2,572). There were 357 independent candidates standing at the election and 2,191 candidates representing 26 different political parties (four more parties than in 2017). There were a number of changes to the campaign laws for candidates at these elections which included a requirement to report donations for the first time and the need to include an imprint on any digital candidate campaign material. The Electoral Commission provided guidance for candidates and agents on the laws in force at these elections. To inform our report we carried out research with candidates to understand their experience of standing at the elections, and we also talked to parties about the process. 5 were largely able to engage with voters Just over two-thirds of candidates who responded to the survey (69%) felt that they were able to effectively get their views across to voters. This is a significant increase from the 43% who expressed that view at the 2021 Scottish Parliament election. 5 used a variety of methods to engage with voters Traditional campaigning (namely leaflets and canvassing) remain the most popular campaigning methods compared to any digital method. Our research found that: the most popular campaigning method used by respondents was leaflets/newsletters/flyers. Overall, 90% of respondents put leafletting in their top-three campaigning methods, with just under two-thirds (63%) of respondents citing this as their most used a substantial number of respondents used social media in their campaigns, though it was primarily used to supplement traditional campaigning methods rather than being the primary tool. Two-thirds (68%) put social media in their top-three most used campaigning methods, with one in 10 (12%) saying it was their most used compared to almost a third (31%) who said it was their third most used when asked what digital campaigning methods respondents used, free methods were far more popular than any paid-for campaigning. Almost four in five (78%) respondents put posts on social media about their campaign, and over two-fifths (44%) asked supporters to share their posts. By comparison, the most popular paid-for digital campaigning method was paying for adverts on social media, which was done by 14% of respondents the other popular campaigning method was door-to-door canvassing, which was the most used tactic for just under a fifth (17%) of respondents. Overall, over half (56%) of respondents said that canvassing was in their top three campaigning methods One in five (20%) of candidates who responded to the survey said that the spending limit was too low, largely citing difficulties of reaching voters in large rural wards while remaining within the spending limit. Voters want more information about candidates Just over half (52%) of all voters said they had enough information on candidates to be able to make an informed decision on who to vote for. However, more than a quarter (26%) disagreed. Voters aged 25-34 were most likely to disagree (40%). When asked where they had seen information about candidates and parties, the most cited sources were leaflets or flyers from the candidate or party (61%) or from another source (27%). Political parties and candidates have raised concerns about their ability to provide information to voters and have called for council election candidates to be able to access a freepost delivery as is available at other elections. This proposal has been supported by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (Cosla). Should this proposal be taken forward for the 2027 Scottish council elections, the Scottish Government will need to ensure there is sufficient time and resource to implement the proposal ahead of the elections. Some

candidates reported experiences of intimidation at these elections. While over half (56%) of candidates who responded to the survey said that they did not have a problem with threats, abuse or intimidation, over two in five (44%) experienced some kind of problem (that is, on a scale of '1 to 5', rated their problem with threats, abuse or intimidation as a '2' or above). One in 10 (11%) said that they had a serious problem (rated '4' or '5' out of '5'). There was a difference between the reported experiences of those respondents identifying as either male or female. 1 , with a larger proportion of female respondents reporting problems with threats, abuse or intimidation (64% of male respondents said they did not have a problem with threats, abuse or intimidation, compared to less than half (48%) of female candidates who did not have an issue.) "In person intimidation/threats/abuse only happened when I was campaigning alone. I've decided not to do that in future, however it's frustrating when seeing other (male!) candidates campaigning solo seemingly without such concerns of intimidation." Of those that said they experienced some kind of abuse, the most common sources were verbal (55%) and online (53%). Over four in five of these (84%) said the abuse came from members of the public. Three in 10 (31%) said it was from an anonymous/unknown source, while a further one in 10 (11%) received threats or abuse from other candidates. One in 10 (10%) who experienced threats or abuse said that their experience(s) would discourage them from standing as a candidate in the future.

The 2022 elections were the first council elections where candidates could choose whether or not to have their home address displayed on the ballot paper. This option was legislated for in response to concerns raised by candidates at previous elections about personal safety. The vast majority of candidates opted not to display their home address on the ballot papers. Recommendation 2 Action is needed to tackle and prevent abuse and intimidation, and to ensure candidates and campaigners can participate freely in our democratic processes. We will work with the UK's governments, Police Scotland and the wider electoral community to make sure we understand what is driving candidate abuse and intimidation, and to ensure this issue is addressed as a matter of urgency.

Candidates had confidence in the election process

The vast majority (94%) of candidates who responded to the survey were confident that the Scottish council elections were well run. Almost two-thirds (64%) said they were very confident, and no respondents said they were not confident. The majority of candidates who responded to our survey were satisfied with all aspects of the nomination process: the vast majority (96%) agreed that the rules for becoming a candidate were easy to understand and follow over nine in 10 (94%) agreed that the nomination process was well run 85% of respondents agreed that they found the pre-nomination checks helpful, compared to 1% who disagreed, and 14% who said they neither agreed nor disagreed/didn't know. of those that interacted with their elections teams or needed to access their local authority offices, the majority (87%) were satisfied with their ability to do so

The vast majority of candidates were satisfied with the count process

Over nine in 10 (92%) of candidates who responded to the survey attended the count and the majority of those who attended were satisfied with the experience. Of those who attended: nearly nine in 10 agreed that elections staff made it clear what was happening at all stages of the count (86%) and a similar proportion (92%) were satisfied with how efficiently the verification/count processes were run 94% agreed that the count process was transparent 93% were satisfied with when the count took place finally, 89% agreed that electronic counting of ballot papers worked well Candidates were broadly confident that no electoral fraud had taken place

Over nine in 10 (94%) respondents felt that, in general, voting is safe from abuse. Over two-thirds (69%) of respondents thought that it is very safe.

However, only half (51%) believed that no fraud at all took place in elections in their area. A fifth (21%) thought that there was ‘hardly any at all’, 5% said ‘a little’, and almost a quarter (23%) said they didn’t know. Reassuringly, no respondents said that there was ‘a lot’ of fraud. Most candidates understood the campaign spending laws. The majority of respondents to our candidate survey agreed that the law around spending, donations and personal expenses was clear, although the proportions were smaller than those who found the nomination process clear. Three-quarters (76%) agreed that the law on election spending and reporting was clear. 71% found the law on donations and how to check permissibility to be clear. Almost three-quarters (73%) found the law about personal expenses clear. Awareness about expenses related to disability was far lower than self-reported awareness about the general spending and reporting law. Just half (51%) of respondents said that they knew that expenses relating to a candidate’s disability did not count towards the spending limit. Candidates understood the new laws on the requirement for digital imprints on their campaign material but concerns continued to be raised around printed material. Nearly nine out of 10 (88%) respondents agreed that they understood the requirement to include imprints on digital campaign material, compared to 5% who disagreed. A smaller majority (72%) agreed that it was easy to meet these requirements, with almost one in 10 (8%) disagreeing. 70% agreed that digital imprint requirements improve the transparency of digital campaigning, while 7% disagreed and 17% said they neither agreed nor disagreed. The Electoral Commission received a small number of complaints about the lack of imprints on printed election material both from candidates and from political parties and non-party campaigners. Where complaints were received, we followed up with the party or campaigner concerned to remind them of the law and, where relevant, to ask them to bring their candidates into compliance. The Electoral Commission is responsible for investigating potential breaches of law on party and campaigner imprints while Police Scotland is responsible for investigating breaches of candidate imprint law. The Commission will continue to monitor compliance with the law by parties and campaigners and will take action where necessary and proportionate. Candidates and parties have called for the ability to submit spending returns electronically. Currently it is at the Returning Officer’s discretion whether they will accept spending returns electronically. Some political parties have asked for a consistent approach across Scotland in relation to the acceptance of digital spending returns. Our research with candidates found two-thirds (68%) of candidates would prefer to submit their spending returns electronically, compared to 16% who prefer paper spending returns and 17% who said they don’t know.

Recommendation 3

Recommendation 3 The Scottish Government should consider electronic submission of spending returns as part of their electoral reform agenda. Disabled candidates continue to value the Access to Elected Office Fund. The Access to Elected Office Fund is administered independently by Inclusion Scotland and financed by the Scottish Government. Its purpose is to offer financial assistance to disabled people to stand at elections. The financial assistance can be used to meet the costs of any adaptations needed to ensure a level playing field for disabled candidates.⁵⁴ 11 applicants were supported by the fund, with 48 of them going on to be candidates at the election. Of these, 22 were successfully elected. Our survey with candidates found that: more than half (52%) said they knew about the Access to Elected Office Fund. 11 respondents received support from the Access to Elected Office Fund. Of these, four said they would not have been able to stand if the Fund had not existed. A further five said they did not know whether they would be able to stand for election had the fund not existed. In a few comments, respondents made references to

not being quite sure how the Fund worked, even from those who used it There was an increasing demand for advice and guidance from candidates The Electoral Commission and electoral administrators faced an increased demand from candidates for advice and guidance on the nomination process and the spending laws. Particular demands came from independent candidates and those representing smaller and more recently registered political parties. “As you would expect, independent candidates required more support than those standing for political parties, which resulted in an increased number of calls from independent candidates requiring additional information and support” “Smaller parties had poor paperwork, did not engage with the office early in the process, and frequently had to be reminded at deadlines”

Increasing opportunities for supporting candidates and parties The May 2021 Scottish Parliament elections were the first at which the Electoral Commission had a statutory role to provide advice and guidance to candidates and agents (although we had done so at previous elections at the request of the Scottish Government). Following feedback from the electoral community, we offered candidates and parties at these elections an increased range of support to understand and comply with political finance rules both before and after the elections. Alongside our standard advice and guidance support to candidates, we also ran seminars on the candidate laws at political party conferences in Scotland in the run up to the May polls. The Commission also ran an online seminar for candidates in advance of the polls which was attended by 183 candidates and agents. We also delivered virtual advice surgeries that allowed candidates and agents to book an appointment to speak to one of our expert advisers and discuss specific issues around the spending and donation laws. Due to the take up and demand, particularly from new and independent candidates, we offered further advice surgeries after the elections and in advance of the reporting deadlines, to provide support with spending returns. Our approach has been informed and led by the evidence and feedback we received in our most recent survey of the regulated community. We will continue to focus on delivering more bespoke advice and guidance resources so that parties and campaigners can easily understand the political finance laws, regardless of their size or experience. Delivering the elections The experience of electoral administration at the May 2022 elections The elections were well-run with no significant issues arising. However, the resilience of electoral administration teams remains a concern, with staffing polling stations proving challenging in a number of areas. Returning Officers took all the necessary steps to support disabled voters at the poll, and 96% of disabled voters said they were satisfied with their experience of voting. Section introduction Our evidence shows that the May 2022 polls, including electoral registration services, were well-run. Voters and campaigners reported high levels of satisfaction and confidence in both the voting process and the count. However, electoral administrators have reported that diminishing council resources are increasing pressures on the delivery of elections. The capacity of election teams continues to be stretched While Returning Officers and their staff reported fewer challenges than in 2021, at the height of the pandemic, concerns were still raised about their ability to continue to deliver elections with diminishing resources. Many Returning Officers struggled to recruit and retain enough poll staff Many Returning Officers experienced difficulties in recruiting sufficient staff for polling stations. The challenges included recruiting enough people in the first place and then managing levels of ‘call-off’ close to or on polling day. Planning for the council elections was undertaken when Scotland was still subject to Covid prevention measures, although many of these had begun to lift as voters went to the polls. This exacerbated the staffing challenges faced as some long-standing poll-staff were

reluctant to work in the context of relaxed public health restrictions, whilst others were keen to take advantage of the easing of restrictions by going on holiday. "We had a number of polling staff call off due to Covid. We had to use all standby staff and some information officers ... to ensure that all posts were covered on day of poll." "Appointment of staff - particularly retention of Presiding Officers and other poll staff was a significant challenge and call offs (not Covid related) soaked up standbys recruited twice before the election. Causes huge administrative burden on small administration team at point of delivery in the last 2 weeks as backtracking to fill posts repeatedly and retrain." "Initial request to staff on our list returned limited availability and as Covid restrictions eased throughout the country, many poll staff – including long standing ones – called off." The Electoral Commission is working with the Electoral Management Board for Scotland (EMB) and the wider electoral community across the UK to discuss and identify solutions to the staffing, resilience and capacity challenges experienced by Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and their teams. An immediate focus is addressing the challenges of recruiting on polling station staff. Further changes to the delivery of elections have the potential to increase pressure on already stretched elections teams unless well managed While Covid was the predominant factor highlighted as affecting the recruitment of staff, Returning Officers have also reported that diminishing council resources more generally are having an effect. This includes making it more difficult to pull in staff from other council departments to support staffing at the polls. Changes to the delivery of UK Parliament elections in Scotland are being introduced through the Elections Act. These have the potential to increase the challenge of recruiting and retaining skilled and experienced polling station staff for future elections, due to the additional responsibilities that Presiding Officers and Poll Clerks will need to deliver, such as checking voter ID. The Scottish Government is also planning to consult on electoral law reform, with any changes expected to take effect in time for the 2026 Scottish Parliament election. It is important that electoral administrators have early clarity about any legislative changes in order that they can plan effectively to deliver them. As a minimum, legislation should be clear at least six months before it is required to be implemented by administrators. Changes to legislation add to the already fragmented and complex sets of rules which must be followed at an election, increasing the risks of mistakes being made and public confidence in election results being undermined. We continue to recommend that both the Scottish and UK Governments commit to simplifying and consolidating electoral law, in line with the recommendations from the UK's Law Commissions. Counts were delivered well across Scotland Due to the complexities of counting the votes and calculating the results at an election which uses the type 2 of the Single Transferable Vote system of voting in place for council elections, all counts in Scotland were conducted electronically. The e-Counting equipment, including the software, is procured nationally by the Scottish Government on behalf of the 32 Returning Officers. As highlighted above, candidates had high levels of satisfaction with the count process. Electoral Commission representatives who attended counts across Scotland did not have any concerns about the delivery or transparency of the counts. Counts were delivered well across Scotland points Some Returning Officers raised concerns about late appointment of staff by the count suppliers A number of Returning Officers noted that, while their counts had gone well overall, the late appointment of supporting technical staff by the supplier had led to some difficulties, as the technical staff then had to familiarise themselves with the count process very close to the event. This had led to initial set up and operational

delivery problems at some counts which, while resolved, had raised concerns amongst those Returning Officers affected. “[They] appeared to lack experience of the system which gave us cause for concern in the run up to the count. While the team was very helpful and positive in their engagement their inability to diagnose problems and their lack of confidence using the system was quite worrying.” The Scottish Government and the EMB are currently carrying out a review of the e-counting project. Once that review has been concluded we would expect that any relevant recommendations are implemented so that Returning Officers can have full confidence in their delivery of future electronic counts. National co-ordination made it easier for people to find information on the election results At previous elections the media had raised concerns about difficulties in accessing reliable results information in real time. This had led broadcasters to send staff to every count venue in Scotland in order to collate results information. Concerns had also been raised by others with an interest in Scottish politics, including voters, about the lack of a central source for all election results. Ahead of the elections, the Electoral Commission worked with the EMB and communications staff from Scotland’s 32 councils to agree a common hashtag and format for the tweeting of each council ward’s results declaration. The EMB also collated the results for all councils and published them on their website, which enabled voters to access all the results in one place. Feedback from broadcasters was positive, and this approach should continue for future elections. The Electoral Management Board continued to support consistency in the delivery of elections The Electoral Management Board (EMB) has statutory responsibility for supporting the delivery of council elections in Scotland, including a power to direct Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers in respect of their duties at these elections. Directions issued by the Convener of the EMB at this election included timings for the dispatch of poll cards and postal votes and also for counts. Electoral administrators and the wider electoral community continue to value the role that the EMB plays in providing support and advice for the delivery of local elections. “Directions of the Convener of EMB invariably helpful and well timed.” “Everything worked well. Directions were helpful without being overly prescriptive or heavy-handed.” ROs improved the support available for disabled voters at these elections The Electoral Commission has a specific legal duty 3 to report on the steps taken by ROs to assist disabled people to vote at the election. To inform our report we asked for information from Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and polling station staff. We also looked at the views of disabled voters who responded to our public opinion research and gathered evidence from disability organisations. ROs improved the support available for disabled voters at these elections points The electoral community worked to improve access for disabled people. Following the 2021 Scottish Parliament elections, where some concerns were raised about Covid measures impacting on disabled people’s access to the poll, 4 work was undertaken to improve the service disabled voters received in polling stations. In January 2022, the Electoral Commission and the EMB ran a briefing event for electoral administrators which included contributions from representatives of disabled people in Scotland outlining some of the barriers faced in accessing voting. Following the event, videos of the contributions from disability organisations at these sessions were disseminated to electoral administrators and were widely used in the training of poll staff. “We used all EC training slides and accessibility at training events and encouraged staff to view videos on how to deal with disabled persons at the poll.” Electoral administrator All Returning Officers who responded to our survey reported having provided the measures required in law to support disabled voters. In 2021 some

sight impaired voters raised concerns about polling staff confidence in supporting voters to use tactile voting devices (TVDs)⁵ in polling stations. At this election no concerns were raised in relation to this, although some electoral administrators highlighted concerns raised by sight impaired voters about the usefulness of the TVD at an election using STV. "We did receive a couple of comments...regarding the use of TVDs – specifically that voters find it harder to use these in elections using STV (i.e using numbers to allocate multiple preferences)." The UK Government's Elections Act makes changes to the way disabled people are supported in the polling station at UK Parliament elections by replacing the prescription of what must be provided, including TVDs, with a requirement for Returning Officers to take all reasonable steps to support disabled voters to vote independently and in secret. This has the potential to improve the range and quality of support available and should speed up the process of providing additional support when a gap is identified, as legislation would no longer be required to allow the use of new technology. The Electoral Commission will provide guidance, developed in consultation with disability organisations and the electoral community, which ROs must have regard to in delivering their duties. It is important that disabled voters receive an equivalent level of support regardless of which election they are voting at in Scotland. The Scottish Government should monitor the impact of this legislation and consider whether similar provisions should be introduced to support the participation of disabled voters at devolved Scottish elections. Disabled voters reported a high rate of satisfaction with the voting process Respondents to our voter survey who defined themselves as disabled or with a long-term health condition were only marginally less satisfied with the process of voting than non-disabled voters: 96% of disabled voters reported satisfaction, compared to 97% of non-disabled voters. Nearly three-quarters (74%) of voters who had a disability or health condition that limited them a lot said they found the help/support from polling station staff useful, compared with 72% of non-disabled voters, and over half (55%) said they found the help/support from polling station staff very useful, compared with 51% of non-disabled voters. Disabled voters also reported finding it easy to get inside their polling station to vote (100%), including 83% who said it was very easy. More work is needed to reach disabled people with information on how to register and vote Respondents to our voter survey who defined themselves as disabled or with a long-term health condition were less likely to say they had enough information on how to cast their vote than respondents who did not consider themselves disabled (61% vs 69%). The Electoral Commission will continue to work in partnership with organisations representing disabled people in Scotland, and the wider electoral community, to address the information needs of disabled voters and to strengthen polling station staff training on accessibility. Supporting evidence Scottish council elections May 2022 Public opinion research tables 2022 Scotland Electoral Data 1. The sample of non-binary respondents was too small to use in analysis ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. Weighted Inclusive Gregory ■ Back to content at footnote 2 3. Section 5 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 as amended by the Scottish Elections Reform Act 2020 ■ Back to content at footnote 3 4. Electoral Commission (2021), Report on the 2021 Scottish Parliament election (<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/elections-and-referendums/past-elections-and-referendums/scottish-parliamentary-elections/report-scottish-parliament-election-6-may-2021>) ■ Back to content at footnote 4 5. The Tactile Voting Device attaches on top of the ballot paper. It has numbered lift up flaps (the numbers are raised and in braille) directly over the boxes where the vote

is to be marked. ■ Back to content at footnote 5 Page history First published: 21 September 2022 Last updated: 21 September 2022 Related content Report on the May 2022 local elections in England Read our report on the May 2022 local elections in England Report on the May 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election Read our report on the May 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election Report on the May 2022 elections in Wales Read our report on the May 2022 elections in Wales. Looking back at the May 2022 elections Read our latest blog post on looking back at the May 2022 elections.

In depth: delivering the 2019 UK Parliamentary general election | Electoral Commission Search In depth: delivering the 2019 UK Parliamentary general election You are in the UK general elections section Home UK general elections On this page Electoral Registration Officers are under pressure: high volumes of applications at major electoral events Overseas electors again faced challenges when voting The timing of the election brought challenges for Returning Officers Voters continue to have positive views about how the election was run What next? First published: 21 April 2020 Last updated: 21 April 2020 Overview People were very satisfied with the processes of registering to vote and voting at the 2019 general election. They thought that they had enough information about the election, how to register, and how to cast their vote The number of registration applications made before the deadline was significantly higher than at the 2017 general election. 3.85 million people applied to register to vote. 660,000 applied on the last day to register Data from Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) shows that approximately one in three applications was a duplicate, submitted by someone who was already correctly registered. In some areas the data suggests that the proportion of duplicates was even higher The most frequently mentioned concern in feedback from overseas electors was about not receiving their postal vote in time to complete it and send it back More than a third of s who responded to our survey said that they or their teams were struggling with the demands of the role and the extra workload from unplanned electoral events in 2019 Electoral Registration Officers are under pressure: high volumes of applications at major electoral events Register to vote on a mobile Electoral Registration Officers are under pressure: high volumes of applications at major electoral events Public interest in major electoral events is increasingly driving electoral registration applications just before elections. An accessible online registration process means it is easy for people who want to make sure they can take part to submit an application, and to do so close to the deadline. EROs and their teams were under pressure to process large numbers of registration applications during the period before the deadline in November 2019. The number of applications made before the deadline was significantly higher than at the 2017 election. 2017 2019 2.9 million people applied between the Prime Minister's announcement of the election and the registration deadline 3.85 million people applied between MPs voting to approve the election and the registration deadline 612,000 people applied on deadline day 660,000 people applied on deadline day Duplicate applications A large number of duplicate applications added unnecessary pressure for EROs and their teams. EROs and duplicate applications Data from EROs shows that many applications were submitted by people who were already correctly registered: Approximately one in three applications received before the deadline was a duplicate In some areas the proportion of duplicate applications was even higher Only around half of all applications led to an addition to the register We received feedback from 160 EROs, Returning Officers (ROs) or s from across the UK. Nearly half (46%) of those who responded to our survey said that the volume of duplicate applications received during the election caused strain on resources and staff, who had to work significant additional hours to process them in time, alongside processing applications to vote by post and proxy. Feedback from s "The duplicate process is a nightmare throughout the year but during a high profile election it becomes a huge drain on resources." "Number of duplicate applications is unacceptable and creates additional enormous workload for no benefit to the register." Feedback from s EROS and postal votes Additionally, the electoral registration and postal voting application deadlines fell on the same day in Great Britain, after Parliament

changed the law. It passed the Early Parliamentary General Election Act 2019 in November, to make sure the registration deadline was the same across the UK. EROs and electoral administrators told us that they felt additional pressure at this election as they processed both types of application to the same deadline. As a result of these pressures, EROs and their teams found it hard to provide the level of resource needed to process applications. In some cases this meant that voters didn't receive the service they should be able to expect. For example: In Plymouth, the ERO had included 1,451 people in the electoral register who had not completed an individual registration application. They identified and resolved this problem before polling day, but it meant that there was confusion about whether some people were able to vote in the election. There was limited time for the people who were affected then to apply to register correctly before the deadline. The ERO did not fully meet our performance standards In Northern Ireland, the Electoral Office sent letters seeking required additional information from some people who had applied to vote, but some letters included an incorrect deadline for response. The Chief Electoral Officer confirmed that anyone who responded after this point, but before the actual deadline, would have had their registration processed correctly. It was also told us that the large number of registration and absent vote applications had an impact on their capacity to focus on running the election at a critical point. Feedback from an EROs need more support EROs need more support to help them continue to deliver the level of service that people should be able to expect before major electoral events. The UK Government should look at the funding model for future UK Parliamentary elections to ensure EROs can handle large numbers of registration applications. More fundamentally, it should also look at how the online register to vote service and electoral management software systems could be improved to reduce the number and impact of duplicate registration applications. The UK's governments should also explore reforms that would make it easier for people to register or update their details throughout the year, such as integrating applications into other public service contacts, or more automatic forms of registration. This could help reduce the need for people to make new applications immediately before an election. Overseas electors again faced challenges when voting Some British citizens living abroad found it difficult to make sure their votes were able to be counted. Overseas voters found it difficult to vote Votes being counted Overseas voter experience Just over 230,000 people were registered as overseas electors, making up 0.5% of the total UK electorate. Many overseas electors who chose to vote by post had a tight deadline to receive and return their postal ballot papers before polling day: ROs could only begin printing ballot papers after the deadline for nominating candidates on 14 November This left less than four weeks to print and issue postal ballot packs, and for overseas electors to receive, complete and return their ballot papers before polling day People who registered or applied for a postal vote close to the deadline had only two weeks to receive, complete and return their postal vote We received feedback after the election from more than 500 overseas voters. The most frequent problem they mentioned was not receiving their postal vote in time to complete it and send it back. Overseas electors were dependent on the speed of the postal service in

the country where they live. Quote from overseas voter "My overseas postal vote arrived the day before the election. This left no time to send it back, and so I was not able to vote despite my desire to." "The ballot arrived Saturday afternoon. I paid \$35 for express shipping to get it back to the UK as soon as possible but it was still unlikely to arrive in time (letters normally take around a week). I don't know why it arrived so late." "IT DOES NOT WORK. My post was sent too late to arrive for me to return it, will not reach the UK in time. I have no vote." "My postal vote did not arrive until 5 working days before the election, making it impossible for my vote to be counted." Views from overseas electors Experience of postal and proxy process Some overseas electors also told us that they did not know they could ask someone in the UK to vote on their behalf by post (known as a 'postal proxy'). This could have been more convenient for the proxy voter, rather than having to travel in person to a polling station that could be far from their own home. More than half (53%) of s who responded to our survey said that they had spent significant time dealing with queries from overseas voters who were experiencing issues with postal or proxy votes during the election. We also received large numbers of queries ahead of the election from people living overseas who wanted to know if, and how, they could vote. This was not the first time that we have seen evidence of these problems for overseas electors. We highlighted evidence in our statutory reports on the 2015 and 2017 UK general elections, as well as following the 2016 EU referendum and the 2019 European Parliament election. At the 2019 general election, the Cabinet Office and Royal Mail put in place a system for faster delivery of postal ballot packs to overseas electors. This does appear to have improved the experience for some electors, but there was still not enough time for overseas electors in some countries to return their votes in time for them to be counted. Overseas electors should be able to expect that their vote will be counted. The UK Government should consider innovative new approaches to voting for overseas electors, using evidence from other countries. This could include the ability to download and print postal ballot papers or vote at embassies and consulates. The UK Government plans to increase the number of British citizens living abroad who can register to vote, by removing the current time limit of 15 years since they were last registered to vote in the UK. As more voters will be affected by the issues identified with postal voting, it will be even more important to give overseas electors ways of voting that mean they can be confident their votes will be counted at future UK Parliamentary elections. The timing of the election brought challenges for Returning Officers The timing of the 2019 election was unusual. It was the first general election to be held in December since 1923, and polling day was less than two weeks before Christmas. This brought specific challenges for ROs and their teams. Polling station image Polling station sign Challenges of timing The election process also began while the scheduled annual electoral registration canvass was still being carried out across Great Britain. Electoral administration teams had to complete their legal responsibilities to process canvass forms returned from households and invite new residents to register to vote, at the same time as setting up the administration of the election. Feedback that we received from EROs, ROs or s from across the UK highlighted some common challenges that they faced: Staff working in elections teams faced significant pressure and worked long hours to complete the annual canvass and deliver the election at the same time Some electoral management software systems had problems running election processes alongside the annual canvass ROs found it harder to recruit temporary staff, including polling station and counting staff, for an election held just before Christmas Some venues that ROs normally use for polling

stations or for the count were already booked for seasonal events and were not available for this election. Larger volumes of post during the Christmas period saw reported delays in issuing and returning postal votes in some areas. More than a third (38%) of those who responded to our survey said that they or their teams had struggled with the demands of the role and the extra workload from unplanned electoral events in 2019. The early general election in December followed the May 2019 European Parliament elections across the UK which had remained scheduled in law, but had not been expected to take place. Scheduled local government elections also took place in many parts of England and across Northern Ireland in May. Feedback from an electoral administrator The pressure put on electoral administrators is untenable. This was our third all out election in a year, two of which were unscheduled. Our mental health is fragile at best. We are exhausted and completely fed up. Feedback from an Errors We saw evidence of printing errors on poll cards or postal ballot packs that caused confusion for electors in a small number of constituencies. Some ROs explained that they thought that the risk of printing errors was higher at this election because of the tight deadlines for checking proofs, combined with pressure on printer availability and capacity. In Waltham Forest, postal ballot packs were not initially sent to 1,470 postal voters because a data file was not sent to the printers. As soon as the problem was identified the postal votes were issued. Candidates and agents were told about this and information was put on the council's website. However, because some postal voters got their postal vote very close to polling day, they might not have been able to fill it in and send it back in time for it to be counted.

The RO did not fully meet our performance standards. These competing pressures and errors also speak to the challenges of delivering elections within an outdated and increasingly complex electoral law framework. We have already seen similar problems at elections held at other times of the year, particularly when different elections are combined and held on the same day. Feedback from an electoral administrator Very difficult to follow. Disparate and some of later legislation contradicts earlier legislation and not in-keeping with current times and technology Feedback from an Modernising electoral law The Law Commissions of England, Wales and Scotland have now published the final report of their detailed review of electoral law. They have made recommendations to simplify and modernise the law that would help improve how elections are run. The UK's governments need to commit resources and time to reform electoral law, building on these comprehensive and well-supported recommendations. Voters continue to have positive views about how the election was run After each election we carry out research with the public to find out what they thought about taking part in the election. Our voter research Our research found that people were very satisfied with the process of registering to vote and voting at the 2019 UK general election: 78% of people were satisfied with the process of registering to vote 93% of people who voted at the election were satisfied with the process of voting More research from voters People also thought they had enough information about the election: 80% of people said that they knew a lot, or a fair amount, about the election 81% of people said they found it easy to access information on what the election was for 88% of people said it was easy to get both information on how to register to vote, and how to cast their vote These are similar to positive levels of satisfaction that we have found at other recent UK-wide elections or referendums. More than two in three people (69% of voters and non-voters) said they were either very or fairly confident the election was well-run (12% said they didn't know). This was similar to the level we found at the 2010 UK general election, but generally lower compared with other UK-wide elections or referendums in recent years, and ten

percentage points lower than the 2017 result (where 79% were confident). However, our 2019 survey cannot tell us whether public confidence is returning to levels seen in the past or the start of a more significant decline. A significant minority of people (18%) said that they were not confident the election was well-run. We asked these people to select reasons why they were not confident the election was well-run. The most common reasons related to concerns about campaigning or the media. Some people also selected concerns that related to the way the registration or voting process worked: 28% of those who were not confident the election was well-run said they thought that some people did not have the opportunity to vote or had the opportunity taken away 22% said they were not confident because the election was held at short notice 17% said they were not confident because they thought some people had difficulties registering to vote More than 7 out of 10 of all voters and non-voters (72%) said that they thought voting in general is safe from fraud and abuse. A very small proportion of people said they had direct or second-hand experience of electoral fraud at the election: 2% said that they knew someone who had committed electoral fraud. 1% said that they personally saw someone vote when they were not allowed to. Despite these low percentages, more than a third of people (38%) said they thought that some fraud had taken place at the election. This is consistent with evidence about allegations of electoral fraud at the election. Data from police forces shows that they recorded 156 cases of alleged electoral fraud relating to the election. Of these cases, just over half required no further action following initial inquiries by the police, and one sixth were locally resolved. One third of the reported cases remain under investigation. What next? What next? Take an in depth look at campaigning at this election Or, go back and read our overview 1. Our power to set and monitor performance standards for electoral services does not apply in Northern Ireland. We continue to be of the view that our performance standards framework should be extended to Northern Ireland and will further engage with the Chief Electoral Officer and the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) to progress this. ■

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2. The Electoral Commission in Wales You are in the Corporate Plan for Wales 2022/23 to 2026/27 section Home Our plans and priorities Corporate Plan for Wales 2022/23 to 2026/27 On this page Our purpose Our strategic objectives Underpinning this work First published: 25 April 2022 Last updated: 25 April 2022 Table summary The table below summarises the key factors which guide and shape the work of the Electoral Commission. Table Vision People trust, value and take part in elections Purpose We work to promote public confidence in the electoral system and ensure its integrity. Key benefits Increased trust Increased value Increased participation Strategic objectives Objectives: accessible registration and voting transparent political campaigning and compliant political finance resilient local electoral services fair and effective electoral law a modern and sustainable electoral system Three key factors will help us achieve our objectives: we demonstrate independence and integrity we are a skilled organisation where diversity is valued we are a learning organisation where improvement is continuous and resources are used effectively Values Engaged Authoritative Making an impact Transparent Independent Our purpose We work to promote public confidence in the electoral system and ensure its integrity. Our strategic objectives Our five strategic objectives for the period April 2022 to March 2027 are: 1. Accessible registration and voting Free and fair elections depend on all people who are eligible and want to vote being able to do so. We will work to ensure: increased levels of voter registration, especially amongst groups that currently have difficulty engaging in the process the removal of barriers, especially those that affect people who currently have difficulty trying to cast their vote We will achieve these outcomes by working collaboratively with policy makers and other partners to identify barriers to participation and propose solutions. We will directly support people who have difficulty engaging in the process, with tailored accessible information and learning resources, and targeted public awareness activity. We outline our plans to support accessible registration and voting in Section 3 of this Corporate Plan. 2. Transparent political campaigning and compliant political finance Parties and other campaigners should be able to campaign without facing undue actual or perceived barriers, while we continue to ensure political finance is transparent. This will support voters to hear a range of campaign voices to help them take decisions when voting. We will work to ensure: increased levels of confidence shown by candidates, parties and other campaigners in their ability to understand, apply and comply with the law on campaigning and political finance high levels of compliance with registration, reporting and other political finance laws We will achieve these aims by maintaining the official registers for parties and campaigners, and ensuring political finance data is accessible, transparent and complete. We will provide guidance and support for all types of campaigners and make regulatory decisions which command the confidence of candidates, parties, campaigners, and voters. We outline our plans for transparent political campaigning and compliant political finance in Section 4 of this Corporate Plan. 3. Resilient local electoral services Local electoral services need to be able to respond to increasingly challenging economic, social and environmental pressures. We will support local authorities and electoral administrators to deliver effective, sustainable and resilient electoral services, ensuring that voters receive the service they should be able to expect. We will work to ensure: sustained and consistent high performance in the delivery of well-run elections increased levels of confidence shown by electoral administrators in the resilience of the electoral system We will achieve these aims by setting challenging standards for electoral

administrators, and providing guidance and support to ensure they are met. We will work collaboratively with local authorities, national bodies, the Welsh Government and Senedd, and other UK governments and parliaments to build resilience into the electoral system. We outline our plans to ensure resilient local electoral services in Section 5 of this Corporate Plan.

4. Fair and effective electoral law

It is essential for the electoral system that the laws which underpin it are fair, effective and well understood. Electoral law must also keep pace with other developments in our society, harnessing technology and working on a continual process of modernisation. We will work to: support the Welsh Government and Senedd, and other UK governments and parliaments, to reform electoral law to make it less complex reduce the risks and inefficiencies associated with electoral law which impact our electoral system. We will achieve this aim by continuing to research and understand how electoral law could be reformed to help voters, campaigners, electoral administrators, and other organisations. We will also continue to provide expert advice on the practicability and impact of any changes to improve the electoral system. We outline our plans to work towards fair and effective electoral law in Section 6 of this Corporate Plan.

5. A modern and sustainable electoral system

The electoral system needs to be resilient to the challenges that lie in and beyond the period of this plan. It needs to modernise to maintain and improve value for money, transparency, trust and compliance. And, it needs to reduce its environmental impact to be sustainable. We will work to ensure: data and technology are harnessed to meet the needs of voters, campaigners and electoral administrators the changing risks to the election system from the misuse of data and technology are understood and acted upon strong relationships and streamlined working practices with all bodies that are part of the electoral system are developed the Welsh Government, other UK governments and the wider electoral community are supported to adopt a strategy and implementation plan which reduces the environmental impact of our electoral system We will achieve these aims by working with others to explore and implement new ways to use data and technology across the electoral system. We will also continue to monitor, advise and act on the misuse of data and technology. We will develop a strategy and implementation plan which reduces the environmental impact of the electoral system, to include innovative evidence-based solutions. We outline our plans to work towards a modern and sustainable electoral system in Section 7 of this Corporate Plan. We also outline our plans to make our organisation carbon neutral, consistent with governments' targets, in Section 8. Underpinning this work Three key factors will make a difference to how we achieve these strategic objectives:

1. We demonstrate independence and integrity To fulfil its duties, it is essential that an electoral commission remains independent from governments, and acts impartially and with integrity. We will continue to demonstrate how we fulfil this by: taking decisions on the evidence and being transparent about the reasons for them basing our policy positions and recommendations on analysis of evidence effectively communicating our work and views providing responsive services to those we support maintaining effective governance arrangements
2. We are a skilled organisation where diversity is valued We work hard to ensure our people feel part of a diverse, inclusive and supportive workplace. In the next five years we will: implement refreshed working practices to reflect wider changes in our work environment and culture attract, retain and develop the people we need maintain and improve high standards of management, with a focus on developing our people further embed equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of our work
3. We are a learning organisation where improvement is continuous and resources are used efficiently We

are committed to utilising technology, funding, time and resources to deliver maximum value. We will invest in our systems and in reducing our environmental impact. In the next five years we will: procure and implement value for money technology that improves service delivery as appropriate maintain a sound prudent financial strategy continue to develop techniques to learn from experience, seek continuous improvement and become more efficient and effective develop a corporate environmental strategy that meets policy and legislative requirements Navigation 1. The electoral system in Wales Section 1 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan for Wales 3. Putting voters first in Wales Section 3 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan for Wales

Performance analysis 2021/22: Goal four | Electoral Commission Search
Performance analysis 2021/22: Goal four You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 On this page Key achievements Performance measures Supporting the organisation Impact of Covid-19 Commitment to EDI First published: 1 August 2022 Last updated: 1 August 2022 Goal Four To provide value for money, making best use of our resources and expertise to deliver services that are attuned to what matters most to voters. This goal provides a focus to activities that support the organisation and ensure we have the appropriate skilled people, resources, technology, systems and governance. The aim is to deliver services that are efficient, effective and economical. Key achievements To support our organisation, we: implemented our new accountability arrangements with the Scottish Parliament and Senedd which came into effect on 1 April 2021. reviewed and refreshed how we deliver legal services carried out an all staff survey and used the results to identify areas for the Senior Leadership Group to prioritise for development in line with our corporate plan. Key initiatives include developing a behavioural charter and redeveloping our learning and development approach. completed internal and external consultations on our new Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy, a final version of which is now being produced developed a race equality action plan through the Race at Work Taskforce completed renovations of our working environment to support more flexible ways of working continued to develop our quality assurance approach to help us continuously improve our processes Performance measures Measure Performance Deliver our Ways of Working project to deliver digitally enabled business change to reflect the expectations on a modern employer and ensure the core ICT offering can support those changes. Completed Stakeholder and staff satisfaction with IT tools Not Met / Ongoing 1 Work with the Scottish Parliament and Senedd to implement our new accountability arrangements, including a new funding formula and business plans for Scotland and Wales Completed Implement our new People Strategy Ongoing Maintain high staff engagement scores in the annual staff survey and ensure indicators such as staff turnover are at appropriate levels Staff engagement score: 67% (Civil Service average: 64%) Staff turnover: 14.2% Identify options, costs and benefits of e-procurement and implement a new system accordingly Completed Monitor significant variances on all budgets and, where appropriate, reduce these variances over the five years of our Corporate Plan Completed Deliver a project to examine how well we manage customer enquiries across the whole range of the Commission's work Completed Supporting the organisation In common with all organisations, the Covid-19 pandemic has transformed the way we work and presented major challenges. Our aim throughout has been to maintain staff wellbeing, so we could continue to deliver without interruption for voters and our electoral stakeholders. Returns to the office, as conditions allowed, were managed with care, balancing staff safety and the benefits of in-person collaboration. Responses to the staff survey that took place in autumn 2021 showed that 94% of respondents felt that the Commission effectively responded to the Covid-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, we have learned and documented lessons from our response to the pandemic, and are reviewing our crisis management plans accordingly. Remote working has highlighted the need for substantial investment in our information technology infrastructure to bring it up to date, support hybrid working and provide an efficient and user-friendly working environment. This was the first year of direct accountability to, and funding by, the Scottish Parliament and the Senedd, as alongside our longstanding relationship to the UK Parliament. We have worked closely with officials in all three parliaments in order to make a success of these unique

arrangements, and have agreed detailed mechanisms to ensure efficiency and transparency. We have made further progress on equality, diversity and inclusion, although this will remain a key priority as we develop the people strategy to underpin our new corporate plan. Our Race at Work Taskforce continues to ensure that the voices of our black, Asian and minority ethnic staff are heard and provide a force for change. We have consulted on a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy and enhanced our Equality Impact Assessment process. And we have groups dedicated to supporting staff with bullying and harassment, to supporting those with mental health issues and to promoting dignity and respect at work. Impact of Covid-19 Where government restrictions required, we have continued to work predominantly from home for much of the year. With the lifting of restrictions we started a phased return to the office that builds on our long-standing use of home-working to develop a hybrid approach. We embraced hybrid working in a way that allows us to balance business need and staff wellbeing. There were no significant additional financial costs to complete this work. Commitment to EDI The Commission serves a diverse democracy and is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion. We have taken a number of steps during the year to help us deliver on this commitment: •We have produced a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy, on which we consulted during winter 2021-22. We are grateful to those who commented and will publish a final version of the strategy during 2022-23; We refreshed our approach to Equality Impact Assessments as part of our ongoing compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty; We brought in external consultancy to help us raise our awareness and knowledge of EDI issues, and now have a permanent senior lead; We have continued the work of our Race at Work Charter Task Force Report navigation links Previous Next Performance analysis 2021/22: Goal three Wales (devolved) annual report 2021/22 1. Staff survey results and network performance show that IT infrastructure performance has not been satisfactory. We have continued to roll out upgrades across infrastructure, devices and applications in this year, however implementation was delayed due to the impact of Covid-19. We shall evaluate in the coming year ■ Back to content at footnote 1

Report: The regulation of campaigners at the referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union held on 23 June 2016 | Electoral Commission Search

Report: The regulation of campaigners at the referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union held on 23 June 2016 You are in the EU referendum section Home EU referendum On this page Funding the campaigns and campaign spending Regulation and enforcement Lessons for future referendums Recommendations: Campaign funding Recommendations: Campaign spending Recommendations: Reporting Recommendations: Enforcing the rules Download our full report First published: 13 June 2019 Last updated: 9 August 2019 About the referendum Our first report on the EU referendum, published in September 2016 1 , focused on the administration of the referendum, including the experience of voters and campaigners, the management and delivery of the poll, the regulation of campaigners at the referendum and the provision of information for voters. This second report includes information on the use of our investigatory and sanctioning powers and analyses the funding and spending of those people and organisations that registered to campaign. Where appropriate, we make recommendations to inform the regulation of future referendums based on the information campaigners were required to submit in their spending and donation returns 2 . Funding the campaigns and campaign spending After the EU referendum, registered campaigners were required to submit a campaign spending and donation return to the Commission. The returns included details of the spending that the campaigners incurred campaigning at the referendum and all donations and loans they accepted over £7,500. s were also required to provide a total figure of any donations and loans of £7,500 or below, but over £500. Anything with a value of £500 or less was not counted as a donation or loan for the purpose of the referendum rules. s that are registered political parties were required to submit details of the spending they incurred campaigning at the referendum. They were not, however, required to report donations or loans towards that spending during or after the referendum (unless they are minor parties). The regulatory rules on political parties ensure there are controls on the sources of their funding and transparency of where that funding has come from 3 . The data in this report is taken from the statutory returns submitted by campaigners on the 23 September 2016 and 23 December 2016. Any changes in the campaign finance data resulting from our on-going compliance work will be available on our website. In summary: 123 campaigners registered with the Commission from 1 February 2016 - 63 indicating they supported 'Remain' and 60 supporting the 'Leave' side. Appendix 1 provides a list of the campaigners that registered for each outcome. Registered campaigners reported spending a total of £32,642,158 campaigning at the EU referendum and reported having accepted donations totalling £30,714,106 and loans of £6,071,940. s that registered to campaign for the UK to remain in the EU reported spending £19,309,588. s that registered to campaign for the UK to leave the EU reported spending £13,332,569. The two designated lead campaigners reported total spending of £13,510,049 - The In Campaign Ltd reported spending £6,767,584; and Vote Leave Ltd reported spending £6,742,466. Political parties that registered to campaign at the EU referendum reported spending of £9,030,300. 58 other registered campaigners reported spending of £10,101,809 4 . Out of total reported donations of £30,714,106, the reported donations to those that registered to campaign for the 'Leave' outcome amount to £15,854,432 and for the 'Remain' outcome to £14,859,674; 52% and 48% of total reported donations respectively. More information on campaign funding and spending of the registered campaigners at the EU referendum can be found on our website. Our website also contains charts that allow users to analyse the data 6 . Regulation and enforcement Our regulatory activity during the referendum campaign was

aimed at preventing breaches of the campaign spending rules before they occurred. To do this we used a range of regulatory tools, including the provision of an advice service for campaigners and the public as well as monitoring the campaigns to identify and engage with activity that risked breaking the rules. Where appropriate, proportionate and necessary, we took regulatory or enforcement action including investigations leading to sanctions. Further details are given in Chapter 2. We are confident that our regulatory activity during the campaign prevented major breaches of the rules. We are, however, considering a number of issues under our Enforcement Policy following an initial inspection of the spending and donation returns submitted by campaigners. Lessons for future referendums As had been the case at previous referendums held under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA), a number of changes and improvements were made to the regulatory controls specifically for the EU referendum. These changes were made by Parliament through the specific EU Referendum Act 2016 and associated secondary legislation, rather than updating the standard referendum rules set out in PPERA. This means that those changes will not apply for future referendums, unless they are again included in the specific referendum legislation. Overall, the financial controls that applied at the EU referendum worked well and improved on the rules that applied at previous referendums. We did, however, make a number of recommendations intended to improve the regulation and reduce the burdens on campaigners at future referendums in our first report published in September 2016. We have identified further lessons that can be learnt from the information campaigners were required to submit in their spending and donation returns to further refine the legal framework in relation to campaign funding, spending and reporting. These include important recommendations to increase transparency during the months before the referendum by providing that prepoll reporting should apply at all future referendums in the UK, and to help ensure the integrity and effectiveness of the referendum spending rules by clarifying the controls that apply when campaigners incur joint spending. Our ongoing compliance activity may also result in lessons for future financial regulation. We have also restated a number of our previous recommendations. These include that the statutory restrictions on the publication of promotional material by Governments and other publicly funded bodies should be significantly redrafted before any future referendum, and that campaign-related staff costs should be included in the limits on political party election and referendum campaign spending. We have provided below an overview of all the recommendations made in this report, which build on the 15 recommendations made in our first report (these are also repeated here, in appendix 2). Where appropriate, we recommend that certain changes should be incorporated into PPERA so that they apply for all future referendums. Recommendations: Campaign funding Recommendation 1: Loan controls should be incorporated into PPERA. The absence of loan controls in the PPERA referendum rules is a significant gap in the regulation of referendums. The UK Government should bring forward the relevant secondary legislation to introduce loan controls at all future referendums held under the PPERA framework. Recommendation 2: The individuals and bodies eligible to register to campaign at referendums should be the same as the eligible non-party campaigners at elections. The ability of the additional eligible campaigners to donate and lend to other referendum campaigners should also be considered. The list of individuals and bodies eligible to register as a referendum campaigner should be realigned with the list of eligible registered non-party campaigners under PPERA. The ability of the additional eligible campaigners to donate and lend to other referendum campaigners should also be considered. It will be important that any changes to the

categories of permissible donors and lenders are clearly defined, particularly in relation to political parties that register to campaign at a referendum.

Recommendation 3: The Government and Parliament should re-visit the permissibility controls on companies. In light of the fact that the PPERA permissibility controls on companies do not fully reflect the recommendations from the Committee on Standards in Public Life, and the implications of the current company permissibility test highlighted by our investigations, the Government and, in due course, Parliament should re-visit the issue of the permissibility controls on companies to ensure that they meet the underlying policy intention of preventing donations and loans from foreign companies. Recommendation 4: The Commission's ability to pay the lead campaigner grant in instalments should be incorporated into PPERA. In order to safeguard public money and to ensure efficient administration of the grant, the Commission's ability to pay the grant available to lead campaigners in instalments should be incorporated into PPERA so that it applies for all future referendums.

Recommendations: Campaign spending
Recommendation 5: The Government and Parliament should take into account the evidence from the EU referendum when considering whether the PPERA referendum spending limits remain appropriate. The Commission does not have a specific statutory role in advising on spending limits at UK-wide referendums held under PPERA. It is nevertheless important that the Government and Parliament take into account the evidence from the EU referendum when considering whether the PPERA referendum spending limits, including the registration threshold, remain appropriate in the context of any future UK-wide referendum. Recommendation 6: Campaign-related staff costs should be included in the limits on political party election and referendum campaign spending. To provide consistency between the controls on referendum campaigners, party campaign staff, candidates and non-party campaigners, as well as close a gap in a large strand of election and referendum campaign spending, campaign-related staff costs should be included in the limits on political party election and referendum campaign spending. Recommendation 7: Joint spending controls should be incorporated into PPERA. To help ensure the integrity and effectiveness of the referendum spending rules, appropriate controls should be incorporated into PPERA to regulate campaigners that engage in joint spending so that they apply for all future referendums. To improve transparency and enforceability, the controls should include a requirement that campaigners must include the names of those they worked with and how much they each spent in their post-referendum spending return. To reduce complexity and allow the Commission to provide clearer advice and guidance to campaigners, the Government and Parliament should clarify what constitutes joint spending for the purposes of regulating referendum campaign expenditure. This should specifically include: Making clear the scope of the legal term 'a plan or other arrangement' Defining what is meant by the fact that referendum expenses must be incurred 'by or on behalf of' those involved in the joint spending, and Exploring whether or not the joint spending rules should explicitly say that regulated expenses should be incurred by every party involved, in order for those rules to apply. In addition to the above clarifications, when the joint spending controls are incorporated into PPERA, the Commission should be given a Statutory Codemaking power to enable us to clarify any further matters should they arise in the future. Recommendation 8: An appropriate level of imprint information should be required on online and electronic referendum campaign material. To ensure that campaigners' identity is clear to voters, an appropriate level of imprint information should be required on online and electronic referendum campaign material. However, before applying such requirements, the Government and Parliament should give careful

consideration to the lessons learnt from the drafting and practical application of the imprint rules in the Scottish Independence Referendum Act 2013. We would welcome the opportunity to work with the Government on this.

Recommendations:

Recommendation 9: Pre-poll reporting requirements should be incorporated into PPERA so they apply for all future referendums. To increase transparency during the months before the referendum poll and help encourage campaigners to ensure that they only accept donations from permissible sources, pre-poll reporting requirements should be incorporated into PPERA so they apply for all future referendums. If the referendum legislation is passed but does not immediately come into force, the legislation should provide for the pre-poll reporting requirement to commence as early as possible.

Recommendation 10: s that incur low levels of spending should only be required to submit a ‘nil return’ or declare the amount of spending incurred if below the registration threshold. To provide an appropriate balance between reducing the administrative burdens on campaigners that registered but only incurred low levels of spending, and providing transparency to campaign spending: The requirements for registered campaigners to submit a ‘nil return’ or a declaration that they have spent less than the relevant registration threshold, rather than complete a full spending return, should be incorporated into PPERA so they apply for all future referendums.

Where a campaigner submits a declaration that they have spent less than the relevant registration threshold, they should be required to provide a figure of the total regulated spending incurred.

Recommendation 11: s should be required to include itemised information for pre-registration spending in their return. To improve transparency and reduce a potential incentive to delay registration, registered campaigners that submit a full spending return should be required to include itemised information for all regulated expenditure, including spending incurred before a campaigner registers with the Commission.

Recommendation 12: The return declaration requirements in the EU Referendum Act 2015 should be incorporated into PPERA. To enable campaigners to sign truthfully the return declaration when they have accepted an impermissible donation, the return declaration requirements in the EU Referendum Act 2015 should be incorporated into PPERA so they apply for all future referendums.

Recommendations: Enforcing the rules

Recommendation 13: The Commission’s current fine limit should be reviewed and increased. To ensure that our sanctioning regime provides a strong deterrent to noncompliance, our sanction limit of £20,000 should be reviewed and increased to a level that would act as a suitable deterrent reflecting the level of fines available to other commensurate statutory regulators and financial regulation regimes.

Download our full report Our report on the regulation of campaigners at the EU referendum 1. Report: 23 June 2016 referendum on the UK’s membership of the European Union ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. Further background information on the EU referendum is contained in our first report. ■ Back to content at footnote 2 3. nformation on the donations and loans made to political parties is available on our finance database. ■ Back to content at footnote 3 4. A further 48 campaigners submitted either ‘nil’ or declarations of spending below the registration threshold, including 10 other political parties. 7 campaigners failed to submit returns and are the subject of enforcement activity ■ Back to content at footnote 4 6. The data in this report is accurate at the time of publication.

However, depending on the specific filters users apply, the results produced following analysis of the data on our website may not always match the figures in this report. Additional or substituted data may also be included on our website following the outcome of our compliance activity. ■ Back to content at footnote 6

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Our response to the Assembly Commission's consultation 'Creating a Parliament for Wales' | Electoral Commission Search Our response to the Assembly Commission's consultation 'Creating a Parliament for Wales' You are in the Our responses to consultations section Home Our responses to consultations On this page Introduction How many Assembly Members does the Assembly need? How should Assembly Members be elected? Who should be allowed to vote in Assembly elections? Who should be able to be an Assembly Member? Should the law relating to electoral administration be rationalised? Should the Assembly have flexibility to decide on its internal arrangements? Appendix First published: 6 April 2018 Last updated: 19 August 0019 Introduction The Commission works to promote public confidence in the democratic process and ensure its integrity by: enabling the delivery of free and fair elections and referendums, focusing on the needs of electors and addressing the changing environment to ensure every vote remains secure and accessible; regulating political finance – taking proactive steps to increase transparency, ensure compliance and pursue breaches; using its expertise to make and advocate for changes to our democracy, aiming to improve fairness, transparency and efficiency. This response sets out the Electoral Commission's views on the Assembly Commission's consultation following the recommendations from the Expert Panel on Assembly Electoral Reform and on other reforms to the Assembly's electoral and operational arrangements to make a more accessible and effective legislature. In April 2017 and May 2017 we responded to the Expert Panel's questions on Assembly electoral reform, and our response here builds on these. This consultation takes place in the context of a wider electoral reform agenda in Wales, with changes also having recently being proposed to local government elections by Welsh Government. We expect that the Assembly Commission will work closely with Welsh Government to ensure that any reforms to the Assembly's electoral arrangements are not made in isolation but take into account this wider context. Since last year we have been working with Welsh Government while it has been developing its thinking on electoral reform for local government elections in Wales and were pleased to respond to the Consultation - Electoral Reform in Local Government in Wales that took place in 2017 on this subject. We published our response to this consultation on 9 October 2017. We have indicated our willingness to contribute fully to the modernisation and reform agenda in Wales and will continue to work with Welsh Government and other partners on this important work. We would also like to work in the same way with the Assembly Commission as it develops its own thinking on electoral arrangements for the National Assembly for Wales. Our focus is to ensure that any changes made to modify and reform electoral arrangements are adequately resourced to ensure that they can be implemented in the best interests of voters. We continue to recommend that all legislation should be in place at least six months before it is required to be implemented or complied with by campaigners, Returning Officers or Electoral Registration Officers. There are some aspects of this consultation which do not fall within the Electoral Commission's remit and where this is the case, we have not commented in the response. There are also other areas which have not been specifically addressed in this consultation which we would like the Assembly Commission to consider as part of their reform of National Assembly for Wales elections. We have set these out in an appendix to our response. How many Assembly Members does the Assembly need? Question 1: The Expert Panel has concluded that the Assembly needs to have between 80 and 90 Members to carry out its role effectively. Do you agree? Please give reasons for your answer. Question 2: Would changes to the number of Assembly Members result in i) costs, or ii) benefits, for you or your

organisation? If so, what would the costs or benefits be? A decision about the number of members required for the Assembly to effectively carry out its business is a significant constitutional issue, and is a matter for the Government and Assembly, not for the Electoral Commission. How should Assembly Members be elected? Question 3: The Expert Panel has outlined three possible electoral systems which could operate effectively in Wales to elect an Assembly of at least 80 Members. Which of these systems would be most appropriate for electing Assembly Members and why? Decisions about which voting system should be used for different elections are significant constitutional issues, and are matters for Governments and Parliaments, not for the Electoral Commission. Our role is to ensure that voters understand the electoral system used so they can cast their vote in the way they intended and that appropriate administrative planning is undertaken by the relevant Returning Officer (RO). In October we responded to the Welsh Government consultation “Electoral Reform in Local Government” on issues regarding the introduction of different electoral systems in local government elections. As stated in our response to that consultation, the potential impact on electors in Wales of a new electoral system could be significant and there may be a real risk of voter confusion, particularly in relation to understanding of how to cast their vote. If the system is changed, the provision of an effective public awareness campaign in Wales ahead of an Assembly election would be required. The Assembly Commission should also consider how Returning Officers and their staff will be able to effectively plan for and resource any electoral change.

The Commission is committed to working with the electoral community in Wales in implementing any new electoral system to ensure a consistent approach to the arrangements and management of elections in Wales through the Wales Electoral Coordination Board. This Board should be the vehicle to effectively plan and manage major electoral change across Wales. Again we reiterate our recommendation that all legislation should be in place at least six months before it is required to be implemented or complied with by campaigners, Returning Officers or Electoral Registration Officers. In addition to this, the Commission would need to consider how it supports the election and the resource we would require to do so from the National Assembly for Wales. Areas of activity would likely include: The provision of advice and guidance to Returning Officers and their staff The provision of advice and training for political parties, candidates and agents The organisation and resourcing of a national public awareness campaign ahead of an election. Question 4: Do you agree with the Expert Panel’s recommendation that a change to the electoral system should be used to encourage the election of an Assembly that more accurately reflects the diverse nature of society in Wales? Question 5: If you answered yes to question 4, do you believe that this should be achieved through legislation such as formal gender quotas, or by less formal means such as voluntary measures put in place by political parties? Please give reasons for your answer. If any changes are introduced to encourage an Assembly that more accurately reflects the diverse nature of society in Wales, the Commission would want to help and support ROs in administering such arrangements, and would look to provide guidance to assist them. Question 6: Should people be able to stand for election to the Assembly on the basis of job sharing? Question 7: What, if any, benefits or risks do you see resulting from allowing people to stand for election on the basis of job sharing arrangements? As current legislation does not allow the presenting of two or more candidates for one seat, the NAW would need to introduce primary legislation in order to permit job-share candidates to stand and be elected at any future Assembly elections. If the law was amended to allow candidates to stand for election under a job sharing arrangement,

legislation relating to the form of nomination papers and the ballot paper would need to be amended, and a range of technical issues would also need to be addressed. This would include, for example, what would happen if one elected member in a job share partnership decided to stand down. Question 8: If the Assembly adopted either the Single Transferable Vote or Flexible List Proportional Representation for the election of Assembly Members, should Assembly Members be elected on the basis of: 20 constituencies based on pairing the existing 40 Assembly constituencies 17 constituencies based on the existing 22 local authority areas As we have said previously in this response (Q3) and in our response to the Welsh Government consultation “Electoral Reform in Local Government”, decisions about which voting system should be used for different elections and the basis for how Assembly Members are elected are significant constitutional issues, and are matters for Governments and Parliaments. Question 9: Would changes to the Assembly’s electoral system result in i) costs or ii) benefits for your or your organisation? If so, what would the costs or benefits be? Before any election to the National Assembly for Wales, the Commission would run a public awareness campaign to encourage people in Wales to register to vote. If the electoral system to elect Assembly Members changes, then it would be necessary for a separate campaign to be organised that would explain to voters about this and how they can vote in the election. This would require additional funding. Building upon our experience of running a similar campaign in Scotland, informing voters about STV, it is likely that this campaign would include the distribution of an information booklet to each household in Wales about the electoral system, as well as additional advertising. Total costs for a voter registration campaign in Wales are typically around £800,000. This compares to around £1.1million for a voter registration campaign in Scotland. This is based on our experience from 2016. Before the Scottish council elections in 2017, the Commission ran two campaigns – one to encourage people to register to vote and another to educate people about how to vote under the STV system. The total cost for these two campaigns was around £1.2million and this was funded by the Scottish Government. In addition to this, the Commission would need to consider how it supports the administration of a new electoral system. For example: The provision of advice and guidance to Returning Officers and their staff The provision of advice and training political parties, candidates and agents Who should be allowed to vote in Assembly elections? Question 10: The same people should be allowed to vote in National Assembly for Wales elections and in local government elections in Wales. Question 11: What implications would there be if there were differences between who could vote in Assembly elections and who could vote in local government elections in Wales If differences were introduced between the National Assembly for Wales and local government franchises this could cause voter confusion, as well as result in significant administrative challenges and require additional public awareness work. The Commission’s view is that any changes to the franchise should be clear six months before EROs are due to begin any scheduled annual canvass activities to enable all those who are newly eligible to vote to take the steps they need to successfully register and participate in the elections. All this would need to be adequately resourced. Impact of varying franchises Electoral Register Currently Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) have a duty to maintain several registers: a register of parliamentary electors a register of local government electors a register of relevant citizens of the European Union entitled to vote at European Parliamentary elections; and a register of peers living outside the UK who have made a declaration to vote at European Parliamentary elections If there were a difference in who could vote in

National Assembly for Wales elections and who could vote in local government elections, additional registers may need to be compiled. Voter confusion Introducing differing franchises for Assembly and local government elections could introduce an element of confusion for voters as they could be unclear which elections they would be entitled to participate in. Public awareness activity Before any election to the National Assembly for Wales, the Commission expects to run a public awareness campaign to encourage people in Wales to register to vote. If any changes were made to the franchise this campaign would need to include specific activity to inform those newly enfranchised of the changes, that they were now eligible to vote and how they could register to enable them to vote. Automatic registration Welsh Government is currently considering changing the franchise for local government elections and also introducing automatic registration for the local government register. One of the proposed changes to the franchise is to allow nonUK nationals resident in Wales to vote in local government elections. Therefore, as nationality would not be a criteria for registration for local elections, it may not be captured as part of the automatic registration process. If the franchise were to differ for National Assembly for Wales elections and nationality determined eligibility to vote, this data may not be available from the local government register. We recommend that the registers and registration process for the National Assembly for Wales and Local Government elections should remain aligned. We therefore suggest that the Assembly Commission works closely with Welsh Government to ensure that any reforms to the Assembly's electoral arrangements are not made in isolation but take into account their plans.

What should be the minimum voting age for Assembly elections? Question 12: What should be the minimum voting age for Assembly elections 16 or 18? The Commission does not take a view on what the minimum voting age should be for Assembly elections. Our response concentrates instead on the practical implications which would need to be considered if such a change was introduced. The Commission's view is that any changes to the franchise should be clear six months before EROs are due to begin any scheduled annual canvass activities to enable all those who are newly eligible to vote to take the steps they need to successfully register and participate in the elections. The Welsh Government have consulted on and is currently considering whether to reduce the minimum voting age for local government elections in Wales to 16. We suggest that the Assembly Commission works closely with Welsh Government to ensure that any reforms to the Assembly's electoral arrangements are not made in isolation but take into account their plans. Public awareness activity Before any election to the National Assembly for Wales, the Commission expects to run a public awareness campaign to encourage people in Wales to register to vote. If the minimum voting age was reduced, the Commission would undertake specific public awareness activities to target 16 and 17 year olds informing them that they are eligible to vote and how they can register to vote. This would likely require two campaigns – one around the first canvass prior to any change if changes were to be introduced and one prior to the election itself. Sixteen and seventeen year olds were able to vote for the first time at the Scottish Independence Referendum in 2014, and have been able to vote in local government and Scottish Parliament elections since May 2016. The Commission has worked with Scottish Government and other partners, such as the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives, the Scottish Assessors Association, the Electoral Management Board for Scotland (EMB), Education Scotland, School Leaders Scotland and the Association of Directors of Education Scotland, to undertake public awareness activities aimed at 16 and 17 year olds. We also produced a political literacy briefing which provided guidance and information sources to schools,

colleges, universities and all other organisations who wished to develop political literacy amongst young people. We would want to build upon this approach in Wales if the voting age was lowered. Our experience in Scotland makes clear that it is important that 16 and 17 year olds are engaged and that specific public awareness activity is undertaken. We would seek to work with educational partners and councils in Wales to identify opportunities for supporting ongoing political literacy in schools and encouraging young people to register to vote. Attainers Currently, the minimum voting age stands at 18. This means that 17 year olds and some 16 year olds are entitled to be included on the register as attainers if they will turn 18 during the lifetime of that register. If the minimum voting age is lowered to 16, the register will include 16 and 17 year olds as full electors. Additionally, 15 year olds and some 14 year olds would be entitled to be included on the register as attainers. If this change is implemented you may wish to consider the arrangement in Scotland, where no information on those aged under 16 must be included on any version of the register published or otherwise made available, except in very limited circumstances, for example as part of a criminal investigation or related to the administration of an election. Question 13: Would reducing the minimum voting age for Assembly elections result in i) costs or ii) benefits for you or your organisation?

If so, what would the costs or benefits be? Question 14: Are there any other issues, benefits or risks you would like us to consider in relation to changing the minimum voting age for Assembly elections? Please give reasons for your answer. As set out in our response to the Expert Panel in May 2017 the cost implications of a reduction in the minimum voting age for Assembly elections would be wide ranging. As a guide the following outlines the costs associated with the additional work relating to the enfranchisement of 16/17 year olds in Scotland. From the financial memorandum published with the Scottish Elections (Reduction of voting age) Bill 2015, the total of the costs falling on the Scottish Government was expected to be within the range of £1,115,000 to £1,365,000, across the 2015/16 and 2016/17 financial years. The Commission actually spent £55,000 on user testing and development and design of the forms and £124k carrying out public awareness activity ahead of the referendum.

Should residents in Wales who are not UK nationals be allowed to vote in Assembly elections? Question 15: To what extent do you agree or disagree or disagree with the following statement: All legal residents in Wales should be allowed to vote in Assembly elections, irrespective of their nationality or citizenship. Question 16:

Are there any other issues, risks or benefits you would like us to consider in relation to changing the rights of non-UK nationals legally resident in Wales to vote in Assembly elections? Please give reasons for your answer. The Commission does not take a view on what the minimum voting age should be for Assembly elections. Our response concentrates instead on the practical implications which would need to be considered if such a change was introduced. Nationality requirement The nationality of an individual determines which, if any, elections in the UK a person is entitled to be registered to vote at. Currently if an applicant is unsure of any aspect of their nationality they are advised to contact the Home Office. EROs also have the power to ask an applicant to provide documentary evidence confirming their nationality. If an ERO is in doubt as to whether an applicant or elector is legally resident, they can request checks of a person's immigration status against Home Office records. The Welsh Government has consulted on and is currently considering changing the franchise to allow non-UK nationals resident in Wales to vote at local government elections. If the same changes are not made to the National Assembly franchise this will result in a difference to who could vote in the two sets of

elections. This would require EROs to maintain an additional National Assembly for Wales register. The Electoral Commission produces guidance for EROs to maintain the electoral registers. This guidance would be updated in the event of any changes to the franchise. Whichever decision is made, all information and guidance provided to candidates will need to be updated and clearly communicated to them. Public awareness activity Should the National Assembly for Wales decide to implement these suggestions, we would expect to carry out work to ensure effective public awareness among these groups so that they are aware they are able to register to vote and vote and of how to do so. As mentioned previously this would require two campaigns – one around the first canvass prior to the change being introduced and one prior to the election itself. Should prisoners be allowed to vote in Assembly elections? Question 17: To what extent do you agree or disagree or disagree with the following statement: Prisoners released on temporary licence or on home detention curfew should be allowed to vote in Assembly elections, in line with the UK Government's intention for UK elections. Question 18: Are there any other issues, risks or benefits you would like us to consider in relation to changing the rights of prisoners to vote in Assembly elections? Please give reasons for your answer. We take no view on whether prisoners should be entitled to vote or not, nor whether the franchise should be limited to certain prisoners with a specific sentence length. If the decision is made to allow Welsh prisoners to vote then we would expect to be consulted further on how this would be implemented. Some of the issues that would need to be considered are: the eligibility criteria for prisoners to register, bearing in mind that residence is one of the main criteria for registration. For example if prisoners register to vote at the prison address, then this would result in registered prisoners having a disproportionate impact on the electorate in the ward in which the prison is located. Given that prisoners are only present at the prison address as a result of their sentence, an alternative option would be for prisoners to register in respect of a previous or intended address. how Welsh voters imprisoned in prisons would be affected. the method by which prisoners would cast their vote. Setting up polling stations in prisons would be logistically very difficult, for example ensuring that all prisoners were able to be issued with the correct ballot paper for their registered address. It may be easier to restrict prisoners to a system of absent voting. the right to a secret ballot for all prisoners regardless of how they cast their vote. the entitlement to a proxy vote without the need for their application to be attested (as is already the case for overseas and service voters). By nature of being in prison, the voter has a sufficient reason for not being able to attend their polling station. an awareness programme to highlight the process in order to enable prisoners to register to vote and cast their vote. how prisoners could access information about the policies of candidates, parties and other campaigners. Who should be able to be an Assembly Member? Question 19: Should legislation to reform the Assembly's electoral arrangements include provision to implement the recommendations of the Fourth Assembly's Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee in relation to disqualification from being an Assembly Member? Are there any other changes which should be made to the disqualification arrangements? In our report Standing for Election, published in January 2015 we recommended that the law in England, Wales and Northern Ireland be changed to make a clear distinction between offices or employment which would prevent someone standing for election, and those which would prevent someone from holding office if elected. In this report we set out a framework of questions which the National Assembly for Wales may find useful as a reference if it

decides to review its own rules on disqualification (although it would be up to Assembly to determine how these should apply when reviewing the law). These are: Firstly, is there a real conflict of interest between the appointed post and the elected post? If so, the postholder would have to resign before taking up elected office. Secondly, does the postholder need to have resigned and served out notice by nomination or election, for example: Does the postholder's role require political impartiality during the election campaign? Does the postholder have access to privileged information that would advantage them over other candidates? Could the postholder exert undue influence over electors by virtue of their position? Is the postholder involved in the administration of the election? A reduction in restrictions on potential candidates would also enable wider choice for voters.

Should the law relating to electoral administration be rationalised? Question 20: Should legislation to reform the Assembly's electoral arrangements include provision to implement the following? Please give reasons for your answers. Question 20 (i): The Electoral Commission's recommendations that costs relating to translation between Welsh and English should not count towards expenditure limits for political parties and candidates in relation to Assembly elections as they already are for non-party campaigners. In our report on the 2016 elections to the National Assembly for Wales, we recommended that: Governments with legislative competence over elections within the UK should amend the definitions of political party and candidate spending so that reasonable expenses that can be attributed to an individual's disability are exempt, (as was recently set out in the revised PPERA rules for non-party campaigners). As the PPERA non-party campaigner rules now exempt the costs associated with translating Welsh to English and vice versa, we recommend that equivalent legal provisions should be introduced by the relevant Government into the election rules covering spending by political parties and candidates. The Commission continues to support the view that costs relating to translating campaign material between Welsh and English should be exempt from the spending limits of political parties and candidates at elections, including those to the National Assembly for Wales and we welcome the proposal as set out in this consultation. As noted previously, this exemption already exists for non-party campaigners, and by exempting it from the spending limits of political parties and candidates it would ensure that all barriers are removed from making campaigning at Assembly elections inclusive of all official languages of Wales. The Assembly Commission may want to consider what these costs are – are they purely translation costs or do they include other areas of campaigning material which are impacted by the inclusion of two languages, for example, additional design or printing costs brought about as a result of the provision of bilingual material. When considering the drafting, the Assembly Commission may wish also to consider drawing on wording from the non-party campaigner rules, which has been used at three elections in Wales: This wording exempts "expenses incurred in respect of, or in consequence of, the translation of anything from English into Welsh or from Welsh into English". (Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act, Schedule 8A). The Assembly Commission may also wish to consider whether costs relating to providing bilingual Welsh and English material should be exempted from both the spending limits and reporting requirements, or whether there should continue to be a reporting requirement for such costs. This will partly depend on the policy objectives and overall aims of creating an exemption. Maintaining a requirement to report on any costs associated with translation would provide transparency about the levels of spending on such costs. It would allow monitoring of expenditure levels and continuing visibility of what campaigners spend on the provision of bilingual materials in Welsh and English. This kind of approach is used for

some items that are exempted from electoral spending limits, such as for the personal expenses of candidates. In contrast, the Assembly Commission may prefer an approach where the costs cease to be regulated or recorded in any sense, by being exempted from both spending limits and reporting requirements. This kind of approach is used in electoral law for a number of exemptions and exclusions. The Commission set up the Welsh Language Legislation Advisory Group following the 2016 National Assembly for Wales elections. It includes representatives from the Electoral Commission, Welsh Government and Electoral Services Managers and Returning Officers from across Wales. This group could be useful in future as an opportunity to discuss ideas and proposals regarding the Welsh language and its use in elections. The Electoral Commission would welcome the opportunity to work with the Assembly Commission on considering the practical implications of the exemption, so it is in place for the next scheduled Assembly election in 2021.

Question 20 (ii): The Electoral Commission's recommendations that costs relating to an individual's disability should not count towards expenditure limits for political parties and candidates in relation to Assembly elections as they already are for nonparty campaigners. As above, we are pleased that the Assembly are considering implementing our recommendation to amend the definitions of political party and candidate spending, so that reasonable expenses that can be attributed to an individual's disability are exempt, and would welcome the opportunity to have further discussions with the Assembly officials about the practical implications of this recommendation.

Candidates Costs that are reasonably attributable to a candidate's disability are already explicitly exempt from the spending limit of candidates at Scottish Parliament, and Scottish council elections. The legislation for these two elections, have been drafted in different ways, and the Assembly Commission may wish to draw on lessons learned about the practical implications of each approach to drafting when considering the legislative wording they wish to adopt. The Assembly Commission should also consider the implications for regional list candidates if expenses reasonably attributable to a candidate's disability are exempt from the spending limit of constituency candidates and independent regional list candidates. This aim could be achieved by also exempting these expenses from the spending limit of political parties, as regional list candidates are subject to the spending rules for political parties.

Political parties

The Wales Act 2017 devolves the responsibility of political party spending and thereby gives the Assembly Commission the opportunity to align the rules for all types of candidates at an Assembly election, as well as exempting disability related expenses from the spending limit of political parties. There are currently no elections in the UK where disability related expenses are exempt from the spending limit of political parties. In drafting the legislation the Assembly Commission may want to draw on lessons from the exemption of disability related expenses for non-party campaigners. This wording covers both the costs associated with the disability of a campaigner, and also the recipients of the campaign material, hence the legislation refers to expenses that are reasonably attributable to the disability of an "individual", as opposed to the legislation for candidates which refers to the disability of a "candidate".

Considerations

The Assembly Commission should consider the following when deciding on the final drafting of the legislation:

- The level of transparency there should be for the voters about money spent by candidates and political parties, versus the level of privacy there should be about expenses relating to a campaigner's disability. The transparency rules help to reduce the risks of evasion of the spending rules, but appropriate levels of personal privacy are also an important consideration.
- Whether to use wording that has already been

tested (for example the wording used in legislation for candidates at Scottish Parliament 1 and local government elections 2 , or the exemption for non-party campaigners 3), or whether to create new wording for an exemption, How a ‘disability’ and a ‘reasonable’ expense’ should be defined in legislation. Whether the exemption should explicitly apply to reasonable costs associated with both a campaigner’s or a voter’s disability – or whether it would be preferable to draft separate exemptions relating to costs incurred as a result of a campaigner’s disability, and to costs incurred to make campaign materials or events accessible to voters. For example, it may encourage campaigners to provide accessible campaign leaflets, events, etc. if the spending rules included an explicit exemption and a reporting requirement for the costs of providing accessible campaigns to voters. Access to Elected Office Funds and other measures to promote greater democratic participation by disabled people Whilst creating legal exemptions in law for costs relating to disability is an important step in encouraging greater democratic participation by disabled people, the Assembly Commission and Welsh Government should consider additional measures to promote greater democratic participation by disabled people. For example, “Access to Elected Office Funds” have been established by the UK and Scottish Governments in 2013 and 2016 respectively, and independent bodies were appointed to allocate funding to a number of prospective candidates. The Funds were intended to cover additional costs related to seeking elected office and arising from a prospective candidate’s disability. The Funds were accompanied by other initiatives to provide opportunities for disabled people to get involved in politics. As part of exploring establishing such a Fund in Wales, it would be necessary to consider how financial support towards costs relating to a campaigner’s disability would be covered by the election spending and donation rules, and whether any legal exemptions should be developed, as was the case for the UK and Scottish Government Funds.

Question 20 (iii): The Law Commissions’ recommendations in relation to the conduct and administration of elections. We strongly support the Law Commissions’ recommendations to simplify, rationalise and consolidate electoral law. The Law Commissions’ recommendations have already been supported by the overwhelming majority of electoral stakeholders. A clearer, better organised and more up to date electoral law that is fit for purpose for elections today would benefit all those involved in the electoral process. This includes the Welsh Government and the National Assembly for Wales (who make the relevant legislation), Electoral Registration Officers and Returning Officers (and their staff), candidates, campaigners and voters. From 1 April, legislative competence to implement the Law Commissions’ recommendations in respect of elections to the National Assembly for Wales and local government elections and referendums in Wales passed to the Assembly. In our 2017 local government election report, we called for the Law Commissions’ recommendations to be implemented in Wales when these powers are devolved. Given the benefits of reform, and the risks of continuing to run elections under the existing law, our view is that these recommendations should be implemented as soon as possible. Some of the law Commissions’ recommendations that relate to Assembly elections can only be implemented by primary legislation (i.e. by way of an Act of the Assembly). Other recommendations can be implemented by the Welsh Ministers using secondary legislation. Welsh Ministers have powers to make secondary legislation regarding Assembly elections under section 13 of the Government of Wales Act (GOWA) 2006 (as substituted by section 5 of the Wales Act 2017). In our view this combination of primary and secondary legislation making powers is likely to be sufficient for the Assembly and the Welsh Ministers respectively to implement the Law Commissions’

recommendations that are relevant to Assembly elections, without the need for the enabling provision that is suggested on page 43 of the consultation document. We would be happy to assist with work to implement the Law Commissions' recommendations for Assembly elections. Should the Assembly have flexibility to decide on its internal arrangements? Question 21: Should the Government of Wales Act 2006 be amended as set out in this consultation document, in order to give the Assembly greater flexibility to determine its own working practices and arrangements through its internal procedures rather than in legislation? The Electoral Commission does not hold a view on this matter. What impact might these proposals have? Question 22: Should the Government of Wales Act 2006 be amended as set out in this consultation document, in order to give the Assembly greater flexibility to determine its own working practices and arrangements through its internal procedures rather than in legislation? Question 23: Would any of the proposals in this paper result in i) costs or ii) benefits for you or your organisation which you have not already outlined in your response to this consultation? If so, what would the costs or benefits be?

Please see previous responses. Appendix Appendix Electoral Registration In our Report on the UK Parliamentary general election held on 8 June 2017 we set out our views on reforming the electoral registration process. We said that want to work with the UK, Scottish and Welsh Governments and EROs across the UK to explore options to enable people to make an application to register to vote when using other online public services including, for example, as part of their driving licence or passport application or tax return submission. to improve opportunities for EROs' access to data from other public service providers – particularly where that data is held by national rather than local providers – to enable them to target their activity at new electors or those who have recently moved. to explore how a more integrated approach to electoral registration could feature greater use of direct registration by EROs, or more automatic enrolment processes (for example, direct enrolment of young people alongside issuing their national insurance number). Improving and modernising the regulatory framework for elections As part of our role to keep electoral law under review, the Commission has made a number of recommendations about improving and modernising the regulatory framework for elections. Following the devolution of powers in the Wales Act 2017, we advise that the Assembly Commission should consider the following changes when legislating for future National Assembly for Wales elections. Transparency of online campaigning Recent years have seen rapid increases in the use of digital and online campaign techniques at elections, including increasingly sophisticated uses of data, more personalised and targeted messaging, and the capacity for campaigners to reach more voters at a lower cost than ever before. Political parties and other campaigners can determine how best to use the campaign techniques available to them and the rules on campaigning should not restrict lawful permitted campaigning. However, our priority is to make sure that the rules are followed and appropriate transparency of campaign spending is maintained in order to ensure voters' confidence in the political finance rules. While spending on online campaigning is subject to regulation in the same way as other, more traditional campaign methods, it does present some specific regulatory challenges. We want to make sure that electoral law appropriately reflects changes in campaigning techniques, and we have made several recommendations for improvements following previous elections. We recommend the following improvements to the current rules for campaigning at National Assembly for Wales elections. Imprints on digital material Online campaign material produced by political parties and non-party campaigners should – like its printed equivalent – be required to include an imprint stating who

has published it. This would enable voters to identify who is spending money on trying to influence them at elections. Such a provision was introduced at the Scottish Independence Referendum in 2014, and we would welcome the opportunity to discuss with the Assembly Commission how a similar provision could be introduced for Assembly elections. Reporting of digital and other campaigning Parties, candidates and NPCs at Assembly elections have to report their spending using prescribed categories. Reporting against these categories is not detailed enough to provide a representative picture of what is actually spent on digital campaigning. Voters should be entitled to expect the same transparency about spending by campaigners at elections, regardless of whether that spending relates to online and social media advertising or other more familiar types of political advertising such as leaflets and billboards. The rules should therefore be improved by ensuring that campaigners report more detailed breakdowns of spending, including on different types of advertising such as online and social media promotion. Codes of practice The Electoral Commission is enabled under PPERA to prepare a statutory Code on qualifying expenses for political parties, and under the Representation of the People Act 1983 to make a statutory Code on candidate election expenses. The Code has to be approved by Parliament. We are interested in the possibility of making Codes for future National Assembly for Wales elections. We understand that the power for the Electoral Commission to prepare Codes for the Assembly elections still needs to be clarified as part of the commencement of the Wales Act 2017 and associated transfer of powers. Creating a code for parties and for candidates would allow us to address areas of electoral law where the law currently allows for more than one way of accounting for election spending. The results of the codes will improve transparency and enforceability of the law, and would lead to improved public confidence in the rules on election spending. Spending on staff time for political parties The election spending rules provide insufficient transparency and limits on the money that political parties spend on staffing their election campaigns. The money that is spent on activities such as producing campaign material or market research is regulated. But many of the staffing costs of parties are exempt from the rules, whilst the staffing costs of candidates and NPCs are included. We have recommended that this inconsistency should be addressed in the interests of transparency and ensuring that relevant election spending is controlled by spending limits. Increasing the Commission's regulatory and sanctioning powers Since 2010 we have had investigatory powers and sanctions relating to most of the obligations set out in PPERA for political parties and NPCs. The civil sanctions powers introduced a toolkit of measures that could be used for addressing noncompliance, with criminal prosecution remaining as the sole remedy for the most serious breaches. Our sanctions include compliance notices, fixed monetary penalties of £200 and variable monetary penalties up to a maximum value of £20,000. There is a case for reviewing and significantly increasing the present cap, so that we can impose sanctions proportionate to the amounts of money that major campaigners raise and spend at elections. While the Commission is responsible for enforcing the rules for political parties and non-party campaigners, the police and prosecuting authorities are currently responsible for enforcing the rules for candidates and investigating breaches. We have recommended that our investigative and sanctioning powers should be extended to offences relating to candidate spending and donations at Assembly elections. This change would help ensure compliance with the rules and strengthen voters' trust in the regulatory system. This would also ensure that parties and candidates are subject to the same sanctions if they do not comply with the legislation. Registration of party names and

descriptions for use on ballot papers We continue to recommend that where a candidate represents a political party on a ballot paper, it should be clear to voters which party the candidate represents. The legal provisions for registration of party descriptions present risks of confusion for voters and restrict the participation of political parties. We would welcome the opportunity to work with the Assembly Commission to reform the provisions for party names and descriptions. Transparency and accessibility of candidate spending To improve transparency and accessibility of candidate spending returns, we have previously recommended that Returning Officers should be required to publish spending returns online as well as through the existing methods of public inspection. We highlight the Law Commissions' review of Electoral Law which proposes a method for implementing this change through legislation (in recommendation 12-5). The accessibility of elections There should be no barriers to voting for disabled people and everyone should have a right to vote on their own and in secret. Following the June 2017 UK Parliament election, the Electoral Commission asked disabled voters about their experiences of voting at the election and asked them what they would like to see changed to make it easier for them to register to vote and vote at future elections. Our report on these findings, Elections for Everyone 4 , contained the following recommendations for governments to improve the accessibility of elections based on the experiences of disabled voters: Changes to electoral forms: Many people with learning disabilities said they found electoral forms – including registration forms, poll cards and postal voting packs – to be confusing and full of jargon. Other disabled people said that they found it hard to read forms which were not in large print or where there is black text on a white background. The Commission would support a review of statutory electoral forms to ensure that they are as accessible as possible. Widening the range of people able to assist a disabled voter when they vote in a polling station: Some disabled people told us that the rules relating to who could assist them were too restrictive and could make it hard for them to find someone to assist them. The Commission believes that the Welsh Government should review the legislation to provide disabled people with more choice over who assists them. Greater flexibility and choice over methods of voting: Respondents to our survey suggested that there should be a wider range of voting methods in order to ensure that disabled people are able to choose a way of voting which meets their needs. This would include voting in mobile polling stations in hospitals, nursing homes, care homes or those set up in remote areas. In addition to the recommendations aimed at governments, disabled people also highlighted the following as areas for improvement: Information provided by political parties and candidates: Concerns were raised about the lack of accessible campaigning materials and manifestos, particularly in Easy Read format. Respondents called for political parties to make their accessible manifestos available at the same time as they publish their other manifestos and in good time for people to be able to read them before they come to vote. The role of electoral administrators: Disabled voters told us that there needs to be better awareness and understanding amongst election staff and polling station staff of the support available for people to vote independently. This includes the availability of accessible versions of electoral forms and voting aids, such as a tactile voting template. The role of carers and support workers: Disabled voters told us that there needs to be improved information available in care services to educate support workers on the voting rights of disabled people and how they can be supported to vote. The Commission will continue to work with the Welsh Government, disability organisations and the wider electoral community to improve the accessibility of electoral registration and elections. In consultation with

accessibility groups we will also review the guidance on accessibility that we provide for Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and their staff.

1. The Scottish Parliament (Elections etc.) Order 2015 ■ Back to content at footnote 1

2. The Scottish Local Government Elections Amendment (No.2) Order ■ Back to content at footnote 2

3. Schedule 8A of Political Parties Elections and Referendums Act 2000

■ Back to content at footnote 3

4. The Electoral Commission, Elections for Everyone, November 2017 ■ Back to content at footnote 4

Related content Consultation: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Statutory consultation on guidance for Returning Officers: Assistance with voting for disabled people Draft guidance for Returning Officers: Assistance with voting for disabled voters (statutory consultation)

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Electoral registration: the need for reform You are in the Modernising electoral registration: feasibility studies section Home A modern electoral register
Modernising electoral registration: feasibility studies First published: 25 July 2019
Last updated: 8 June 2021 Summary The UK's electoral registers are the basis on which people may vote in elections and referendums – they are the practical expression of the franchise and therefore fundamental to democratic participation. The accuracy and completeness of electoral registers are central to the health of our electoral system as a whole. Evidence about the accuracy and completeness of the registers helps provide an indication as to the overall effectiveness of the current system. Our study of the December 2015 Great Britain registers (those published at the end of the transition to Individual Electoral Registration) indicated that the local government registers were 91% accurate and 84% complete, with the parliamentary registers being 91% accurate and 85% complete. These figures meant that an estimated eight million people were missing from the electoral registers. Intro Our research confirms the correlation between certain demographics and lower or higher levels of completeness, with age and mobility still found to be the variables with the strongest impact: the young and those more likely to move home are less likely to be registered. Reform of the annual canvass should help Electoral Registration Officers tackle under-registration by enabling better targeting of resources in areas of greatest need, leading to more effective identification and registration of eligible electors.

However, more far-reaching reforms of the electoral registration system are needed to fully address the challenges of achieving accurate and complete registers. The current system of electoral registration The UK's electoral registers are the basis on which people may vote in elections and referendums – they are the practical expression of the franchise and therefore fundamental to democratic participation. Electoral registers are also used elsewhere in the electoral system – for example, they are used to allocate voters to polling stations and to draw electoral boundaries. For these reasons, the accuracy and completeness of electoral registers are central to the health of our electoral system as a whole. There is no national electoral register for the United Kingdom. A total of 371 separate electoral registers are compiled and maintained by Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) 4 in Great Britain, and one register for Northern Ireland is compiled and maintained by the Chief Electoral Officer. A system of Individual Electoral Registration (IER) has operated in Great Britain since 2014, and a similar system has been used in Northern Ireland since 2002. Individuals are responsible for applying to register to vote individually, and must supply identifying information (namely date of birth and National Insurance number) as part of their application. Their identity is verified using this information before their names can be added to the electoral register. An online registration application service was introduced in Great Britain at the same time as IER in 2014 and in Northern Ireland in 2018. Individuals can apply to register online at any point during the year at the register to vote website , or by completing and returning a paper application form. In either case, although data from registration applications are verified against Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) records, each application is determined locally by individual EROs. Each ERO in Great Britain is still required by law to conduct an annual canvass of all properties in their registration area to audit their electoral register entries and to identify individuals who have moved or were not previously registered. EROs must publish a revised register by 1 December each year, with further updates published on the first working day of each month outside of the canvass period and before elections. In 2006

the annual canvass was abolished in Northern Ireland and replaced with a process of continuous registration (although a complete canvass must be conducted in Northern Ireland at least every 10 years, with the next scheduled for 2020). Since 2006, the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland (EONI) necessarily has relied much more on information from other public authorities to maintain the electoral register. The EONI currently receives data from seven data sources for the purposes of identifying eligible citizens and updating information on the register, including the Business Services Organisation (data received quarterly), General Register Office for Northern Ireland (data received weekly) and DWP (data received annually, and quarterly in the case of people turning 16 in the previous quarter). Challenges in electoral registration Annual canvass of electors In recent years it has become increasingly clear that the traditional household canvass in Great Britain has become less efficient and more expensive for EROs to conduct. The Electoral Commission has highlighted the risk of continuing with the current, largely paper-based and costly approach to the canvass at a time when local authority budgets are tight. We have therefore welcomed the UK, Scottish and Welsh Governments' plans to reform the annual canvass, which should give EROs the tools with which to implement a more data-driven, targeted and efficient approach to canvass activity, focusing their efforts increasingly at those properties which have reported a change in composition. Reform of the annual canvass represents an important first step in modernising the electoral registration system, but there is more that should be done to ensure we have an effective, joined-up and year-round registration process. While successful implementation of canvass reform is a clear priority over the short to medium term, the universal embedding of a more data-driven approach offers considerable scope for reforming the system further. This should aim to reflect people's changing expectations in a digital society by building on the increasing use of data across the public and private sectors to the benefit of citizens and the delivery of efficiencies. Accuracy and completeness of the registers We undertake research to measure the quality of the electoral registers on a periodic basis. Evidence about the accuracy and completeness of the registers helps provide an indication of how effective current methods of maintaining the register are. Our study of the December 2015 Great Britain registers (those published at the end of the transition to IER) indicated that the local government registers were 91% accurate and 84% complete, with the parliamentary registers being 91% accurate and 85% complete. These figures meant that an estimated eight million people in Great Britain were missing from the electoral registers. Our research on the electoral registers in Great Britain confirmed the correlation between certain demographics and lower or higher levels of completeness, with age and mobility still found to be the variables with the strongest impact: the young and those more likely to move home were less likely to be registered. Although evidence suggests that the accuracy of the electoral registers in Great Britain has improved significantly since the introduction of IER (91% accurate as at 1 December 2015, an improvement of four percentage points during the transition to IER), we estimated that there were still between 4-4.5 million inaccurate entries on the local government electoral registers. Our research on the electoral register in Northern Ireland indicated that the local government registers were 87% accurate and 79% complete, while the parliamentary registers were 87% accurate and 81% complete. The study found that the main drivers of completeness were, as in Great Britain, age (with young people aged 18-34 significantly less likely to be registered), recent home movement and whether someone rented their home from a private landlord. The evidence suggests that current methods employed to

maintain the registers are not necessarily working as effectively as they could, particularly in relation to capturing traditionally under-registered groups. Canvass reform should help EROs tackle under-registration by enabling targeting of resources in areas of greatest need, leading to more effective identification and registration of eligible electors. However, more far-reaching reforms of the electoral registration system are needed to fully address the challenges of achieving accurate and complete registers. Duplicate registration applications The online registration system currently allows people to submit an application to register even if they are already registered to vote. There is no direct link between the online registration service and the electoral registers, which are each held separately on local databases using a range of different Electoral Management Software (EMS) systems. The different systems cannot currently communicate directly with each other and it is therefore not possible to automatically detect and prevent duplicate applications. Estimates by EROs of the proportion of duplicate applications received ahead of the 2017 UK general election ranged from 30% of the total submitted in some areas to 70% in others. At the 2016 EU referendum, 38% of electoral registration applications made during the campaign were duplicates. EROs have highlighted the significant administrative impact of processing duplicate applications ahead of electoral events. Each individual application must be carefully checked to confirm whether or not they are a duplicate, although some EMS systems used by EROs can help manage this workflow more efficiently. There would be benefit in exploring the extent to which the online registration system could check automatically whether a person was already correctly registered to vote before submitting a new application. Similar facilities are already offered to voters in other comparable democracies, including Australia, New Zealand and the Republic of Ireland. A more joined-up electoral registration system In our report on electoral registration at the 2017 UK Parliamentary general election we argued that it is time for the UK to evolve the current system, which relies solely on electors taking steps to register themselves, to make electoral registration more joined up with other public services. The use of data is already beginning to revolutionise the provision of services across the public and private sectors, to the benefit of citizens and the delivery of efficiencies. There is considerable potential to explore how existing public data could be utilised to support further reform to our voter registration system. In the following chapters we summarise various ways in which the further modernisation of the electoral registration process might be delivered, drawing on the findings of the feasibility studies we conducted over the past year. Related content Reforming electoral law Find out about electoral law and the changes we want to see A modern electoral register Find out about the changes we want to see to the electoral registration system in the UK Transparent digital campaigning Find out about digital campaigning and the changes we want to see of elections Find out about the accessibility of elections and the changes we want to see

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review First published: 22 January 2020 Last updated: 6 February 2020 Meeting
overview Date: Wednesday 30 October 2019 Location: Boothroyd Room, 3 Bunhill Row,
London Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Holmes, Chair Alasdair
Morgan Alastair Ross Anna Carragher Elan Closs Stephens Joan Walley Rob Vincent Sue
Bruce Sarah Chambers Stephen Gilbert Bob Posner, Chief Executive Ailsa Irvine,
Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and
Corporate Services Amanda Kelly, Interim General Counsel Majella La Praik, Head of
Registration and Reporting Niki Nixon, Head of External Communications David Bailey,
Head of Strategic Planning and Performance David Meek, Senior Advisor, Governance Tim
Crawley, Head of Campaigns and Corporate Communications (for item 1) Petra Crees,
Planning, Performance and Governance Manager Phil Thompson, Head of Research (for
items 1 and 2) Tom Hawthorn, Head of Policy (for items 1 and 2) Emma Rose, Senior
Research Officer (for item 2) Helen Lyon, Research Officer (for item 2) Apologies
Craig Westwood, Director, Communications, Policy and Research and Louise Edwards,
Director, Regulation gave their apologies. Consideration of likelihood of unscheduled
electoral events, Queen's Speech, and related matters The Chief Executive discussed
the preparations that staff had undertaken in response to the vote in Parliament on a
proposed UK Parliamentary General Election on 12 December 2019. The Chief Executive
noted the preparation work we had undertaken in advance of this election. We had
moved into operational mode, with daily meetings to ensure that we were able to
deliver our functions in relation to the election. The Chief Executive assured
Commissioners that they would be briefed on any developments throughout the campaign.
The Director of Finance and Corporate Services discussed the financial implications
of the unscheduled event. We had submitted a request to Her Majesty's Treasury for an
advance from the Contingency Fund to deliver our work for the election. We were now
able to proceed on staffing and advertising resources needed. Recruitment activity
had started to fill the contingency roles that were required. The Chief Executive
noted that we had grown our core staffing numbers in the wake of the recent budget,
so there were fewer additional staff required, and they weren't needed with the same
urgency as in previous instances of unscheduled electoral events. The Director noted
that there was essential Information Technology (IT) activity underway, work on which
would continue, but disruptive work would be minimised. The Director explained that
the Commission would be required to submit a new five year corporate plan in the new
Parliament as required by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act
(PPERA), by February 2020. The timing of the election gave a very short period for
forming the plan. We were therefore planning to propose this would be a detailed plan
for year one and a high-level summary for the subsequent four years. We would then
request the opportunity to deliver a new, more considered, corporate plan to the
Speaker's Committee later in 2020. The Board would consider for approval the new
corporate plan in the coming months. The Head of External Communications explained
that we had already briefed our creative and media strategy agencies on our campaign
work, and would finalise the media strategy soon. We had also updated all our voter
content on our new website, which would go live immediately. The Board heard that we
had an agency based in Northern Ireland to run campaigns there, and another agency in

Great Britain. These campaigns would be comparable but different, and would be nation-sensitive. We had had initial conversations with large social media companies about voter registration reminders. We had begun to increase our staffing numbers in the public information and press office teams, and both teams had already started to see an increase in enquiries. The team were providing support for the registration campaign. The research team had set up a contract for our post-poll public opinion survey, and work was underway to capture requirements for other key areas of research such as electoral data, candidates' survey, and Returning Officer feedback. The policy team had started the daily internal monitoring process to identify emerging external issues and assign actions throughout the election period. They would also monitor policy announcements from the major parties to identify any commitments that were relevant to the Commission. The Head of Registration and Reporting advised that regulatory guidance would be published as soon as we had certainty over the regulatory timetable. We would also publish guidance that covered pacts for parties, such as where one party stood aside for another. The Board heard that the rules in this area were complex and could vary depending on specific circumstances. We were due to send a regulatory bulletin out to registered parties and registered non-party campaigners. Due to the short timeframe before close of nominations and statutory requirements for consideration of registration applications, we were unable to decide new registration applications in time for the election. We would make this clear on our website. We would continue to register non-party campaigners right up to polling day. We had planned to use our resources flexibly, and would be undertaking real time regulation. Our resources would focus on parties and campaigners where there was greatest risk of non-compliance. As in 2017, we would provide the Police with information on key dates and links to the approved professional practice website. We would continue to provide reactive general advice about potential offences. The Director of Electoral Administration and Guidance provided an update on the guidance we had issued for Returning Officers for administering the polls. We had confirmed the election timetable, following a technical amendment to the election bill which ensured there was the same registration deadline across the UK. We had also shared supplementary guidance around managing unscheduled polls, with a particular focus on the specific circumstances relating to a poll in close proximity to the end of the canvass period and in the winter. We would issue a survey this Friday to get information on how the polls would be managed, which would help us build up a picture of arrangements across the UK and identify any potential issues which we would then follow up. We would continue to use the Electoral Coordination and Advisory Board structure that worked well in the European Parliamentary Election. Cabinet Office would be involved in this group, which was important as they were responsible for the funding of the elections. The Director also provided information on key dates in the timetable for a UK Parliamentary General Election. The Chair sought greater clarity on how we would regulate electoral pacts. The Head of Registration and Reporting said this would depend on the individual arrangements, and how money was being spent in each pact. We had raised awareness, and asked such campaigners to contact us so that we might provide bespoke advice to them once we understood their circumstances. Where we saw such pacts, we would be proactive in offering them advice. The Board questioned how we identify third-party campaigners, and how we would know if they had crossed the spending threshold. The Head of Registration and Reporting explained that this would be determined by the monitoring we do, and in some cases requests for information on how much they had spent on such campaigns. The Board discussed the implications of one party spending money on another party's candidate, and who needed

to declare such spending. The Chief Executive explained that such spending could fall under two different pieces of legislation (Representation of the People Act and Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act), which had different rules and different levels of allowable spending. The Board sought clarity on the proposed real-time regulatory interventions. The Head of Registration and Reporting explained that this covered a range of different methods, such as directly contacting someone to provide advice and guidance. The Board considered the circumstances under which a stop-notice would be issued by the Chief Executive. We had not had to issue a notice in the past, but the option was available if it was needed. If this was not complied with then it would become a court matter. The Board discussed the risk of regulating digital campaigning. The Board heard that we had put extra resources into this, and these staff would be monitoring online activity and media libraries. The Board was reminded that digital campaign spending was reportable in the same way as other campaign spending. The Board also discussed the activity that would be outside our remit, but would reflect on the Commission, such as a late-in-the-campaign “deep fake” video, which would be circulated before an election and could change the narrative. This would be outside the scope of electoral law. The Board raised concerns about the prospect of foreign interference. The Chief Executive reminded the Board that we had made recommendations on how electoral law should be changed, and none of these changes had yet been implemented. The Chief Executive advised the Board that the Cabinet Office’s Election Cell had been set up and tasked with monitoring security risks around the elections. This was similar to the approach taken by other countries. The Chair advised the Board that we had spoken to the security services about what could be learnt from recent elections around the world. The Electoral Commission had been invited to be a member of this Cell, and we had agreed to take part. This enabled us to assert where the government should not interfere in matters that were more appropriately in our remit. The Election Cell would monitor any foreign interference and deep-fakes, and decide any action to take. The Cell was chaired by the Deputy National Security Adviser. The Board discussed our ability to robustly refute inaccurate accusations and allegations. The Chief Executive noted that our future work could cover digital literacy, including encouraging voters to question sources of information, and the validity of information received. However, we were not in a position to lead in this area at this time. The Chair noted our role as being calm and reassuring. The Board heard that we did proactively rebut falsehoods on social media where possible, but that it could be hard to keep up with the volume. We had the ability to contact the social media company and have the information removed. We had built and maintained good relations with the public policy teams of the major social media companies so we could raise issues with them throughout the campaign period. The Board heard that we were proactive in monitoring developments throughout the election campaign which would assist us in preparing for future policy developments. The Board heard that we had identified the potential impact of a strike at the Royal Mail, and were working to develop an appropriate response. We were in regular contact with the Royal Mail to understand their operating environment. The Board heard that local authorities had been working on securing sufficient polling stations for the General Election over the past few weeks. The Board discussed the political situation in Northern Ireland, including the possibility of an electoral event such as a Northern Ireland-only referendum as part of the Withdrawal Agreement Bill. The Board heard of the preparation that we had undertaken for a potential Assembly Election in early 2020. We had not discussed specific referendums with the government, but there had been general discussions.

These were positive discussions, where we were able to encourage the government to ensure there would be sufficient time to prepare for any referenda. The Board enquired about our approach to involvement in media news programmes about elections. The Board heard that we had been sharing information in areas where there had been discussion on elections, but avoided involvement in political discussions. The Head of External Communications advised that we would shortly be pro-active in media interviews, focused on registration of voters, delivery of the election and compliance with the campaign rules. Discussion on the findings from the winter-tracker research The Head of Research presented the findings of the 2018/19 winter-tracker to the Board. We run this public opinion survey annually, and had been since 2006. The Board heard that the responses were collected online, as had been the case since 2017. The total number of responses was 1,731 from a nationally representative sample. The Board discussed the value of conducting these surveys annually. The Board heard that this information was published and used by the wider electoral community, including academics and think tanks. The three words that respondents used to best describe the Electoral Commission were 'important', 'professional', and 'independent'. The research found that confidence in casting a vote and registering to vote were high. Confidence that elections were well run was more volatile, but this could have been influenced more by external events. Confidence in well-run elections varied by age; with younger people less confident that elections were well run. This would be monitored to determine if it was indicative of a trend.

Satisfaction with the process of voting at elections, the system of registering to vote, and that elections were well run was also variable, and might be influenced by results rather than what was under our control. The research asked those that indicated they were dissatisfied with the system of registration and the process of voting what would improve their satisfaction. Responses included automatic registration and the ability to check online whether a voter was registered or not, and the ability to vote online. The Board questioned whether we should ask all respondents what would improve their voter satisfaction, rather than limiting our data to the respondents who had indicated they were unsatisfied. Some of the areas of concern identified in the research included media bias, low voter turnout at elections, and inadequate regulation of the money political parties spent on their election campaigns. Different age groups had different perceptions of problems, and the research team would continue to monitor these responses to confirm whether these perceptions were linked to particular age groups. The research found low awareness of the way in which parties raised money to pay staff and contest elections, low confidence that spending and funding was transparent, or that voters could easily determine how parties were funded. However, half the respondents believed that authorities would take appropriate action in these areas. Sarah Chambers, Ailsa Irvine, Niki Nixon, and Majella La Praik left the meeting at 12.30pm. Scoping for procurement of external facilitator for 2020 Board effectiveness review The Director of Finance and Corporate Services asked the Board for suggestions on what topics they would like to cover with an external facilitator in February 2020. The Chief Executive suggested assessing the Board's impact or innovation as potential themes for discussion. The Chair suggested a broad look at the Board before assessing specific areas. The Board then discussed what kind of organisation would be best placed to lead this discussion. The Board suggested a more bespoke, tailored service most likely from a smaller organisation would be best. The Board discussed the value in having someone sit in on a Board and Committee meeting to observe how Commissioners interact. This would ensure that the review would cover the way the

Board works through its agenda and monitors the wider organisation, while also reviewing the dynamic of interactions. Some Commissioners said they would pass on the name of organisations they had previously worked with on similar reviews. The Chief Executive explained that the scheduled Board meetings would be affected by the General Election. The Board agreed that the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee meeting scheduled for 4 December 2019 would be moved to 22 January 2020. The meeting finished at 12.45pm.

Report on the May 2022 elections in Wales | Electoral Commission Search
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Delivering the elections Supporting Evidence Summary This report looks at how the May
2022 elections in Wales were run, how voters and campaigners found taking part, and
what lessons can be learned for the future. We have reported separately on elections
held in England , Northern Ireland and Scotland . On 5 May elections took place
across the 22 local authority areas in Wales. Overall, people were confident that
these elections were well-run and were highly satisfied with the process of
registering to vote and voting. Turnout at these elections was lower than at previous
comparable elections, and was lowest for voters under 35 years of age. Further
education and engagement is recommended to support newly enfranchised voters to
understand and participate in Welsh elections. Almost everyone who voted was able to
use their preferred method and found it easy to fill in their ballot paper. s engaged
with voters in a range of ways ahead of the elections and felt able to get their
views across effectively. Voters generally found it easy to access information about
the elections, but this did not necessarily translate to them feeling well-informed
about the elections and who they could vote for. A notable proportion of candidates
told us that they experienced some form of abuse or intimidation. While robust
political debate is part of a healthy democracy, sometimes things go too far and
cross the line into threats, abuse and intimidation. When this happens, it is vital
that action is taken against those found guilty of these criminal offences. We will
work with Welsh Government, the police and the wider electoral community to make sure
we understand what is driving candidate abuse and intimidation, and to ensure this
issue is addressed as a matter of urgency. Finally, the late introduction of
legislation making changes to the rules for running the elections brought significant
additional challenges for Returning Officers and electoral administrators. All
relevant Governments need to consider the impact of legislative changes on the
administration of elections and commit to legislation being clear at least six months
before it is required to be implemented or complied with. Voting at the elections The
experience of voters at the May 2022 elections Most people were confident that the
elections were well-run and the vast majority were satisfied with the process of
registering to vote and voting. Almost all found voting in person at a polling
station easy to do. Most voters were able to vote using their preferred method and
found the ballot paper easy to fill in. Turnout at these elections was lower than at
previous comparable elections, and was lowest amongst voters under 35 years old.
Overview On 5 May 2022, there were local government elections across all 22
authorities in Wales. This was the first time that 16 and 17 year olds and foreign
nationals resident in Wales were able to vote in local elections. Four local
authorities trialled advanced voting at these elections. We evaluated the pilots, and
our report - which was published in August - identified several specific areas to be
addressed if a further roll out of advanced voting is considered for future
elections. Voters continue to have positive views about how elections are run
Satisfaction with the registration and voting process remains high People had high
levels of satisfaction with the process of registering to vote and voting. Our
research shows that: 81% of people across Wales were satisfied with the process of
registering to vote. 95% of people who voted were satisfied with the process of
voting. 71% of people said they were confident that the elections were well-run;
however, 10% were not confident. These figures are broadly consistent with findings

following the most recent comparable elections in 2017 and the 2021 Senedd election. Most voters were able to obtain enough information on the candidates Our research shows that the majority of people could obtain information on the candidates standing for election. We found that: 41% of people said it was fairly easy and 18% said it was very easy to obtain the information they required; 19% said it was fairly difficult and 9% said it was very difficult. 45% of people said that they had enough information about the candidates to make an informed decision when voting, but just over a third (34%) tended to disagree. Turnout at these elections was lower than at previous comparable elections In 2022 there was a decrease of 4% in turnout for the local government elections (38%) compared to 2017 (42%). People were most likely to tell us that they didn't vote because of: lack of time/too busy (18%) not interested/fed up with politics (12%) vote wouldn't have made a difference to the outcome/ doesn't count (11%) medical/health reasons not related to COVID-19 (9%) didn't like the candidates/parties/they didn't represent my views (8%) 94% of people who voted said they were able to use their preferred method of voting (in person, by post or by proxy). This figure was lower amongst in-person voters with a disability or health condition (82%). Most people were confident they knew how to cast their vote Nearly all voters (97%) found the ballot paper easy to fill in, and three in four (74%) found it very easy. However, this figure was lower amongst voters with a disability or health issue (67%). Almost everyone who voted by post said that they knew how to complete and return their postal vote and found the postal voting instructions useful: 97% said it was easy to complete and return their postal vote, compared to 3% saying it was difficult Data from electoral administrators shows that: 3.3% of returned postal votes were rejected. The most common reason for postal votes being rejected was that the personal identifiers (signature and/or date of birth) that voters provided on the postal voting statement did not match those that they had provided previously 0.6% of votes cast were rejected at the count. The most common reason for ballot papers to be rejected at the count was because they were unmarked, with this accounting for almost three-quarters (73%) of all rejected ballot papers Changes to postal voting statements did not reduce the postal vote rejection rate In March 2022, Welsh Government, through the Wales Electoral Coordination Board, requested that a trial group of Returning Officers make a change to the postal voting statement to include an additional "today's date" box. The aim was to reduce the postal vote rejection rate due to errors by an elector in providing their personal identifiers (specifically their date of birth). 13 local authorities (out of 22) made this change to the statement. Rejection rate for postal votes 2017 2022 In the trial areas 2.5% 3.3% Not in the trial areas 3.3% 3.1% In the trial areas where the postal voting statement was modified, there was a 0.8% percentage point increase in the rejection rate compared with the most recent comparable elections in 2017. In non-trial areas, there was a 0.2% percentage point reduction in the rejection rate compared with 2017. There is no pattern evident in the data to indicate why this increase may have occurred. We know from our other research that the majority of people who vote by post do so for most elections, so may have become used to using the unmodified version of the form. Welsh Government should consider the available data carefully in making any decision to legislate for permanent changes to the statement. We will also continue to explore ways of improving the electoral system to meet voters' needs. As part of this, we (working alongside the Wales Electoral Coordination Board) will consider evidence about whether changes to postal voting documents or processes could help to reduce the number of postal ballot packs that are rejected at future elections. Further education and engagement is recommended to

support new voters to understand and participate in Welsh elections. The Local Government and Elections Wales Act 2021 extended the voting franchise for Welsh local government elections to 16 and 17 year olds and qualifying foreign citizens. To ensure new voters understood this change and knew how to register, we worked with the Welsh Government and partners across Wales to encourage registration and educate new voters about their vote. The Welcome to Your Vote campaign ran for a second time. Ahead of the elections we re-ran our 'Welcome to Your Vote' paid voter registration campaign, targeted at newly enfranchised 16-17 year olds, alongside our 'Got 5?' campaign targeting the whole electorate. Alongside the campaigns, we held awareness raising events including 'Welcome to Your Vote Week' and 'Welcome to Your Vote Day' targeted at each of the newly enfranchised groups. During the campaign period, a total of 38,438 people in Wales applied to register to vote, including 3,596 16-17 year olds and 663 qualifying foreign citizens. 1 The most applications were from citizens of Hong Kong, USA, Turkey and the Philippines. 2 We worked with partners to reach under-registered groups. Alongside our work to encourage newly enfranchised groups to register, we worked with partner organisations to explain the democratic process to other groups who are typically under-registered or disengaged. Our partners included the British Deaf Association Wales, Mencap Cymru, Welsh Women's Aid, Llamau and Gypsies and Travellers Wales. Ahead of the elections, the Welsh Government provided funding to local authorities to recruit Electoral Registration Support Officers, to help improve registration rates among newly enfranchised and under-registered groups. We worked closely with these officers via the Wales Electoral Coordination Board communications sub-group and the Welsh Government registration partnership. This additional resource was welcomed by local authorities and was crucial in delivering key areas of work to local target groups, especially young people. The strongly held opinion of those local authorities that we talked to was that this resource should continue to be made available to ensure that the foundations already laid are built upon and this important work can continue.

Participation by young people is less than in other age groups. Our research shows a clear difference in turnout amongst those under the age of 35 compared to all other older age groups. Approximately 1 in 5 (12,338) newly enfranchised 16-17 year olds registered to vote ahead of this election. 3 More focus on political education is needed. Ahead of the elections, we developed our democratic education work to help young people understand how to get involved in the democratic process. We published updates to our resources for educators, all linked to the current Welsh curriculum. We partnered with The Democracy Box and have been working with the project's young co-creators and focus group participants aged 16-26 to gain feedback on our resources for young people. Feedback from young people and partners involved in our education work has consistently shown: a lack of understanding as to how to participate in our democratic process; a lack of motivation to engage in elections due to insufficient knowledge about candidates, parties and the process in general. Our Public Opinion Tracker 2022 research (carried out in February 2022) also found that: 77% of parents think it's important that children learn the basics about politics, voting and democracy at school; more parents think the information their children get around politics, voting and democracy at school is insufficient (31%) than sufficient (22%). The Democracy Box's Youth Voice evaluation report recommended that: "Democratic education should start young and be embedded into the curriculum, but continue as young people go on to do different things in different places in both formal and informal education settings and beyond." The New Curriculum for Wales aims to support learners to become 'ethical, informed citizens who understand and exercise their

human and democratic responsibilities and rights.' There is therefore an opportunity for democratic awareness to be woven consistently through education, rather than being a standalone topic during an election. We will continue to build on the work already delivered by engaging further with young people and educators across Wales, and with the Welsh Government, to identify more themes and topics our resources can address and to provide teacher training. We will work closely with the Welsh Government to ensure our resources can effectively support the delivery of democratic education in schools through the new curriculum. Recommendation 1 Recommendation 1 Welsh Government should consider continuing to provide an additional resource to local authorities to increase registration rates and support participation amongst newly enfranchised and under-registered groups, building upon the work carried out by the Electoral Registration Support Officers. Campaigning at the elections The experience of campaigning at the May 2022 elections s communicated with voters using a number of methods, including printed material, face-to-face and digital campaigning. The majority of candidates felt they were able to get their views across to voters. Traditional campaigning methods (leafletting and canvassing) were the most popular. Transparency around who is responsible for producing online and digital campaign material remains important to voters. Late legislation relating to the nomination forms caused some confusion for candidates, particularly around the declaration of party affiliation. A notable proportion of candidates responding to our survey said that they experienced some form of abuse or intimidation. In most cases this involved verbal or online abuse, and the majority of instances came from members of the public. We also received reports of poor candidate behaviour from the police. We will work with Welsh Government and the wider electoral community to make sure we understand what is driving candidate abuse and intimidation, and to ensure this issue is addressed as a matter of urgency. Overview Over 3000 candidates stood at the local elections in Wales, representing 24 political parties as well as 711 independent candidates. Of the 1,233 seats available, 74 candidates were elected without a contest. s were able to engage with voters but some raised concerns about the continued impact of Covid s engaged with voters in a range of ways ahead of the elections and the majority felt able to get their views across effectively. s used a variety of methods to communicate with voters At the 2022 elections, voters reported receiving information from candidates in a variety of different ways including: leaflet from a candidate (56%) leaflet from another source (individual or organisation supporting a candidate) (27%) door-to-door canvassing (15%), which was higher in rural areas (23%) word of mouth (15%) untargeted social media posts (14%) advert on social media (12%) Candidates responding to our survey told us that more traditional campaigning methods were used at these elections: 83% put leafletting in their top three campaigning methods, with 45% of respondents saying it was their most used method. Door-to-door canvassing was also popular, with 30% saying it was their most common approach a substantial number of respondents used social media in their campaigns, though it was primarily to supplement traditional methods, rather than being the main tool. 55% put social media in their top three methods of campaigning, with 8% saying it was their most used method, compared to 40% saying it was their third most used when asked about digital campaigning, free methods were far more popular than any paid-for digital methods. 56% of respondents put posts on social media, and 25% asked supporters to share their posts. The most popular paid-for digital campaigning was adverts on social media, although this was utilised by just 7% of respondents around a third (30%) of respondents said they did not use any digital campaigning Covid continued to have an impact on campaigning Our research

showed that Covid continued to have some impact on campaigning. According to candidates who responded to our survey, 65% felt that they were able to effectively get their views across to voters, while 9% disagreed. However, the majority of candidates reported that Covid affected their campaigns in some way, specifically: 60% said that Covid impacted their ability to enlist volunteers 'a lot' or 'a little', and over half (55%) said that fewer opportunities for face-to-face campaigning impacted their campaign to some degree 45% said that concerns about their own health impacted their campaign in some way People want to know who is responsible for producing campaign material Our research confirmed that people continue to value transparency about who is responsible for political campaign activity online at elections. Transparency about who is producing election campaign material is important to build trust We found that: three in five adults in Wales say it is important for them to know who has produced the political information they see online almost half of respondents (49%) said they would trust digital campaign material more if they knew who produced it 40% feel that they cannot currently trust the political information that is available online, whereas only 14% said the information online was trustworthy The UK Government has introduced legislation that will require most campaigners to include information to identify themselves as part of their online campaign material. This new digital imprint requirement will help voters understand who is paying to target them online at future elections and referendums. We will monitor any impact of these new requirements on people's levels of confidence in political information online. Recommendation 2 Recommendation 2 We continue to recommend that Welsh Government ensures that a digital imprint regime is in place in advance of the next set of scheduled elections in Wales. Late legislation caused confusion for some candidates standing for election Two issues have been identified where late legislative changes made ahead of these elections affected candidates. Changes to the nomination process caused confusion The first change was a declaration of party affiliation, where candidates must now declare whether they have been a member of another political party within the 12 months leading up to the day on which the notice of election is published. This caused confusion for some candidates, who either failed to complete this section or completed it incorrectly. This issue is covered in further detail in the Delivering the elections section of this report. The second change related to the use of joint descriptions on the ballot paper. The new legislation permitted two parties to use a joint description on the ballot paper which must include the full registered names of both parties involved. The law for Senedd elections and other UK-wide elections is different, and allows for the use of joint descriptions that are registered with the Electoral Commission and which identify the parties involved but don't necessarily include the full registered party names. At the local government elections, these registered joint descriptions were not permitted under the new legislation. Recommendation 3 Recommendation 3 Welsh Government should review the legislation around joint descriptions ahead of the next scheduled local elections, to allow for registered joint descriptions to be used on the ballot paper, in line with the position for Senedd elections and other elections across the UK. We provided support to candidates throughout the election process We attended candidate sessions at party conferences and stand-alone virtual events, to provide candidates and agents with information on the rules for the elections from the nomination process through to the reporting of campaign spending. We also arranged a bespoke virtual session for independent candidates, and attended local authority briefing sessions to ensure that we were able to provide as much support as possible prior to the nomination period and through to polling day. Increasing

opportunities for supporting candidates and parties. We also introduced virtual post-poll advice surgeries for candidates and agents who wanted to ask specific questions. These sessions were popular and the feedback has been positive. Feedback included: almost three quarters of candidates (73%) agreed that the law on election spending and reporting was clear. A fifth (20%) either said they didn't know or neither agreed nor disagreed, and 7% disagreed just under two thirds (64%) agreed that the law on donations and how to check permissibility was clear, compared to 6% who disagreed. 69% found the law about personal expenses clear, while 6% disagreed. Threats, abuse and intimidation continue to be an issue during elections. 3 in 5 candidates who responded to our survey (60%) said that they did not have a problem with threats, abuse or intimidation; however, 40% experienced some kind of problem and 8% experienced a serious problem. Our research found that: of those that said they experienced some kind of abuse, the most common sources were verbal (69%) and online (46%) over two thirds (69%) said the abuse they experienced came from members of the public. Almost 2 in 5 (39%) said they received abuse from other candidates, while 15% received threats or abuse from campaigners or volunteers. 16% witnessed threats or intimidation towards those campaigning on their behalf of those who experienced or witnessed abuse, 15% said they reported it to the police, and almost a fifth who experienced threats or abuse said that their experience would discourage them from standing in the future. We have received information from the four police Single Points of Contact (SPOCs) in Wales regarding issues experienced during the election period. In general, it was reported that some candidate behaviour was poor, particularly on social media. The police have said that: "The behaviour shown by some candidates at the local elections in May was completely unacceptable." The SPOCs have proposed that they, on behalf of the police forces in Wales, create some guidance for candidates and campaigners on expectations around behaviour during an election period, and that this should be provided to all candidates as part of the nomination process. This new guidance would sit alongside the resources already available on the College of Policing website relating to candidates, and the Code of Conduct for campaigners. We will work with the relevant police forces and SPOCs in the development and support of this material. We will work with Welsh Government and the wider electoral community to make sure we understand what is driving candidate abuse and intimidation and to develop effective responses to protect candidates and campaigners at future elections.

Delivering the elections

The experience of electoral administration at the May 2022 elections

The elections were well run across Wales, but issues with the capacity and resilience of elections teams, coupled with the high recent turnover of Returning Officers created challenges. The late introduction of legislation making changes to the rules for running the elections, brought additional challenges for Returning Officers and administrators. This could be avoided if all legislation relating to electoral events is clear at least six months before it is required to be implemented or complied with.

Overview

Local authority elections teams were responsible for managing electoral registration, candidate nominations, absent voting, polling stations and the counting of votes. Our evidence shows that the May 2022 polls were well-run, and voters and campaigners reported high levels of satisfaction and confidence. For Returning Officers and electoral administrators, however, these elections presented significant challenges, with one notable issue being the lack of time available to plan as a result of the late introduction of new legislation. There also remain underlying issues relating to the capacity and resilience of election teams. These challenges were felt most strongly in local authorities where capacity was more limited, or in some cases where there had been a

recent change of Returning Officer or Electoral Services Manager. However, with considerable diligence and effort, together with support from the Wales Electoral Coordination Board, local authorities were able to deliver the polls successfully, albeit under pressurised circumstances. The timing of legislative changes meant Returning Officers lacked the certainty they needed to plan. The Welsh Government undertook a review during the summer of 2021, which resulted in the introduction of legislation providing a new set of rules for the local government elections in May 2022. The Local Elections (Principal Areas) (Wales) Rules 2021 and The Local Elections (Communities) (Wales) Rules 2022 came into force on 14 December 2021. The changes in the rules meant, that for the first time, candidates: did not require the signatures of supporters (apart from one witness) could choose not to have their home address shown on the ballot paper had to disclose previous party membership (within the last 12 months) could submit their nomination electronically Changes were also made to the disqualification criteria which meant that you could stand as a candidate at a local authority election if you were a paid officer or employee of that local authority, but had to resign your post if elected. In March 2022 the new rules were amended by The Local Elections (Miscellaneous and Consequential Amendments) (Wales) Regulations 2022. These amendments were made partially in response to comments received during the short period of consultation on the substantive rules, but also to add provisions that were necessary to support the advance voting pilots in four local authority areas. 4 The late introduction of the new rules created challenges for administrators in preparing for the elections, as well as for us in producing guidance and resources to support them. The key impact was on the nomination forms, which we could not make available until 18 February when the amending legislation had been laid. Electoral administrators who responded to our survey said they found that the introduction of legislation so close to the elections made it difficult for them to plan effectively. Specifically, they reported that the lateness of nomination forms impacted on the availability of guidance and the briefings they could offer for candidates. "Legislation was too late for the local elections. Our candidate briefings started in January and legislation came through late December. How are we supposed to encourage candidates to come forward and stand for election when we don't know the rules and processes well enough in advance particularly given the potential scale of changes that were being proposed?" - Returning Officers need early clarity to be able to deliver significant changes introduced by new legislation Returning Officers need early clarity to be able to deliver significant changes introduced by new legislation Significant reform is expected in Wales over the coming years, which will present new challenges for electoral practitioners in Wales. This includes new policies expected to be introduced by Welsh Government as well as changes arising from the UK Government's Elections Act 2022. Governments need to ensure there is effective planning, management and communication with the electoral community around new legislation and avoid significant delays and short notice changes. Recommendation 4 Recommendation 4 We once again urge Welsh Government to ensure that all legislation relating to electoral events is clear (either by Royal Assent to primary legislation, or by laying secondary legislation for approval by the Senedd) at least six months before it is required to be implemented or complied with. We also call on the UK Government to ensure the legislation is clear at least six months before any changes in the Elections Act 2022 are going to be implemented so that Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and electoral administrators have enough time to prepare. Failure to do this creates significant risks to the delivery of well-run polls and public confidence in elections. It means that electoral administrators are

put under intense pressure, with the successful delivery of elections then relying on their goodwill to work additional hours during the pre-election period, which is not sustainable. It also impacts directly on candidates and agents, who have less time to familiarise themselves with the process. Resilience and capacity in election teams remains a significant challenge In previous reports we have highlighted our concerns about the resilience and capacity of electoral administration structures in Wales. The high turnover of Returning Officers continues and increases the risks to the delivery of well-run polls. The support provided by the Wales Electoral Coordination Board through its events and mentorship scheme was appreciated by new Returning Officers. "The personal support I received from my mentor and other experienced Returning Officers in my region was extremely useful. I also found the support from the Wales Electoral Coordination Board very useful, particularly for making me aware of the critical issues across Wales, and offering solutions." Returning Officers and electoral administrators who responded to our survey said the resilience of electoral services was still an issue, but that these elections were more straightforward to manage compared with the challenge of delivering the Senedd election in 2021. There was an issue in Denbighshire where a printing error was made in the instructions on how to vote, which were sent out to 16,000 postal voters. When the problem was identified, action was taken to contact those voters affected to provide them with the correct instructions. While the number of voters who received incorrect instructions was significant, the number of postal ballot papers re-issued because of the error was small (15). We recognise the pressures faced by Returning Officers and their teams, particularly where officers are new and inexperienced. It is important, however, that voters, candidates and political parties can have confidence in the election process and that the election material they receive is accurate. Following the polls, the Returning Officer in Denbighshire and his team have reviewed how the error had occurred and their processes for dealing with it, and have made a commitment to improving processes in the future. We have also provided advice to the Returning Officer and his staff to support them in improving their proofing processes for future elections. Returning Officers struggled to recruit enough staff to work in the polling station Recruiting staff to work at the elections in some areas was a problem. Two thirds of administrators who responded to our survey said that recruiting enough suitable staff for polling stations was an issue. In certain cases, administrators reported having to recruit Presiding Officers with limited or no experience of the role in order to ensure polling stations could be staffed appropriately. Also, administrators highlighted that a number of people who had previously undertaken the Presiding Officer role had said they were no longer interested in doing so. Administrators also said they believe this will continue to be an issue, limiting the number of experienced people who will be available to work at each set of polls. The Electoral Commission will continue to work with the Wales Electoral Coordination Board and the wider electoral community across the UK to discuss and identify solutions to the staffing, resilience and capacity challenges experienced by Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and their teams as well as in recruiting sufficient polling station staff. Effective planning and support helped Returning Officers to deliver the elections The Wales Electoral Coordination Board played an important role supporting Returning Officers and electoral administrators and promoting consistency As at previous recent elections, the Wales Electoral Coordination Board played an important coordination role for these elections, supporting local authorities by holding all-Wales briefing events for Returning Officers and Electoral Services Managers in the autumn of 2021 and

spring of 2022. The Board, which was established in 2017, operates on a voluntary basis to co-ordinate the planning for all-Wales electoral events and activity related to electoral modernisation and reform. As well as this, the Board supports collaboration between Regional and Local Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and key partners in Wales. Those who responded to our survey said they felt that the Board's role was sometimes confusing and that communication could be improved. If the Board was made statutory, as recommended in our reports on elections in Wales in 2017 and 2021, we believe this would begin to address these concerns.

National agreement was reached on holding the count the day after the poll rather than overnight. The Wales Electoral Coordination Board had early discussions about the timing of the count, and sought consensus from across Wales. In January 2022, with the support of the main political parties, the Board recommended to all Returning Officers in Wales that the count should take place on the day after polling day and not overnight. This recommendation was implemented across Wales. Similar to feedback received at the Senedd election in 2021, we heard from administrators that daytime counting was a success, and was appreciated by candidates and election staff. It made staffing the count easier and was reported to have improved the overall atmosphere.

Recommendation 5

Welsh Government should strengthen the Wales Electoral Coordination Board and place it on a statutory footing, which will enable it to play an enhanced role in the delivery of future elections and electoral reforms in Wales. New nomination forms and electronic submission processes made the process easier for candidates but created administrative challenges. New legislation changed the nomination forms for the local elections, and candidates were also able to submit them to Returning Officers electronically for the first time. Legislative changes to the nomination forms caused confusion and created extra work for administrators. While the nominations process generally ran smoothly and provided candidates with different ways to submit their nomination papers, feedback from electoral administrators highlighted issues with the nomination forms and the electronic process for submission. For example: the processing of electronic nominations forms added to the workload at a point when time is limited many candidates submitted nomination forms electronically very close to the deadline making it difficult for any issues to be addressed. The forms were felt to be repetitive and not straightforward to complete. “Online applications were a double-edge sword. It made it relatively easy for candidates to submit papers at a time of their choosing and removed the need for them to come into the office to hand them in. At a time when we are extremely busy with nominations, minor errors on the form that could be corrected in seconds in the office, could take a couple of days to resolve via emails.” Through the Wales Electoral Coordination Board, work is currently underway to identify improvements to the nominations process that could be introduced for future elections.

Statement of party affiliation

The new rules also made changes to the nomination forms requiring candidates to provide a statement confirming whether they had been a member of any registered political party during the period of 12 months ending with the day when the notice of election was published (defined as ‘the relevant period’) and, if so, to provide details of this membership. At the end of March 2022, administrators expressed to us that there was confusion around the information they needed to transfer from the nomination forms to the statement of persons nominated, which they would then make publicly available. If the legislation had been in place earlier, and more time given to consultation with those affected by the changes, this issue may have been avoided. To address the confusion, we issued supplementary guidance to Returning Officers and Electoral Services Managers advising them to only extract and

include information from the statement of party membership relating to the relevant period. We also advised Returning Officers and Electoral Services Managers to remind candidates and agents, during the informal check stage, of the specific circumstances under which they needed to include details on their statement of party membership. We are working with Welsh Government to minimise the potential for misunderstanding in future and will consider further additions to our guidance to provide additional clarity. Supporting Evidence Welsh local government elections May 2022 Public opinion research tables 2022 Wales Local election electoral data 1. Data provided by UK Government Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. The data on applications by newly-qualified foreign nationals includes applications by those with dual or multiple nationalities, even where one or more of these nationalities would have historically granted the applicant the right to vote in UK elections prior to the extension of the franchise in Wales. It is not possible to discern from the data what proportion of applicants with dual or multiple nationalities are truly ‘newly-qualified’ foreign nationals as the specific nationalities of these applicants are not given. The data also covers applicants from Zimbabwe, the Maldives and Fiji, who are eligible to vote as Commonwealth citizens and therefore are not technically ‘newly-qualified’ foreign nationals. Similarly, the data includes applicants from Hong Kong, irrespective of franchise eligibility. Finally, the data covers online applications only and applicants whose nationality is unrecorded. ■ Back to content at footnote 2 3. Total number of registrations between 1 May 2021 and 14 April 2022. ■ Back to content at footnote 3 4. These were initiated by Welsh Government under its framework for electoral modernisation (<https://gov.wales/written-statement-framework-electoral-reform>). ■ Back to content at footnote 4 Page history First published: 21 September 2022 Last updated: 21 September 2022 Related content Report on the May 2022 local elections in England Read our report on the May 2022 local elections in England Report on the May 2022 Scottish council elections Read our report on the May 2022 Scottish council elections. Report on the May 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election Read our report on the May 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election Looking back at the May 2022 elections Read our latest blog post on looking back at the May 2022 elections.

Commission Board minutes of items of electronic business: 1 June 2020 | Electoral Commission Search Commission Board minutes of items of electronic business: 1 June 2020 You are in the Electoral Commission Board section Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Q4 2019/20 Quarterly Performance Report First review of the Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 Commission Board minutes Commission Board forward plan Commission Board action tracker Chief Executive's Update May 2020 First published: 3 July 2020 Last updated: 21 June 2021 Meeting overview Noted by email: Monday 1 June 2020 Present Present John Holmes, Chair Alasdair Morgan Anna Carragher Elan Closs Stephens Joan Walley Sarah Chambers Stephen Gilbert Sue Bruce Q4 2019/20 Quarterly Performance Report (eEC 42/20) The Board fed back on the report. Issues raised included the deferral of the launch of Political Finance Online. It was also noted that performance standards for Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers only applied in Great Britain. It was noted that Quarterly Performance Reports will be taken as business in Commission Board meetings from now on. Resolved: That the paper be noted. First review of the Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 (eEC 43/20) A query was raised about aspects of underspend, including postponement of the May 2020 elections. A question was raised on the target for checking financial returns. The number of returns checked annually varies and has been higher in years with electoral events. Amendments were requested to include reference to litigation in the foreword, clarity on when the online portal for party finance and registration would come into use, and to update the table of Commissioner terms to add a clarifying footnote. Resolved: That the paper be agreed, subject to these points. Commission Board minutes (eEC 44/20) Commissioners were updated that the National Audit Office were still completing their audit. To date there have been no major issues highlighted with the accounts. Resolved: That the paper be noted. Commission Board forward plan (eEC 45/20) Resolved: That the paper be noted. Commission Board action tracker (eEC 46/20) Resolved: That the paper be noted. Chief Executive's Update May 2020 (eEC 47/20) The Board was reassured that we did not currently foresee a problem keeping on track with Commission work during the coronavirus pandemic, whilst recognising that the Coronavirus impacted members of staff and the Commission as a whole and needed proactive management. It was noted that individual Commissioners were welcome to be involved in developing appropriate strands of the Corporate Plan and meetings would be scheduled and organised. Stakeholder engagement in the plan would seek to involve young adult and Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups. A query was raised about the outcome of long-standing legal challenges. The Chief Executive updated the Board on working arrangements with the Police and the Crown Prosecution Service. It was noted that the Committee for Standards in Public Life would commence review work which was welcomed by the Commission. Resolved: That the paper be noted.

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Meeting summary Date: Wednesday 6 April 2022 Time: 9:30am to 1:00pm Location: In person and by video conference Date of next scheduled meeting: Wednesday 18 May 2022 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Pullinger, Chair Rob Vincent Sue Bruce Alex Attwood Sarah Chambers Elan Closs Stephens Stephen Gilbert Alasdair Morgan Joan Walley Katy Radford In attendance: Shaun McNally, Chief Executive Craig Westwood, Director, Communications, Policy and Research Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Laura McLeod, Head, Regulatory Support Binnie Goh, General Counsel Zena Khan, Senior Adviser, Governance Hannah Kavanagh, Legal Officer [meeting support] Tom Hawthorn, Head, Policy [items 6b and 10] Mel Davidson, Head, Support and Improvement [items 9 and 10] Phil Thompson, Head, Research [items 9 and 10] Andy O'Neill, Head, Electoral Commission, Scotland [item 10] Cahir Hughes, Head, Electoral Commission, Northern Ireland [item 10] Rhydian Thomas, Head, Electoral Commission, Wales [item 10] Apologies and welcome Apologies were received from Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation. Laura McLeod [Head, Regulatory Support] attended and deputised in Louise's absence. The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, in particular Shaun McNally, as he attended his first Commission Board meeting as the new Chief Executive.

Declarations of interest Commissioner Stephen Gilbert had previously declared that he is a member of the select committee on fraud. The Board noted that declarations would be included in the Commissioners Register of interests and published on the Commission's external website in line with the Commissioners Code of Conduct.

Resolved: That the Board noted Commissioner Stephen Gilbert's declaration.

Minutes (EC 100/22) Resolved: That the minutes of the Board meeting on 23 February 2022 be agreed. Commission Board action tracker (EC 101/22) The Board noted updates on ongoing work for the recruitment of the independent adviser to the Board on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, planning for the October Board meeting in Northern Ireland and support for Commissioners on using the functions on Objective Connect, the board paper management system. Resolved: That the Board noted the progress against actions requested by the Board. Forward Plan of Board business 2022/23 (EC 102/22) The Board discussed receiving regular updates on live matters that impact on the range of the Commission's work, such as Equality, Diversity and Inclusion matters, the Elections Bill and the PACAC report on the Commission. This could include providing updates on topical items within the quarterly Chief Executive's update report and scheduling items on Board away days. Resolved: That the Board discussed and reviewed the Forward Plan of Board business for 2022/23, with pending topical items to be scheduled in. Chief Executive updates (Oral) Introduction from the new Chief Executive The Chief Executive, Shaun McNally, addressed the meeting by thanking the Board Chair and the leadership team for welcoming him into the organisation and providing an insight into the functions of the Commission through induction meetings. The Board noted that the Chief Executive's initial focus was on listening, including getting to know the Board, its challenges and focus across the organisation. The Board welcomed the Chief Executive and looked forward to a

collaborative working partnership. Update on current activities including the Elections Bill The Director, Communications, Policy and Research provided an update on activity relating to the Elections Bill. The Board noted that there had been broad engagement with peers during the House of Lords' consideration of the legislation, from overview briefing meetings through to direct advice relating to amendments. It was noted that Commission briefing and advice had been widely welcomed, and its impact visible from the debates. Work on the secondary legislation was now beginning; and under the chair of the Director, Regulation, the Commission has strengthened its internal project governance to prepare for this next, complex phase of work. The Board noted that preparation for implementation was already beginning on those measures the successful implementation of which would require work to begin now to be able to meet expected timetables for commencement. Resolved: That the Board noted the updates. Annual review of governance Commissioner skills and linked Commissioners (EC 103/22) The General Counsel introduced the report, providing data from the survey taken in December 2021, on Commissioners' skills levels, experience and interest in key areas of the Commission. The Board discussed areas of the Commission where Board members could be brought into discussions where there was a need for expertise and where there are critical issues arising. The Board further discussed the nature of having linked commissioners to assist with the oversight of progressing Corporate Plan objectives. It would be important to manage the risk that a particular area was no longer visible in Board meeting discussions, due to a Member having a link to it. The Board welcomed the report and thanked the General Counsel for a useful and necessary paper. Resolved: That the Board noted the results of the skills audit and insights into the Board. Resolved: That the Board agreed Commissioners Joan Walley and Sarah Chambers be Linked Commissioners for public awareness work. We will be developing and implementing the campaign on voter ID and this is where the input of Commissioners would be helpful. (Putting voters first (CP Objective 3)). Resolved: That the Board agreed Commissioners Stephen Gilbert and Alasdair Morgan be Linked Commissioners for the Commission's IT upgrade, which is a significant project being planned and would benefit from Commissioners experiences. (A Modern and sustainable electoral system and Underpinning work (CP Objective 7 & 8)). Corporate Governance Framework (EC 104/22) The General Counsel introduced the report setting out the rules and responsibilities of Commissioners, the Board and Committees, together with its delegations. The Board discussed looking at providing further guidance on conflicts of interest for Commissioners in the next iteration of the Corporate Governance Framework. The General Counsel would liaise with Commissioners to draft a few sentences for more clarity in this area. Resolved: That the Board agreed the amended Corporate Governance Framework. Commission Board effectiveness review 2020/21 (EC 105/22) The General Counsel introduced the report on the outcomes of the Action Plan adopted in January 2021, following an external annual review of board effectiveness conducted in July 2020. Resolved: That the Board noted the completion of the 2020/2021 Action Plan and considered plans for forthcoming reviews of Commission Board effectiveness. Resolved: That the Board agreed Commissioner Rob Vincent would help shape the next reviews for 2022/2023 and 2023/2024. Update on Electoral Registration officer (ERO) performance standards (EC 106/22) The Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance introduced the report and was joined by the Head of Support and Improvement and Head of Research, providing an update on the new performance standards framework for EROs, and how it was operating in practice. The Board discussed the importance of outcomes and being able to understand the impact of EROs' activities and of our work to support and challenge them. Further work to

improve data and how we use it, as well as closer links to our wider research and electoral registration modernisation work, would aim to deliver improvements in these areas. The Board noted that a report on the 2021 registers and performance would be published following the May elections. Resolved: That the Board noted the content and progress made in using the framework to support and challenge EROs with planning for and delivering well-run electoral registration services across Great Britain. Update on elections (Oral) The Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance and Director, Communications, Policy and Research provided a presentation on the following headline topics: Elections taking place across the UK in May 2022 The policy and legislation framework for polls in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales Flexible voting pilot schemes in Wales Delivery of our election support activity on: Guidance, advice and support Party registration Monitoring, research and reporting Public awareness and voter information Election information and polling station finder Web and social media content Media engagement The Board held discussions on the pilot schemes and how these were selected, security and younger voter turnout, as well as on preparations for voting in Tower Hamlets, public health issues and Covid-19 protocols, postal voting and Royal Mail. Resolved: That the Board noted the content within the presentation. Annual declaration of interests (EC 107/22) Resolved: That the Board noted the declaration of interests of Commissioners and the Executive Team and for these to be published on the Commission's website.

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referendums section Home Observing elections and referendums First published: 31 May
2019 Last updated: 8 December 2022 Overview of code of practice The Code of Practice
for accredited electoral observers includes information about: becoming an electoral
observer the standards expected of observers facilitating electoral observers If you
become an accredited electoral observer, you will need to meet the standards set out
in the code. This includes: respecting the laws of the United Kingdom and the
authority of electoral bodies maintaining strict political impartiality at all times
abiding by the requirements of secrecy not obstructing electoral processes providing
appropriate identification (your accredited observer badge) maintaining proper
personal behaviour

You are in the section Home On this page Estimates First published: 30 May 2019

Last updated: 28 September 2023 Overview of what we produce and publish Our financial year starts 1 April, and ends 31 March the following year. We make estimates of what we think we'll spend, then review our spending at the end of the year in a report and a set of accounts. The Speaker's Committee approve our estimates, reports and accounts, before the House of Commons adopt them. Estimates Main Supply Estimate Our Main Supply Estimate, or budget, sets out what we need for the financial year ahead. We present it to the Speaker's Committee at the start of the financial year for approval, before it goes to the House of Commons. Main Supply Estimate for 2023/24 Main Supply Estimate for 2022/23 Main Supply Estimate for 2021/22 Main Supply Estimate for 2020/21 Main Supply Estimate for 2019/20 Vote on Account Our Vote on Account sets out what we need during the gap from the end of one financial year, to when Speaker's Committee approve our Main Supply Estimate. Vote on Account 2023-24 Vote on Account 2022-23 Vote on Account 2021-22 Vote on Account 2020/21 Vote on Account 2019/20 Supplementary Estimate We take a Supplementary Estimate to the Speaker's Committee for approval, if there are changes to the information in our Main Supply Estimate. We also produce correction slips if we need to make changes to our estimates. Supplementary Estimate 2023-2024 correction slip Supplementary Estimate 2021-22 Supplementary Estimate 2020-21 correction slip Supplementary Estimate 2020-21 Supplementary Estimate 2019/20 Supplementary Estimate 2018/19 correction slip Supplementary Estimate 2018/19 Related content Speaker's Committee Find out about the Speaker's Committee and our work Interim corporate plan 2020/21 - 2024/25 Our interim corporate plan was published following the 2019 UK Parliament general election. It has now been replaced by our 2022/23 to 2026/27 plan. Audit and Risk Committee Find out about our Audit Committee, and read the minutes of past meetings Register to vote All you need to register to vote is 5 minutes and your National Insurance number.

Political Finance Online You are in the section Home On this page Download a guide for Political Finance Online First published: 30 May 2019 Last updated: 7 October 2020 Change of deadlines for the over £250,000 spending returns for the 2019 General election The spending returns for parties and campaigners who spent over £250,000 at the 2019 general election were expected in June 2020 but due to Covid-19 not all parties and campaigners were able to deliver returns by that deadline.

Therefore, we are publishing spending returns in batches, so that voters can see the spending information that is ready for release; this means the information on the following pages is not yet complete and is being updated when we publish each batch. Overview of our finance database Visit Political Finance Online We publish all of the information political parties, campaigners and other groups report to us on our finance database. This is so you can see what political parties, campaigners and other groups are doing. The rules for publishing this information are different in Northern Ireland. At the moment, the legislation doesn't allow us to publish any information about donations and loans from before 1 July 2017. On the database, you can look at: donations and loans spending registration and accounts You can also add search criteria and filters, or search by keyword. Download a guide for Political Finance Online PEF Online - getting started Related content Campaign spending: Candidates Find out about how candidates spend money on election campaigns View donations and loans Campaign spending: Political parties and non-party campaigners Find out about campaign spending for political parties and non-party campaigners Annual accounts Find out about political parties' annual accounts

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Introducing digital imprints You are in the Elections Act section Home

Elections Act On this page Changes Our role First published: 5 July 2021 Last

updated: 2 February 2023 Summary From November 2023 campaigners will need to include imprints on their digital political campaign material. Changes Imprints are details

that need to appear on political or election-related material to show who has produced and paid for the material. They need to include the name and address of the promoter and any person on behalf of whom the material is being published. From November 2023, campaigners will be required to include imprints on their digital political campaign material. This means that many types of digital material such as social media adverts, tweets and posts, will require an imprint. This is the same requirement as for physical campaign material, like leaflets and letters. Digital

imprint rules are already in place for some elections and referendums in Scotland. Material requiring an imprint includes: social media posts website material adverts in online newspapers videos images direct messages on Whatsapp It is also required on audio material such as adverts in podcasts or streams. The rules will apply all year round, not just in the run up to an election, and will apply to anyone paying to place political adverts online. An ordinary member of the public will not need to include an imprint on any organic digital material. Our role We are currently responsible for enforcing the law for imprints on printed election material for parties and non-party campaigners. Candidates are also required to add imprints to printed election material, and these laws are enforced by the police. We will now have a similar responsibility for imprints on digital material. We will also produce, for approval by Parliament, statutory guidance for parties and campaigners on the digital imprints requirements. This is for parties, non-party campaigners,

candidates, future candidates, elected officeholders and recall petition campaigners.

You can read the draft version of our statutory guidance and our response to the consultation . Related content Elections Act about the UK Government's Elections Act and what it means for voting and campaigning About the Elections Act about the

Elections Bill, including the measures it contains and which elections it applies to.

Changes to overseas voting about proposals to remove the 15 year limit on voting rights for British citizens living overseas. Preventing candidate intimidation Read about the proposals for a new penalty for intimidating candidates, campaigners or elected representatives.

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[Donations reported late by party](#) First published: 16 July 2019 Last updated: 16 May
2023 Summary box Political parties must submit information to us every quarter showing the donations they have accepted during each reporting period. Unless a donation is part of an aggregation, it must be reported in the quarter in which it was accepted. Data in this section [Chart: Donations reported late by party](#) Reporting donations We publish information about donations to political parties four times a year, usually at the beginning of: March June September December This information includes: the political party who accepted the donation the value of the donation who made the donation, including their name and status (such as individual or company), or if it was public funding [Chart: Donations reported late by party](#) This chart shows which parties reported donations late in the last quarter and the total value of these donations. [Chart: Donations reported late by party](#) Related content [Registers of unincorporated associations](#) Download and view the registers of unincorporated associations [Donations accepted](#) View data about donations accepted by parties and campaigners [Public funds](#) View data about public funds received by parties Register to vote All you need to register to vote is 5 minutes and your National Insurance number.

Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal two | Electoral Commission Search

Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal two You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 On this page Key achievements Performance measures First published: 30 June 2020 Last updated: 30 August 2020 Goal two To ensure an increasingly trusted and transparent system of regulation in political finance, overseeing compliance, promoting understanding amongst those regulated and proactively pursuing breaches This goal captures our regulatory role. This work focuses on two areas at the heart of a healthy democracy: ensuring transparency and good regulation. Key achievements To ensure transparency, we: published annual accounts from registered parties, information about donations and loans, and details of campaign spending, which parties and others are required to report to us registered political parties and other campaigners and published details in online registers continued reviewing party descriptions, to ensure that voters can identify the party for which candidates are standing continued developing a new online portal for party registration and finance, which we aim to launch in 2021 and will improve how parties and campaigners register and deliver financial returns scrutinised advertising transparency proposals from social media companies including Facebook, Google, Twitter and Snapchat, to ensure they provided improved transparency about digital campaign activity at elections in 2019 To support good regulation we: provided advice and guidance to support parties, candidates and campaigners to comply with the rules took action and imposed sanctions when the political finance rules were broken defended legal challenges to our enforcement decisions developed new codes of practice for parties and candidates continued pressing for law changes to strengthen our investigatory and sanctioning powers – including increasing the maximum fine we are able to impose for breaches of PPERA from the current level of £20,000 worked with the National Assembly for Wales to review their Standing Orders and ensure they have a robust plan to develop new rules and guidance for the elections in 2021 and to bring dual reporting to an end

Performance measures Measures Performance We publish routine financial returns from parties and campaigners, including statements of accounts, within 30 working days of receiving them (target 100%) 100% Achieved We check a minimum of 25% of all financial returns for accuracy and compliance each year 57.7% 1 Achieved We publish 100% of guidance products on time with no substantive errors 100% Achieved We provide accurate advice within five to 20 days of receipt of the request, depending on the complexity of the advice (target 90%) 94% Achieved We notify applicants of the outcome of their registration applications within 30 days of a complete application 75% of the time 86.2% Achieved We conduct timely and proportionate investigations of which 90% are completed within 180 days 84.3% 2 Achieved We issue 90% of final notices setting out our sanctions within 21 days of the deadline for representations. We publish the outcome of all our investigations 87.5% 3 Achieved We make timely regulatory recommendations that reflect the principles guiding our approach to effective regulatory framework 100% Achieved Ensuring transparency Throughout the year, we focussed on delivering the responsibilities we are accountable for to the UK's parliaments. We maintained the registers of political parties, ensuring only parties meeting the legal tests are on the register, and we continued reviewing descriptions to help voters identify the party for which candidates are standing. We faced two instances of campaigners seeking, via the court, to have their spending returns removed from our online database. One campaigner withdrew their court application and the court refused the other application. Good regulation Leading up to the UK Parliamentary general election, we registered a record number of non-party

campaigners. We also developed our approach to campaign monitoring to be more proactive and quickly identify and intervene when issues came up. This stopped them from escalating and prevented campaigners from breaking the rules. We will continue to focus on this. We continued to use our investigation and sanctioning powers to identify and respond to non-compliance and deter future non-compliance. We imposed fines of £25k and £40k respectively, on two registered parties for multiple failures. The courts heard three appeals against penalties in 2019. One was withdrawn, one refused and one upheld. This brings the total number of appeals against sanctions we have imposed to five, of which the courts have upheld one. The appeals have provided helpful case law and we have learned from each case to improve our enforcement approach. For a number of years we have recommended that the UK's governments should change laws to strengthen our investigatory and sanctioning powers. This year we saw such changes in Scotland, where the Scottish Parliament, through the Referendums (Scotland) Act, increased the level of fines available to us (from £20,000 to £500,000); gave us wider powers to obtain information outside of formal investigations; and established rules to require imprints on digital campaign material. Report navigation links Previous Next Performance analysis: Goal one Performance analysis: Goal three 1. The number of returns we check annually varies and is higher in years with electoral events, when we receive more and larger financial returns. ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. Where we missed the deadline, the cases were complex and required significant legal advice or evidential analysis. The unscheduled UK Parliamentary general election also required us to re-allocate resource. ■ Back to content at footnote 2 3. Our need to prioritise monitoring and interventions work during the campaign period for the unscheduled UK Parliamentary general election temporarily drew resources away from sanctions decisions. ■ Back to content at footnote 3 Related content Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 Read our annual report and accounts for 2019/20, including key figures about the year at a glance. Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal one This is goal one of the performance analysis section of our annual report and accounts Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal three This is goal three of the performance analysis section of our annual report and accounts Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal four This is goal four of the performance analysis section of our annual report and accounts

Changes to the voting system for mayoral and PCC elections | Electoral Commission

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elections You are in the Elections Act section Home Elections Act On this page

Changes Our role First published: 21 March 2022 Last updated: 2 February 2023 Summary

From May 2023, the voting system at mayoral elections in England and Police and Crime Commissioner elections in England and Wales use the first past the post system.

Changes Mayoral elections and Police and Crime Commissioner elections previously used the Supplementary Vote (SV) system, where voters could choose a first and second choice vote. Now, voters will choose a single candidate on the ballot paper. This is the same system as UK Parliamentary elections and local elections in England. Our role To support electoral administrators, we will update our guidance on these elections to reflect the change to the voting system. We will consider what activity is needed to raise awareness of the change in voting system and ensure voters and the electoral community understand it. It will be particularly important to avoid voter confusion if multiple elections are taking place using different voting systems.

Related content Elections Act about the UK Government's Elections Act and what it means for voting and campaigning About the Elections Act about the Elections Bill, including the measures it contains and which elections it applies to. Register to vote All you need to register to vote is 5 minutes and your National Insurance number. Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation

Report: How the 2016 GLA elections were run | Electoral Commission Search Report: How the 2016 GLA elections were run You are in the Greater London Authority (GLA) elections section Home Greater London Authority (GLA) elections On this page About the elections Registration and turnout The voter experience The administration of the poll Standing for election and campaigning Looking ahead Recommendations: Legislation Recommendations: Communication Recommendations: Access for accredited observers Recommendations: Advisor with recent elections experience on GLRO's team Recommendations: E-counting Recommendations: Candidates Recommendations: Campaigning Download our full report First published: 20 June 2019 Last updated: 9 August 2019 About the elections On 5 May 2016 elections were held in London to elect the Mayor of London, 14 Constituency members and 11 London-wide Members of the London Assembly. There were also Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) elections held across 40 police force areas in England and Wales (but not in London or Greater Manchester) and also elections to local authorities across parts of England, and mayoral elections in Bristol. This report looks specifically at the administration of the Greater London Authority (GLA) elections, which included the contests for the Mayor of London and London Assembly. Registration and turnout A total of 5.74 million people were registered to vote in the GLA elections on 5 May 2016. Overall turnout at the elections, including votes rejected at the count, was 46.1% This was an increase of 7.3 percentage points from the 2012 elections, when turnout was 38.8%. 1 858,634 voters - 15% of the electorate - were issued with postal ballot papers for these elections. This is 0.9 percentage points higher than the 14.1% of the electorate issued with postal ballot papers in 2012. Turnout amongst postal voters was 68.4%, broadly similar to postal voter turnout in 2012, and equivalent to 22.1% of the total votes cast. 2.60 million valid votes were cast at the elections. 1.9% (49,871) of ballot papers were rejected at the count, which was similar to the percentage of ballot papers rejected in 2012. A total of 22,728 returned postal ballot papers (3.7%) were rejected or not included in the count, a decrease on the 4.6% recorded in 2012. The voter experience Overall, the evidence from our public opinion research suggests that the large majority of voters were confident that the election was well-run and were satisfied with the process of registering to vote and the process of voting, regardless of how they cast their vote whether in person at a polling station or by post. Voters felt well informed about the GLA elections with 82% of those who took part in our research indicating that they knew 'a fair amount' or a 'great deal' about the election, a 10 percentage point improvement on views expressed in 2012. Voters also found it easy to access information on casting their vote and information about candidates standing. The administration of the poll Overall, our view is that the GLA elections were well run. People were satisfied with the process of registering to vote and with the process of voting, regardless of how they cast their vote, whether in person at a polling station or by post. However, serious problems in Barnet, where incomplete registers of electors were provided to polling stations, and issues at the results collation centre at City Hall, where software problems affected the collation of vote totals for the London Mayoral candidates, greatly overshadowed the good work undertaken in planning and delivering the poll. Standing for election and campaigning Our post-election survey of candidates suggests that the majority of candidates (66%) agree that the rules on spending and donations are clear. However, access to information about London Mayoral candidates' and London Assembly candidates' spending and donations could be improved by making candidates' election returns available for viewing online. Looking ahead Any decision taken about the combination of polls in May 2020 must be informed by extensive consultation between

relevant Government departments, elected bodies, political parties, administrators and voters to ensure that the interests of voters are put first. For the GLA elections, specific consideration must be given to the added complications introduced by the potential combination of electronic and manual counting. Recommendations: Legislation Recommendation 1: The role of Borough Returning Officer be recognised in the legal framework for future GLA elections The roles of the Greater London Returning Officer (GLRO) and Constituency Returning Officer (CRO) are defined in the statutory framework. Borough Returning Officers (BROs) in each London Borough and the City of London supported the GLRO and CROs in running certain functions of the elections, including the administration of polling stations within each local authority area, and the issue and receipt of postal votes. However, the role of BRO is not recognised in legislation and there have been occasions at previous elections where communications between CROs and BROs have not been as straightforward as they should be, with some BROs calling for clarification of the roles. The Commission recommended (in response to the draft GLA elections rules in August 2007 and again following the 2008 and 2012 elections) that the role of BRO be recognised in the legal framework for the GLA elections in 2016. However, the government did not amend the rules to reflect this. Although this lack of recognition did not seem to cause significant problems at the 2016 elections, the Commission again recommends that the role of BRO be recognised in the legal framework for future GLA elections.

Recommendation 2: Providing an online registration status check Providing a way for electors to check their registration status at the beginning of the online registration application process would reduce the action required by voters to keep their register entry up to date, and would also reduce the impact on EROs of processing duplicate applications. The UK Government should develop an online service to allow people to check whether they are already correctly registered to vote before they complete a new application to register . Any such service would need to carefully manage and protect voters' personal information. Recommendation 3: Ensuring legislation is clear in good time before elections We continue to recommend that Governments with legislative competence over elections within the UK should manage the development and approval of legislation so that it is clear (either by Royal Assent to primary legislation, or by laying secondary legislation for approval by Parliament) at least six months before it is required to be implemented or complied with by campaigners or electoral administrators. All governments should normally be able to plan to ensure that legislation for elections is clear at least six months before it is required to be implemented or complied with. If a government has not been able to ensure that legislation is clear by this point, it should table a formal statement in the relevant legislature explaining why it has not, and setting out its assessment of the likely impact of the late confirmation of legislation for voters, campaigners and electoral administrators. Recommendations: Communication Recommendation 4: Improved communication with those attending the count centres through announcements and better use of progress screens Our observation at the count centres was that there was little or no use of announcements to explain to attendees what was happening. Outside of the formal announcements made at the beginning and end of the process, there was also limited interaction between CROs and their staff with those observing. The screens used to show progress scrolled too quickly between the different contests and it would have been better to have separate screens for each contest. The GLRO should ensure that there are co-ordinated communication arrangements at the count venues to supplement the individual constituency count arrangements. Use of display screens should be reviewed, particularly scrolling

speeds, to ensure that data is communicated in a way that allows candidates, agents and observers to fully understand the progress of the count. Recommendation 5: More timely and regular communication with those attending the count collation hub Due to a problem with the software used for e-counting, a discrepancy was discovered between the figures allocated to Mayoral candidates and the total number of ballot papers counted (and rejected) in each of the 14 constituencies. This error was first observed at approximately 4.30pm although there was no communication from the GLRO to advise the candidates, agents, observers and media that there was a problem, or of the effect the problem might have on any expected result declaration time, until 9.45pm. The GLRO should ensure that communication with candidates, agents and observers about the progress of the count collation process is clear and transparent, and provides proper and regular assurance at all times throughout the proceedings.

Recommendations: Access for accredited observers Recommendation 6: Ensure access to all areas of the count collation hub for Electoral Commission representatives and improved access for accredited observers Electoral Commission representatives at the count collation hub were initially denied access to areas where key decisions were being made following the discovery of a discrepancy between the figures allocated to Mayoral candidates and the total number of ballot papers counted (and rejected) in each of the 14 constituencies. While we had some oversight of the count collation hub where data from the count venues was being received, we were initially prevented from gaining access to the area where the GLRO and his team of advisors were situated. Although access was later granted – and the Commission representatives subsequently played a key role in supporting the GLRO through to the declaration of the result – there was a risk to the transparency of the election process. The GLRO must ensure that the Electoral Commission representatives are never denied access to any part of the count or any part of the electoral process, including access to the GLRO and his advisors. Consideration should also be given to providing candidates, agents and accredited observers better access to observe proceedings at the count collation hub.

Recommendations: Advisor with recent elections experience on GLRO's team

Recommendation 7: The GLRO should make arrangements to have an advisor with recent elections experience on his team The GLA core management team, including the GLRO, suffered by not having an experienced senior elections practitioner as part of the team at the count hub. This became especially apparent when the problem with the e-counting software arose. While there was expert legal advice available, the focus of deliberations and decision making of the core team was led almost exclusively by legal considerations to the exclusion of proper count management practice, and in particular to the communication of information to candidates and agents. The GLRO should ensure that he has, as a member of his core team, someone at a senior level who has recent and practical experience of delivering election counts and who can provide balanced practical advice and an overview of the management of the count process and the expectations of candidates, agents and observers. Recommendations:

E-counting Recommendation 8: Further consideration should be given to the effectiveness, value for money and risks of using e-counting systems This is the fifth set of Mayor of London and London Assembly elections that have used an e-counting system. In our report on the 2012 elections, we recommended that the cost benefit analysis that was carried out prior to letting the contract for e-counting in 2012 should be updated and published which was done. We again recommend that this analysis which should include a robust and detailed consideration of counting by hand is updated and published for comment by summer 2017. Given that elections currently scheduled for 2020 would entail a mixture of manual and electronic counting the

Commission would welcome the opportunity to contribute to the analysis. The GLA's Election Review Panel is conducting a review of all aspects of the Mayor of London and London Assembly elections and for the e-counting part of this review we recommend that consideration is given to the risks arising from the technical and specialist nature of e-counting systems by asking the following questions: How much of the technical detail of the e-counting system does the GLRO personally need to understand? Who else in the GLRO's direct team is responsible for understanding and managing the operation of the e-counting system? How much control did the GLRO actually have over the e-counting system? How comfortable would the GLRO be with a similar degree of understanding and control for future elections? What was the overall risk assessment made by the GLRO about using the ecounting system? Was this risk anticipated, were the controls appropriate and applied effectively? Has this changed the GLRO's overall risk assessment about the use of e-counting in future elections? Recommendations: Candidates Recommendation 9: To remove all requirements in electoral law for candidates to pay a deposit before their names are allowed to be included on the ballot paper Our evidence continues to suggest that deposits represent a significant financial hurdle for independent candidates and candidates from smaller parties and the ability to pay a deposit is not a relevant or appropriate criterion for determining access to the ballot paper. We continue to recommend that there should be no deposit requirement for candidates or political parties at all UK elections, as we consider that the ability to pay a deposit is not a relevant or appropriate criterion for determining access to the ballot paper.

Recommendation 10: Access to the electoral register for Independent Candidates We continue to recommend that the law is changed to allow all candidates to get earlier access to the register for electoral purposes. This would particularly enable independent candidates to campaign on a more equal basis with candidates from political parties. Recommendations: Campaigning Recommendation 11: Publication of candidate spending returns To improve transparency and accessibility of candidate spending returns, we have previously recommended that Returning Officers should be required to publish spending returns online as well as through the existing methods of public inspection. We recommend that spending returns of London Mayoral candidates and London Assembly candidates should be published online in future. We support recommendation 12-5 of the Law Commissions' review of Electoral Law which proposes a method for implementing this change through legislation. 2 Recommendation 12: Registration of party names and descriptions for use on ballot papers We continue to recommend that where a candidate represents a political party on a ballot paper, it should be clear to voters which party the candidate represents. The legal provisions for registration of party descriptions present risks of confusion for voters and restrict the participation of political parties. The Governments of the UK should work with the Electoral Commission to reform the provisions on party descriptions. Recommendation 13: Improve transparency of non-party campaign spending at London Mayoral and London Assembly contests We recommend that the UK Government improve the rules on non-party campaign spending at London Mayoral and London Assembly contests before the next elections expected in 2020, including introducing greater transparency about who is campaigning and how much they are spending. Recommendations: Combination of polls in 2020 Recommendation 14: Analysis and consultation on the risks of holding polls on the same day The next Mayor of London and London Assembly elections are scheduled to take place on the same day as the next scheduled UK Parliamentary General Election. Elsewhere in England, there are scheduled PCC elections and local government elections, which include local council

elections, directly elected local authority mayoral elections and combined authority mayoral elections. In Wales, there are PCC elections scheduled. In our view, this potential combination of polls presents significant risks which need to be mitigated in order to give voters, campaigners and Returning Officers confidence that the elections can be well-run. In London, specifically: There will be two sets of elections, incorporating three methods of voting and four ballot papers: the UK Parliamentary contest uses the 'first-past-the-post' system; the Mayor of London contest uses the supplementary vote system; the Constituency London Assembly Member contest uses the 'first-past-the-post' system; and the London-wide Assembly Member contest uses the closed list system which is a form of proportional representation. Clear and tailored information for voters on how to cast their vote will be essential to minimise confusion - for example, if the Mayoral and London Assembly ballot papers are counted electronically voters would be advised not to fold the ballot papers, while for the UKPGE the papers should be folded. The voting areas for the two sets of elections are different: In London, the Parliamentary elections are currently based on 73 Westminster constituencies (with draft proposals to reduce this number to 68 in 2018) which in some cases are and will be non-coterminous with the 33 London Boroughs. The Mayor of London and London Assembly elections are organised across 14 GLA constituencies (which themselves are combinations of London Boroughs). These differences may cause voter confusion and will also present challenges for political parties campaigning in both sets of elections and for those administering them. The timing of the counts and the counting system used in each election will need to be considered alongside expected levels of voter turnout: If ecounting is used in 2020 for the Mayor of London and London Assembly elections with a manual count for the UK Parliamentary election, consideration will need to be given to logistics of each count and the timing, particularly in the event of high turnout. Although counting can commence for the UK Parliamentary election before verification for all elections is completed , the verification of the ballot papers for all four contests will need to be completed before the UK Parliamentary election result can be declared. It is difficult to envisage how a combination of voting enabling manual and electronic counting for the respective polls could be delivered to allow an e-counting process which incorporates verification and counting simultaneously and enable the UK Parliamentary votes to be verified and counted manually on the night of the poll. It is a requirement at a UK Parliamentary general election for the Returning Officer to take reasonable steps to begin counting the votes within four hours of the close of poll. The UK Government should immediately begin the necessary analysis and consultation on the risks of holding these polls on the same day, including giving consideration to the potential for changing the date of elections currently scheduled to be held in May 2020, so that they do not coincide with the next scheduled UK Parliamentary general election which will be held on Thursday 7 May 2020. The Government should publish its assessment and any proposals for change by September 2017, to allow sufficient time to make any changes to legislation which might be required, and to allow Returning Officers, suppliers, campaigners and the Commission time to prepare. Any change to the date of scheduled elections would be a significant proposal, and must be informed by appropriate consultation with political parties, the Electoral Commission, relevant Government departments, elected bodies, administrators and voters themselves to ensure that the interests of voters are put first. Download our full report 2016 London election report 1. Turnout, valid votes cast and rejected ballot paper figures are for mayoral first preference votes. ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. Law Commissions' Review of Electoral Law, Recommendation

12-3, page 161 http://www.lawcom.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/electoral_law_interim_report.pdf ■ Back to content at footnote 2 Related content Results and turnout at the 2016 Greater London Authority elections View the results and turnout at the 2016 Greater London Authority elections Past elections and referendums Read our reports and view data about past elections and referendums Types of elections about the types of elections in the UK. Report: Voting in 2017 Read our report about voting at the general election in 2017

Impact on security | Electoral Commission Search Impact on security

You are in the May 2018 voter identification pilot schemes section Home Our research Voter identification pilots May 2018 voter identification pilot schemes First published: 24 July 2019 Last updated: 24 July 2019 Impact on security There is very limited evidence from the May 2018 pilot schemes about whether the identification requirement had a direct impact on the security of election procedures. In particular, it is not possible to evaluate whether the requirements actually prevented attempts to commit electoral fraud at elections. Overall findings from the pilot schemes In the areas where the pilot schemes took place, the local police forces have told us that there were no complaints about electoral fraud at polling stations for the May 2018 elections. However, it is not possible to assess whether the identification requirement prevented any actual attempts to commit impersonation fraud. In other areas where elections took place in May 2018 there were three complaints about electoral fraud taking place at polling stations. The police forces for those areas told us that they have investigated two of these cases but they did not need to take any further action. They are still investigating the other case. There is no direct evidence to suggest that this difference was because of the identification requirements in areas where pilot schemes took place. However, the pilot scheme requirements did introduce new identification checks where there have previously been no checks. Because of this, we can conclude that the pilot scheme requirements are likely to have had some positive impact on reducing the potential for electoral fraud by impersonation at polling stations. We cannot make any assessment from the available data about the nature or extent of this impact, however. Nor can we make any assessment from the data from these pilot schemes about whether there was any difference in the impact on security between the different requirements in each of the pilot scheme areas. Beyond the pilots: the impact on security at future elections Further pilot schemes may not help to provide more robust evidence about the impact of an identification requirement on the security of future elections. This is because it is not possible to evaluate whether the requirements actually prevented attempts to commit electoral fraud at elections. However, more work should be carried out before any further pilot schemes to further assess the relative security of different approaches to checking the identity of voters. It would be particularly useful to gather more evidence on the levels of assurance about someone's identity provided by different types of documents. For example, the security of different types of identification documents needs to be balanced against the availability of those forms of identification. This balance should be considered further before future pilot schemes and any decision to implement a voter identification requirement in Great Britain. Related content Register to vote All you need to register to vote is 5 minutes and your National Insurance number. Our Commissioners Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run

Scottish Parliament Political Parties Panel minutes: 24 November 2020 | Electoral Commission Search Scottish Parliament Political Parties

Panel minutes: 24 November 2020 You are in the Party panels section Home How we make decisions Party panels On this page Who was at the meeting Welcome and introductions Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising Preparations for the Scottish Parliamentary Election 2021 Public attitudes to voting in the context of Covid-19 Observations from Council by-elections Guidance update Scottish Government update Scotland Office/Cabinet Office update Scottish Boundary Commissions update Royal Mail update EMB update Electoral Commission update Dates of future meetings First published: 26 February 2021 Last updated: 21 May 2021 Tuesday 24 November 2020 Tuesday 24 November 2020 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Michael Sharpe, Scottish Labour Party (Chair) Gordon Dickson, Scottish Green Party John Hardy, Scottish Green Party Matt Edmonds, Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party Scott Martin, Scottish National Party Paul Moat, Scottish Liberal Democrats Isabel Drummond-Murray, Scottish Boundary Commissions Maria McCann, Scottish Government Chris Highcock, Electoral Management Board for Scotland Pete Wildman, Scottish Assessors Association (Char of Electoral Registration Committee Eleanor Tankard, Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland Rachel Winham, Royal Mail Scott Forsyth, Royal Mail The Electoral Commission:- Dame Susan Bruce, Electoral Commissioner, Scotland Alasdair Morgan, Electoral Commissioner Andy O'Neill, Head of Electoral commission, Scotland Sarah Mackie, Manager, Electoral Commission, Scotland Martin McKeown, Senior Adviser, Elections and s, Scotland Catherine Heggie, Partnerships and Information Officer Clara Cole, Head of Regulatory Support Lindsey Hamilton, Business Support Officer (Minutes) Apologies Malcolm Burr, Convener Electoral Management Board for Scotland and Iain Hockenhull, Scottish Government Welcome and introductions Michael Sharpe (MS) noted apologies and welcomed those present. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising The minutes of the previous meeting held on 29 September 2020 were approved subject to the following corrections suggested by Scott Martin: Paragraph 3.6 was amended to reflect that Martin McKeown confirmed the guidance would be in the existing .pdf style. A reference was added to reflect that Andy O'Neill had confirmed that the Electoral Commission had never refused a S.10 request to give advice to a government. Preparations for the Scottish Parliamentary Election 2021 Scottish General Election (Coronavirus) Bill and other legislation relating to Scottish Parliamentary election 2021 Maria McCann (MMcC) reported on progress of the Scottish General Election (Coronavirus) Bill and the Scottish Parliament Election Amendment Order. She summarised the contents of the draft Bill and advised that the Scottish Parliament Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee had held an evidence session on the draft Bill on 19 November. The Electoral Management Board (EMB), Association for s and the Electoral Commission (EC) had given evidence. The PPP asked questions in relation to the main provisions contained within the draft Bill and their impact on preparations for the May polls. Scott Martin (SM) noted the impact of moving the deadline for absent voting applications and the importance of ensuring that administrators were resourced to handle applications. He questioned the impact of moving the dissolution date for party spending limits in the long and short campaigns and wondered if it would be possible to change the date to allow an additional week in the long campaign. Public attitudes to voting in the context of Covid-19 Sarah Mackie (SMA) advised that the Commission had undertaken further research of public attitudes to voting under Covid-19. This followed similar research undertaken in August. The results would be shared with the PPP in the next week but she confirmed that the research had largely

confirmed the findings of the earlier research undertaken in August. The Commission would reflect on how to incorporate the findings in to its approach to public awareness for the May polls. She agreed to share the resources that had been produced to assist local authorities with key messaging. The Commission would continue to discuss the approach to awareness raising with key stakeholders including ROs and EROs. Observations from Council by-elections Martin McKeown (MMcK) provided a summary of the findings and key lessons learned from the Commission's observations from the recent by-elections held in Scotland under coronavirus restrictions. He advised that the intention was to produce and publish a report by the end of the year. The PPP discussed the key findings and the implications arising for the May polls. The following points were raised and discussed. MS noted the late communication of the decision to postpone the North Lanarkshire by-elections close to the day of poll SM asked if the Commission intended to repeat the public opinion research. SMA advised that there were no specific plans to do so. She agreed to provide the PPP with data arising from the Commission's winter tracker. SMA confirmed that the Commission would be producing a household booklet. She undertook to confirm details of Phase II of the Electoral Commission public awareness campaign at the January PPP. Mathew Edmonds (ME) noted that it would be harder to campaign with voters more apprehensive about going to the polling station than normal. In respect of the postal vote application deadline of April 6, he wondered whether people might not really start paying attention to an election when it was still a month away. SMA noted that the household booklet had to carry a number of messages, including around how to complete the ballot papers along with electoral registration and different methods of voting and voters were more likely to act on messaging closer to the poll. However, other methods would also be used to disseminate earlier information on postal voting. PW observed that evidence from the Independence Referendum when demand for postal votes increased by 2.6%; 1% in the months ahead, but 1.6% in the final weeks. The Clackmannanshire by-election had shown a very minor increase in postal votes and the Electoral Commission survey results were clear in that where people were encouraged to vote by post, there followed an increase in numbers of postal vote applications. Clear communication about the electoral timetable to voters early on was essential. Chris Highcock (CH) reported the pattern of voting in polling places during the Edinburgh by-election had been different from normal; with more people working from home there was less reason for people to attend early, so there had not been the same early morning rush from people on the way to work at 7:00 am SM said the current proposal to change the date of poll card issue would force postal vote applications into a smaller number of days as poll card issue was the point when voters applied for a postal vote. AON said the Electoral Commission household leaflet would be issued in time to flag up the postal vote deadline. Guidance update MMcK provided an update on the preparation and publication of guidance for administrators and campaigners in advance of the May polls, including new guidance on digital imprints. He advised that the Director of Regulation would be circulating her Regulation Bulletin to campaigners shortly. Guidance would be published before the Christmas break. This included the new guidance on imprints. Clara Cole (CC) advised that the Regulatory Support team was working hard to get guidance out in a timely manner and would like to engage with campaigners to identify what further supports were needed. Arising from the report, SM and MC both commented on the importance to parties of getting sight of the imprints guidance as soon as possible in order for them to ensure consistency of interpretation and compliance within their organisations. MMcK advised he would circulate the guidance as soon as it had been signed off and

published. He offered to meet with parties to discuss the guidance once it was published. The PPP agreed that MMcK (a) confirm to parties when guidance had been published and (b) meet with parties thereafter as required. Scottish Government update A report on current legislative developments had been circulated. The PPP agreed to note the report. Scotland Office/Cabinet Office update A report from the Scotland Office / Cabinet Office had been circulated. The PPP agreed (a) to note that report; (b) that any issues arising from the report be highlighted to Lindsey Hamilton. Scottish Boundary Commissions update Isabel Drummond-Murray (ID-M) provided an update on (a) the outcomes from the LGBCs reviews of electoral arrangements in Argyll and Bute, North Ayrshire and Highland council areas; (b) the final recommendations arising from the reviews of the Scottish parliament constituencies of Glasgow and Central Scotland to Ministers in March 2020; and (c) the work programme arising from the Parliamentary Constituencies Bill. Royal Mail update Rachel Winham (RW) noted the increased demand for postal votes and confirmed that Royal Mail were currently putting plans in place for the May polls, including arrangements for delivering and collecting postal ballots. CH suggested the matter could be discussed through the EMB and agreed to arrange a meeting to discuss. PW suggested that the EC be invited to attend. The PPP agreed that CH arrange a meeting to discuss the issue. EMB update CH and PW provided updates on (a) Council by elections; (b) planned directions by the Convener for the May polls; (c) plans for a joint event with the EC for Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers in advance of the polls; (d) implementation of the extension of the franchise to qualifying foreign nationals. Arising from discussion, MS noted the directions would be helpful in promoting consistency for voters. PW asked that parties use the absent voter list to check whether voters were already postal voters or, as has occurred in the past, where the person had died. Paul Moat (PM) said they had met with resistance from ERO staff against processing data and had a lot of chasing up to get information out of them. PW said he had a meeting with EROs on 3 December and would flag up that they should respond quickly to these requests. The PPP agreed that PW raise PM's point with EROs and otherwise noted the report. Electoral Commission update MMcK and CHe provided updates on (a) new education resources for young people aged 14-18 (in formal and informal education) which were now live on the Commission's website; (b) the submission of draft Codes of Practice on Spending at Scottish Parliamentary elections to Scottish Ministers for approval; and (c) discussions that had taken place with EROs relating to the progress of the annual canvass and the imminent publication of a report on progress. Arising from discussion SM asked if the Commission had taken any external legal advice on the developments of the Codes. MMcK agreed to clarify. The PPP agreed that MMcK (a) clarify the position with regard to external advice taken on the draft Codes of Practice; and (b) circulate a copy of the report on the annual canvass once published. Dates of future meetings Dates of future meetings Thursday 21 January 2021 10:30am Thursday 4 March 2021 at 11am

2. Impact on voters: experience | Electoral Commission Search

2. Impact on voters: experience You are in the May 2019 voter identification pilot schemes section Home Our research Voter identification pilots May 2019 voter identification pilot schemes First published: 12 July 2019 Last updated: 12 July 2019 Contents Overview Our findings Impact on voters: experience Impact on voters: confidence Impact on security Impact of administration of the polls Background to our evaluation Key findings Nearly everyone in these pilots who went to their polling station to vote was able to show ID without difficulty, as in 2018. Out of all those who went to their polling station, the proportion who couldn't show ID and who did not return to vote ranged from 0.03% to 0.7%. Some groups of people may find it harder than others to show ID, particularly photo ID. This includes people with accessibility challenges as well as other less frequent voters who did not attempt to vote on 2 May but are more likely to do so at a UK general election. Impact on voters on 2 May The number of people who were not able to show ID Nearly everyone who came to their polling station and wanted to vote in each of the pilots was able to show the right identification and be issued with a ballot paper. Some people did, initially, go to their polling station without the right identification and could not be issued with a ballot paper. Many of these people came back later with the right identification. The proportion of people who did not return ranged from 0.03% of all polling station voters in one local authority to 0.7% in two other areas. We cannot speculate or draw any conclusions about the reasons why these people did not return, because it was not possible for polling station staff to collect information from them. Number of people who were not able to show ID Mixed model pilots Number of people initially refused ballot paper Number of people who didn't return with ID People who didn't return, as percentage of those who voted in the polling station Braintree 203 73 0.3% Broxtowe 231 69 0.3% Craven 129 49 0.7% Derby 514 256 0.6% North Kesteven 145 68 0.4% Poll card pilots Number of people initially refused ballot paper Number of people who didn't return with ID People who didn't return, as percentage of those who voted in the polling station Mid Sussex 15 8 0.03% NW Leicestershire 266 61 0.4% Watford 94-209 33-51 0.2% Photo ID only pilots Number of people initially refused ballot paper Number of people who didn't return with ID People who didn't return, as percentage of those who voted in the polling station Pendle 284 101 0.7% Woking 87 22 0.1% For the photo and mixed ID pilot models, the average proportion not issued with a ballot paper was the same at 0.4%. The poll card model saw a smaller proportion not being able to vote at 0.2%. Polling station staff were not asked to collect demographic data about the people who did not come back, owing to the practical challenges involved in carrying out that data collection exercise. That means we have no direct evidence to tell us whether people from particular backgrounds were more likely than others to find it hard to show ID. However, it is possible to look at the numbers not issued with a ballot paper at a ward level within each pilot, compared with demographic data for the ward. Derby, Pendle, Watford and Woking are the only pilots with sufficient diversity in ethnic background to allow for this analysis. Having made this assessment, there is no clear picture across these pilots but we do see noteworthy findings in some areas: In Derby there is a strong correlation between the proportion of each ward's population from an Asian background and the number of people not issued with a ballot paper. In Pendle there is a weak correlation between the proportion of each ward's population from an Asian background and the number initially arriving at a polling station with no ID or the wrong ID. In the 2019 data we do not see any such correlation in Woking and Watford, although in the 2018 pilot in Watford there was a strong relationship

between the proportion of Asian residents and the number not issued with a ballot paper. The evidence is therefore mixed and it is important to be clear that this correlation analysis does not definitively suggest that Asian voters were disproportionately affected by the requirement to show ID. However, this does emphasise the importance of ensuring that the ID requirements are suitable for all and that any public awareness activities are genuinely effective across all communities.

Impact on voters on 2 May: accordions Awareness of the ID requirement:

voters In line with this data, we found that most of those who voted in the pilots knew that they would need to show ID to be able to vote. Our public opinion research after the election found that 85% of people who voted at a polling station said they were aware beforehand that they would have to show ID. However, some groups of polling station voters were less likely to say that they knew they would need to show ID. Awareness was lower among first time voters (73%) compared to people who had voted before (87%), and among 35-54 year olds (80%) compared to those aged 55+ (89%). Awareness was consistent across the photo and mixed ID pilots and lower in the poll card pilots. However, as with the 2018 pilot scheme, we think this is not due to poor public awareness in the poll card pilots but because of respondents' interpretation of the question we asked – some people may not see needing to take a poll card as the same as needing to 'show some identification in order to vote'. The types of identification that voters showed In addition to those in the photo ID pilots, nearly nine in ten voters in the mixed ID pilots also chose to use a type of photo ID – most commonly their photo driving licence. Nearly six out of ten voters across both the photo and mixed ID pilots showed their photo driving licence, which was similar to the proportion in the three photo ID only and mixed model pilots in 2018. The vast majority of voters in the poll card pilots chose to show their poll card. A small proportion of people showed their photo driving licence (5%) or passport instead (1%).

Most frequently shown 2 nd most frequently shown 3 rd most frequently shown Photo ID only pilots Photo driving licence (62%) Passport (25%) Travel pass (11%) Mixed model pilots Photo driving licence (55%) Passport (19%) Travel pass (14%) Poll card pilots Poll card (93%) Photo driving licence (5%) Passport (1%) Roughly 10% of voters in the mixed ID pilots used non-photo ID. Of these, the majority of people used a combination of their poll card and a bank card. A small number of people did apply for these locally issued IDs in the two photo pilots and in two of the mixed ID pilots: 70 people in Pendle (63 voters showed it in the polling station) 24 people in Woking (37 voters showed it in the polling station, which included some issued in the 2018 pilot) Two people in Broxtowe (one shown in the polling station) One person in Braintree (none shown in the polling station) All of the pilots allowed voters to show their identification in private (for example, because they were registered to vote anonymously or if they normally cover their face for religious reasons).

Electoral Commission staff who were observing across the pilot scheme areas saw that this arrangement was in place in almost all of the polling stations they visited. The arrangements in place varied between polling stations with some planning to use a separate room while others had a screen, curtain or purposely designed polling booth that voters could go behind. Almost all of the polling stations that Commission staff observed had at least one female member of staff who would be able to view ID of female voters in private. From our observations on polling day, we are only aware of this facility being used by a small number of electors in Derby and Pendle. We therefore cannot draw any firm conclusions about how this process would work in practice across Great Britain. However, if the requirement to show ID to vote is

introduced, it is important that the needs of these electors are considered alongside the administrative implications for Returning Officers of providing appropriate facilities and staffing arrangements to allow voters to show their ID in private in polling stations. Turnout Year-on-year turnout comparisons are difficult owing to the local government electoral cycle. For example five of the pilots have not held local elections since 2015, when they were held in combination with a UK general election. This means we cannot usefully look at differences by pilot model. For the pilots with comparable figures, turnout was down by 2-6 percentage points compared to the 2018 elections. For Watford and Woking, both in the second year of piloting voter ID, turnout was lower than in their 2018 pilot and the previous elections in 2016. In two of the other pilots (Craven and Pendle) turnout was also down on 2018 and 2016. However, in Derby, while 2019 turnout was lower than in 2018 it was higher compared to 2016. Overall, across England, local election turnout in 2019 was around two percentage points lower compared to 2018. As in our evaluation of the 2018 pilots, it is not possible to draw a clear connection between the pilot scheme and any changes in turnout. Limited data is available and where it is available, the pattern is not consistent. We also know that turnout is volatile and dependent on a number of factors. Why people didn't vote and impact on the likelihood of voting As well as assessing the impact on those that tried to vote on 2 May, we have also looked for evidence of whether a voter ID requirement could deter electors from voting. We used our public opinion survey to ask non-voters why they did not vote. The main reasons given were in line with previous surveys (too busy - 30%, away on holiday - 9%, forgot - 6%). However, 1% of people who didn't vote in the pilots said it was because they didn't have the right ID and less than 1% said it was because they disagreed with the requirement. The limitations of sample-based surveying mean that we do not have enough responses from specific groups of people or within specific pilot models to be able to report experiences or views across those groups. This is because the samples are designed to provide data that is representative of areas as a whole. This means that for some demographic groups, that are small relative to the overall population, the number of people surveyed can be too few to analyse. We also asked respondents whether the requirement to show ID made them more or less likely to vote. Most people in the pilot scheme said it made no difference or made them more likely to vote (90%). However, a notable minority said it made them less likely to vote (3%), that they didn't have ID (1%) or that they didn't know (6%). Non-voters on 2 May were more likely than voters to say that they would be negatively affected or that they were unsure. Implications for accessibility and equality Our evaluation has also considered whether the identification requirements might have disproportionately affected particular groups of people. We asked 165 national and local organisations, including those representing people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, to provide us with evidence of how the pilots affected the specific groups they represent. A total of 29 organisations responded, with 16 providing more detailed feedback. None of the organisations that contacted us provided any direct evidence about people who were unable to vote in the pilot scheme because they couldn't show ID. However, almost all of them gave us more general views and raised concerns about the possible impact of an ID requirement for the people they represent. Building on our evaluation of the 2018 pilot scheme, these have increased our understanding about the specific challenges that some groups of people might face. Key themes from the responses were: Charities representing people with learning disabilities, the BAME, LGBT+, gypsy and traveller communities and people without a fixed address raised general concerns that some of the people they represent are

already less likely to register and vote, and they are also less likely to have ID. Many of the responses highlighted existing difficulties their users face in accessing services requiring proof of identity, including barriers faced by people who don't have easy access to the internet. People without a fixed address would be less likely to have forms of non-photo ID such as utility bills. A transgender or non-binary person's ID may not reflect their gender expression or identity. People with learning disabilities would need accessible information to ensure they knew about an ID requirement and were able to access ID. The cost, inconvenience and time required to obtain ID may be prohibitive for some people.

Impact on potential voters: beyond the pilots

These findings raise questions about the effects of an ID requirement at future elections, where previous research suggests that the demographic profile of likely voters is different (e.g. local election voters tend to be, on average, older).

Impact on potential voters: beyond the pilots: accordions

Varying levels of awareness

Returning Officers in the pilot schemes ran public information campaigns before the elections and we know these raised overall levels of awareness; people knew more about the need to show ID by May 2019, compared with earlier in the year. In January 2019, 17% of people said they had seen or heard something about the requirement, increasing to 45% in May 2019. Our research did find variations in levels of awareness, however, particularly among those who did not vote. For example, 57% of voters told us they had heard something compared to 31% of non-voters. This pattern is then also reflected by demographic groups where one is more likely to have voted, for example: Those aged 55+ were more likely to have heard something – 54% compared to 31% of 18-34s. White respondents were more likely to have heard something than BAME respondents – 46% compared to 27%. These findings tell us something about the potential for a negative impact at other polls with higher turnout. If there were to be a disproportionate impact on particular groups of voters this could also have a negative impact on public confidence; we know that problems at elections can affect voters' and non-voters' overall perceptions of the poll. Of course, it is possible that groups reporting lower levels of awareness in relation to the 2 May elections, where they were less likely to vote, would have higher levels of awareness around an election in which they intended to vote, such as a UK general election. However, we cannot assume that would happen automatically. It is likely to depend, to some extent, on the nature of the public awareness activities used. These findings on awareness therefore emphasise the importance of ensuring that public awareness activities around any national rollout are genuinely effective across all communities and groups, particularly more infrequent voters. Year-on-year turnout comparisons are difficult owing to the local government electoral cycle. For example five of the pilots have not held local elections since 2015, when they were held in combination with a UK general election. This means we cannot usefully look at differences by pilot model.

Ease of showing ID

When we ask about how easy people think it would be to show ID, if it was required at future polls, we see similar results. Most people (91%) say that they would find it easy to show ID if they had to; however: Voters were more likely to say it would be easy (95%), compared to 88% for non-voters. Those aged below 34 were slightly less likely to say they would find it easy than their older counterparts (84% compared to 93% for 35-44s and 94% for those aged 55+). BAME respondents were less likely to say it would be easy compared to white electors (87% compared to 92%).

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Signing the recall petitions Transparency and secrecy Running the recall petition
Background First published: 10 October 2019 Last updated: 10 October 2019 Summary
There have been two petitions during 2019 to recall the MPs for the constituencies of
Peterborough and Brecon and Radnorshire . Both Petition Officers (POs) delivered all
their duties as required under the Recall Act 2015 and provided a high standard of
service. There were no significant problems which affected people eligible to sign or
wishing to campaign. Only one recall petition had been held before, in 2018 in the
North Antrim constituency . The experiences of these three recall petitions have
provided us with valuable evidence about how the existing petition rules work in
practice, in different parts of the UK types of constituencies political contexts.
There are some areas where applying electoral rules to a process which is not an
election has led to administrative challenges and issues with transparency and
secrecy, and we have made recommendations for changes to the rules and processes for
running future recall petitions. Our recommendations Recommendations for the UK
Government The UK Government should now review the policy and legislation for recall
petitions to identify changes that would improve the experience for electors and the
administration of future petitions. The Government should: Identify the appropriate
length for a reduced petition period of less than six weeks. This should start by
considering whether a four-week period would be sufficient. Review the scope of who
can observe the process in signing places to extend transparency and scrutiny, while
ensuring that secrecy is maintained for people signing the petition. Review the
recall petition regulations for Northern Ireland to ensure there is appropriate
access to inspect the marked register if there are concerns about fraud at future
recall petitions. Consider whether eligible electors should be given the chance to
complete an equivalent to the signing sheet to indicate that they oppose the
petition. Set out more clearly what time signing places should close on the final day
of the petition period and the deadline for receipt of postal signing papers, and
when and how the Speaker should be notified of the petition result. Keep the rules
for donations and spending by campaigners under review as more experience is gained
at future recall petitions, to ensure there is appropriate oversight and regulation
of campaigner spending. Recommendations for Petition Officers and Returning Officers
We also recommend that Petition Officers and Returning Officers should review their
plans for running future recall petitions: Petition Officers for future recall
petitions should ensure they offer some extended opening hours for people to sign the
petition, beyond the minimum hours of 9am to 5pm. Returning Officers should review
their contingency planning to include arrangements for delivering any recall
petitions which could potentially take place in their constituencies, particularly to
identify possible locations for signing places. Signing the recall petitions In both
Peterborough and in Brecon and Radnorshire more than 10% of the people eligible to
sign the recall petition had done so by the end of the six-week signing period. This
meant that the sitting MPs would be recalled and a by-election would be held to fill
the vacant seat in each constituency. Chart 1: Percentage of eligible people who
signed the recall petitions in Brecon and Radnorshire and Peterborough Signing the
recall petitions Length of the signing period Data provided by both Petition Officers
(POs) shows that the majority of people who decided to sign the petitions did so

early in the six-week signing period: In Peterborough 79% of all those who went to a signing place or returned a postal signing sheet (22% of all those eligible to sign) did so within the first two weeks of the signing period In Brecon and Radnorshire 70% of all those who went to a signing place or returned a postal signing sheet (14% of all those eligible to sign) did so within the first two weeks of the signing period

In both constituencies the number of people signing the petition each week began to reduce after the first two weeks of the signing period, and the threshold had been reached. However the full duration of the petition process had to take place before the outcome could be counted and announced. Chart 2: Proportion of eligible people who had signed the petitions during the signing period Postal signing sheets People could also choose to sign the petition by post. Many of the signatures recorded in both constituencies were from people who had completed and returned postal signing sheets to the PO. This included a significant proportion that were returned within the first two weeks of the signing period. Table 1: Number of postal signing sheets issued and returned Peterborough Brecon and Radnorshire Total number of postal signing sheets issued 13,395 (19% of all those eligible to sign the petition) 8,795 (17% of all those eligible to sign the petition) Number of postal signing sheets returned during first two weeks of signing period 6,914 (45% of all signing sheets recorded during first two weeks) 3,288 (46% of all signing sheets recorded during first two weeks) Total number of postal signing sheets returned by the end of the signing period 7,848 (41% of all signing sheets recorded during the signing period) 3,790 (37% of all signing sheets recorded during the signing period) Everyone who had previously applied to vote by post at UK Parliamentary elections in these constituencies was automatically sent a postal signing sheet at the beginning of the signing period. This meant that a significant proportion of people in Peterborough and Brecon and Radnorshire received a postal signing sheet without having to make a new application to express their view by post. By contrast, in Northern Ireland postal voting is only available at elections to people who can provide a reason why they cannot be reasonably expected to go to their polling station. Only 4% of people eligible to sign in North Antrim were sent a postal signing sheet. We have not been made aware of any significant problems with the process for signing by post. Almost everyone in our public opinion survey in Peterborough who said they signed by post felt it was easy to do so, including over two-thirds who said it was very easy. Views on the length of the signing period Some people who were involved in the petitions felt that the signing periods were too long, and could possibly be shortened. Their feedback highlighted concerns that: Providing signing locations and staff for a six-week period was a significant public expense, and managing the petition was an additional burden on local authority resources and capacity. Public interest in the petition reduced significantly over the course of the six-week period. Some staff in signing places reported that they had been quiet during most days of the recall petition. Our research with the public in Peterborough found that more than two thirds (69%) of people felt that there was enough time during the signing period, while one in five (21%) felt the period was too long. People who didn't sign the petition were much less likely to say they felt the period was too long (9%, compared with 30% of those who did sign) and were slightly more likely to say the period was too short. Evidence from the recall petitions in Peterborough and Brecon and Radnorshire suggests that there is scope to reduce the length of the signing period without significantly reducing access for those people who want to sign. We recommend that the UK Government should review the rules for recall petitions to identify the appropriate length for a reduced petition period of less than six weeks. This should

start by considering whether a four-week period would be sufficient. Signing places and opening hours POs can designate up to 10 signing places for a recall petition, which must be open from 9am to 5pm on Monday to Friday, for a total of six weeks. POs can also choose to offer additional, extended opening hours. The decisions taken by the POs in Peterborough and Brecon and Radnorshire on signing places and opening hours are set out in Table 2.

	Peterborough	Brecon and Radnorshire
Number of signing places	10	6
Extended opening hours	Opened at 7am on Tuesdays. Closed 10pm on Thursdays	Opened at 8am on Tuesdays. Closed 8pm on Wednesdays
Number of people signing during extended opening hours	1,410 (7% of the total)	483 (5% of the total)
Views on signing places and opening hours	The POs in both Peterborough and Brecon and Radnorshire said that the length of the signing period made it harder for them to find suitable venues for signing places which were available for the full six-week period. They also only had a relatively short timeframe, 10 working days, to do this. Both found that they were unable to use venues that had been tried and tested as polling stations at elections, because they had already been booked during the signing period. Data from POs about when people signed the petition (shown in Table 2 above) shows that a significant number of people took advantage of the extended opening hours offered by the PO to sign the petitions. We recommend that POs for future recall petitions should ensure they offer some extended opening hours beyond the minimum hours of 9am to 5pm.	The POs in both Peterborough and Brecon and Radnorshire said that the length of the signing period made it harder for them to find suitable venues for signing places which were available for the full six-week period. They also only had a relatively short timeframe, 10 working days, to do this. Both found that they were unable to use venues that had been tried and tested as polling stations at elections, because they had already been booked during the signing period. Data from POs about when people signed the petition (shown in Table 2 above) shows that a significant number of people took advantage of the extended opening hours offered by the PO to sign the petitions. We recommend that POs for future recall petitions should ensure they offer some extended opening hours beyond the minimum hours of 9am to 5pm.
On 10 May 2019 we received a copy of a letter sent to the PO from Glyn Mathias (a former Electoral Commissioner) and Sir Paul Silk (former parliamentary official) who were both eligible to sign the petition in Brecon and Radnorshire. The letter set out their concerns about the administration of the recall petition. These concerns primarily related to the number of signing places that had been allocated, the location of two of the signing places within council office buildings rather than being located in the centre of town, and the opening times of the signing places. We did not find any evidence to substantiate this claim. While the PO in Brecon and Radnorshire met the obligations to provide signing places under the Recall Act 2015, we suggest that for future recall petitions POs should consult with the Electoral Commission about the number of signing places and their suggested locations as part of their planning process. The PO and her staff suggested it would be useful for all Returning Officers as part of their contingency planning process to carry out a review of their arrangements to include planning for potential recall petitions which could take place in their local authority. This would mean they would be able to refer to their contingency planning documents if a recall petition was held. They suggested a useful starting point could be polling station reviews that occur every five years. We recommend that Returning Officers should review their contingency planning to include arrangements for delivering any recall petitions which could potentially take place in their constituencies, particularly to identify possible locations for signing places. If the overall length of the signing period is also reduced, this would also help POs to find suitable available venues to use as signing places for the full duration of the signing period. POs should make sure that there are enough to mean that there is a site close enough to be easily accessible for all electors. Our research in Peterborough asked what people thought about the signing places. Overall, as shown in Chart 3, around two-thirds of all people surveyed indicated they thought it was easy to get to their allocated signing place. A majority of those who said they had signed the petition in person also indicated that the building was appropriate for use as a signing place and that it was accessible.	Chart 3: Views on accessing signing places in Peterborough Transparency and secrecy	
It is important to	Transparency and secrecy	

ensure that people who are entitled to sign a recall petition feel able to express their views freely, while also having confidence that petition processes are well-run and that any allegations of fraud can be investigated. Restrictions on transparency and secrecy are more significant for a recall petition, compared with an election, because it is obvious what position someone signing a petition is taking: they have made an active choice in favour of the proposal to recall the current MP. By contrast, polling station observation or inspection of the marked register after an election shows only that a ballot paper was issued to an individual elector, and does not indicate whether they cast a vote for a particular candidate or party. There are some areas of the petition process, discussed below, that could be clarified for POs, electors and the public more widely to ensure that the appropriate levels of secrecy and transparency are in place. The UK Government should review the law in these areas. The Government could also consider whether all eligible electors should be given the chance to complete an equivalent to the signing sheet to indicate they oppose it. This could reduce the risk of compromising secrecy for individuals, particularly if access to independent observation of the process in signing places were to be extended. Transparency and secrecy Observing the recall petition Unlike at elections, only Electoral Commission representatives can observe all parts of the recall petition signing process during the whole six-week period. For both petitions, Electoral Commission representatives observed the petition process in signing places (including days with extended opening hours), the daily process for verifying the number of signing papers completed that day, and the final count. Individuals who are accredited under the Electoral Commission's electoral observation scheme are only able to attend the final counting of signatures, while accredited organisations are not entitled to observe any stage of the process. No accredited individual observers attended the counts. Limiting observation in this way helps to ensure secrecy for those signing a recall petition, and also prevents others from estimating whether the 10% threshold has been reached before the end of the petition period. However, it does also mean that transparency and scrutiny of the signing process are limited. We recommend that the UK Government should review the scope of who can observe the process in signing places to extend transparency and scrutiny, while ensuring that secrecy is maintained for people signing the petition. Secrecy of the petition and access to the marked register The petition regulations provide some secrecy protections for people signing the petition. POs should take into account the need for privacy when allocating signing places in their constituency. During the petition period it is also an offence to publish a statement that could indicate if an individual has signed the petition or not, or to publish any forecasts about the result of the petition. After the conclusion of a recall petition in Great Britain, a marked copy of the electoral register (showing who had signed the petition) may be made available by the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) for public inspection on request. The ERO is only required to make those documents available in response to a request for inspection if they are satisfied that fraud may have taken place at the petition. These secrecy measures are intended to limit the scope for undue influence and pressure on people to sign or not sign a petition, while maintaining protections against fraud. We are not aware of any complaints about the secrecy of the signing places, intimidation or fraudulent signing during either of the petitions. Our research in Peterborough found: only 6% of people who said that they had signed the petition in person indicated that there was not enough privacy inside the signing places 17% of people who said that they had signed the petition in person indicated that there was not enough privacy around the signing places almost two-thirds of

people agreed that signing with a signature was sufficiently anonymous around half agreed that the process meant that they could sign in secret In Northern Ireland there is no provision in the legislation to allow the marked register to be inspected in cases of suspected fraud, or for the PO to supply it to the police, the Electoral Commission or anyone who requested it. We recommend that the UK Government should review the recall petition regulations for Northern Ireland to ensure there is appropriate access to inspect the marked register if there are well-founded concerns about fraud at future recall petitions. Running the recall petition In both constituencies the petitions were well-run. Most people in Peterborough said they were confident that the petition was well-run (87%), with almost all of those who actually signed the petition saying they were confident (96%). However, both POs faced practical challenges in running the petitions in their constituencies. These were increased, in the areas outlined below, by a lack of clarity in some areas of the legislation, POs having to take on new responsibilities and difficulties in POs having to use electoral management software to run a petition which is not the same as an election. POs were also faced with planning and delivering other electoral events which impacted on resourcing the petitions. Running the recall petition Closing the recall petition and announcing the result Under the Recall Act there is a requirement for the PO, or assigned member of staff, to verify the number of signing papers completed during each day of the petition period. However the Recall Act lacks clarity in relation to the final count and does not set out: what time signing places should close on the last day the deadline for receiving postal signing papers; or timings for the count (except that it should take place “as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of the signing period”). As a result, the POs in Peterborough and Brecon and Radnorshire took different decisions about the deadline for returning postal signing papers and started counting at different times, which were both different from the decision made by the PO in North Antrim. Table 3: Comparison of arrangements for closing the petition and count start times

Peterborough Brecon and Radnorshire North Antrim Signing places closed 5pm on Wednesday 1 May 5pm on Thursday 20 June 5pm on Wednesday 19 September Deadline for returning postal signing papers 5pm on Wednesday 1 May Midnight on Thursday 20 June Midnight on Wednesday 19 September Count started Straight after the signing places closed at 5pm 9am on Friday 21 June 0.01am on Thursday 20 September There is no evidence that these different approaches had an impact on the running of the count, and feedback from our representatives at the counts was that they worked well. However, to ensure a more consistent experience for those wishing to sign at future recall petitions, the legislation should specify what time signing places should close on the final day of the petition period and the deadline for receipt of postal signing papers. Once the signing papers have been counted, the PO must notify the Speaker of the House of Commons of the result before an announcement is made. However there is no provision in law as to how this should happen and in what form the notification should be made. The POs in all three constituencies agreed with the Speaker in advance that they would send an email, and once this was acknowledged they could then publish the result. We recommend that the UK Government should review the recall petition legislation to set out more clearly when and how the Speaker should be notified. Registering campaigners At elections and referendums, the Electoral Commission is responsible for registering political parties and non-party campaigners wishing to spend over a certain amount. At recall petitions, uniquely, the registration of campaigners is undertaken by POs. People or organisations wishing to campaign for or against the recall petition, and intending to spend over £500, must

notify the PO that they want to be a registered campaigner. POs must also receive donation and spending returns from registered campaigners within 30 days of the end of the regulated period of the recall petition. A total of eight people and organisations registered to campaign during the petitions. They submitted donation and spending returns to the POs after the petitions. At time of publication reported donations and spending had not been received for one individual and one trade union in Peterborough. Table 4: Registered campaigners and value of reported donations and spending Peterborough Brecon and Radnorshire Registered campaigners Two political parties, two Trades Unions and one individual Three political parties Spending £6,988.79 £13,365.87 Donations £3,212.11 £10,324.50 These spending returns are made available for public inspection by the PO and copies sent to us, but there is no provision for returns to be scrutinised by a statutory agency. This differs from the Political Parties Elections and Referendums Act (PPERA) rules for elections and referendums, where it is required for the Commission to receive spending returns from political parties and campaigners so we can check that these comply with the law. However, the Recall Act appears to have been based on the Representation of the People Act (RPA) requirements for candidates at UKPGE who are required to send their spending returns to the RO and not directly to us. The lack of statutory scrutiny of donation and spending returns means that there could be significant spending on activity intended to influence electors at future recall petitions that is not fully monitored to check that campaigners have complied with the law. We recommend that the UK Government should keep the rules for donations and spending by campaigners under review as more experience is gained at future recall petitions, to ensure there is appropriate oversight and regulation of campaigner spending. Other challenges to running the recall petitions The use of electoral management software (EMS) is an established part of running electoral events. Using it for a recall petition, which despite having many of the same processes is not an election, was not straightforward for POs and their staff. The EMS systems used by the POs did not provide templates for recall petition paperwork, and were not able to run two events with different timetables in parallel. This was more challenging as both signing periods overlapped with other electoral events – the 2 May local government election in Peterborough and the European Parliamentary election in Brecon and Radnorshire held on 23 May. Although recall petitions may not frequently overlap with other electoral events in future, it would assist POs if EMS providers were able to develop their systems to manage multiple events on different timetables and to produce templates for use in recall petitions. Background Why did the petitions take place? The Recall of MPs Act 2015 introduced a process where a sitting MP can lose their seat in the House of Commons if there is a successful petition to recall them. All those in the relevant constituency who are eligible to vote at a UK Parliamentary election can sign. They can choose to do so in person, by post or by appointing a proxy. Over 10% must do so for the MP to be recalled. The Commission is required to publish a report, following the petition. This process was first used in 2018, when a petition in North Antrim to recall Ian Paisley MP was unsuccessful. We published our report on the North Antrim petition in November 2018. There have been two more recall petitions in 2019. The first was in Peterborough following Fiona Onasanya MP's conviction on 19 December 2018 on charges of perverting the course of justice. On 29 January 2019, Ms Onasanya was sentenced to three months in prison. Her appeal against the conviction was rejected by the Court of Appeal on 5 March, and the Speaker of the House of Commons gave notice to the Returning Officer in Peterborough that a recall petition was to take place. The petition took place between 19 March and 1 May. The second was in

Brecon and Radnorshire. This was a result of Chris Davies MP's conviction on 23 April 2019 of having made a false expenses claim relating to setting up his constituency office after the 2015 UK Parliamentary General Election. On 24 April, the Speaker of the House of Commons notified the Returning Officer in Powys that a recall petition was to take place. The petition took place between 9 May and 20 June. Roles and responsibilities The constituency's Returning Officer, acting in the role of Petition Officer, is responsible for opening and running a recall petition. Their role includes setting the opening date of the petition, which must be no later than 10 days, or as soon as reasonably practical, after the notification from the Speaker of the House of Commons. They must also publish a register of people eligible to sign the petition and notify them that the petition is taking place. A total of 69,673 people in Peterborough and 53,032 in Brecon and Radnorshire were able to sign the petition. People were notified by letter why the petition was taking place, what the outcome would be, how they could sign and information about their allocated signing place. In Peterborough, our public opinion survey found that almost three quarters of people could remember receiving a letter telling them that a recall petition was going to take place. During a recall petition, local police forces have a role investigating any breaches of the rules set out in the Recall Act and to enforce compliance with the law. The Commission provides advice and guidance to help people to understand the rules. We can also seek forfeiture of impermissible donations, if necessary, by court order. Feedback from people in Peterborough Due to its proximity to the May 2019 local elections, we were able to extend our post-election public opinion research to cover the recall petition in Peterborough. This allowed us to increase our understanding of people's awareness and perceptions of the Peterborough recall petition. Research agency BMG conducted 159 telephone interviews between 3 and 23 May 2019, with a sample of people who would be eligible to vote at a UK Parliamentary general election in Peterborough. Quotas were set on age and gender to ensure that the respondents were as representative as possible of the population of the area. Data are weighted to correct any demographic differences between the interviewed sample and known population profile from the census population data. Supporting evidence Peterborough recall petition - topline report Peterborough recall petition - weighted data tables Related content Past elections and referendums Read our reports and view data about past elections and referendums Types of elections about the types of elections in the UK. Report: Voting in 2017 Read our report about voting at the general election in 2017 Testing the EU referendum question Find out about our testing of the EU referendum question

Looking ahead to 2020/21 and using our resources to support the delivery of our goals | Electoral Commission Search Looking ahead to 2020/21 and using our resources to support the delivery of our goals You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 On this page Looking ahead to 2020/21 Using our resources to support the delivery of our goals Our environmental impact Using our financial resources efficiently First published: 30 June 2020 Last updated: 17 August 2020 Looking ahead to 2020/21 One of our challenges for the year ahead is to ensure local authorities can continue delivering well-run elections. We supported the UK Government's decision to postpone the polls scheduled for May 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. There are significant challenges to delivering the combination of polls now scheduled for May 2021. We are working with the UK's governments and supporting local authorities, to ensure they can deliver the polls successfully, safely and in line with relevant guidelines. There is already pressure on local authority resources because of outdated and complex legislation. There are more than 50 Acts and 170 Statutory Instruments relating to the delivery of elections. This leads to real costs, consequences and risks for voters, candidates and campaigners, regulators and governments. Proposals from the UK's Law Commissions provide a well-researched basis for further work. In 2020-21, we will continue calling on the UK's governments and parliaments to take these forward. While annual canvass reforms in Great Britain are welcome, governments need to do more to modernise the registration system. The existence of more than 370 separate registers that do not communicate with each other leaves the system vulnerable, while voters being unable to check online whether they are already registered leads to duplicate applications before every election. In the coming year, we will continue to encourage the UK's governments to commit to making registration more automated and connected to address these challenges. The nature of political campaigning continues to change, with parties spending a greater portion of their advertising budgets on digital advertising. In response to these changes, we need the right powers and tools to continue regulating political finance effectively. In 2020-21, we will work with all concerned to encourage compliance and we will run a new campaign to help voters understand digital campaigning rules. We welcome the Committee for Standards in Public Life (CSPL) review of electoral regulation in the UK. The nature of political campaigning has significantly changed, as has the public's expectations since the UK Parliament wrote the rules 20 years ago. We will be ready to provide CSPL and others with information and advice to help deliver outcomes and recommendations that best enable people to continue recognising the UK as a leading and robust democracy. Whilst acknowledging the likely continuing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, our 2020-21 work programme includes: continuing with our transition towards providing our guidance in a new modern, more accessible format working with partners on improving the accessibility of elections so that everyone has equal access to election information and processes supporting the UK's governments' annual canvass reforms supporting the 2021 canvass in Northern Ireland developing a strategy to support increased resilience in the delivery of electoral services at a local level publishing new performance standards for EROs engaging with the Scottish and Welsh governments' policy and legislative agendas for changes to the franchise for their elections reviewing our compliance with our Welsh language obligations, to a standard the Welsh Language Commissioner is satisfied with completing a review of political parties' and campaigners' registered descriptions to make sure only those meeting the legal tests are included delivering a new political finance online system to support parties and campaigners to deliver their financial

returns efficiently building the capacity to prosecute suspected offences and consulting on the way we approach the use of prosecutions engaging with government policy and legislative agendas for political finance strengthening our engagement with social media companies and other providers of digital advertising, to ensure their services and policies support transparency for election and referendum campaign activity enhancing our public awareness activity to help people understand digital campaigning rules and by producing education materials for young people improving the accessibility of our information by developing our website further including work to share open data developing a new five-year Corporate Plan implementing our new people strategy delivering digitally-enabled business change to reflect the expectations on a modern employer continuing to work with the Scottish and Welsh parliaments to implement our new accountability arrangements reviewing how we deliver legal services that effectively meet our changing requirements reviewing quality management processes across our main services and functions Using our resources to support the delivery of our goals Our people Staff relations and engagement The expertise, hard work and high level of commitment of our workforce enable successful performance and delivery of our Corporate Plan. We value the positive and constructive relationship we have with colleagues and work hard to maintain it. Our staff engagement group meets on a regular basis to seek input from colleagues on emerging issues and help to maintain good relations with staff. We also actively encourage staff involvement as part of the day-to-day process of line management, and we share information on current and prospective developments widely and regularly. To support this, we have a recognition agreement with the Public and Commercial Services Union. We completed our latest staff survey in March 2020 and 86% of employees responded. Our employee engagement score was 72% (up from 65% in 2018-19). Our scores compared most positively to the Civil Service benchmark in areas such as our people agreeing that: we took action after the previous survey they feel a strong personal attachment to our organisation and its work they would recommend the Electoral Commission as a place to work The areas where we compared least positively to the Civil Service benchmark and we need to improve on include people agreeing that: there are opportunities for them to progress in their careers at the Electoral Commission they have the IT systems and equipment they need to do their jobs effectively we are committed to creating a diverse and inclusive workplace Equal opportunities and diversity We are committed to the principle of equality of opportunity and the value of diversity. Our single equality scheme sets out our duties and commitments across the whole of the UK and includes an action plan that we update annually. The scheme reflects the public sector equality duty, which prohibits discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. We have designed our scheme to ensure: that everyone who is eligible is able to participate in the democratic process, by identifying barriers, making recommendations and working with others to remove them that we embed equality and diversity in all our work, treat all customers fairly and with respect, and are transparent in the decisions we make equality of opportunity for everyone and that all staff are treated fairly and with respect We completed equality impact assessments on relevant policies and procedures throughout 2019-20. The equality impact assessments support a commitment to evidence-based policy making. In addition to arrangements for consultation and monitoring, the assessment process helps to develop effective policies that meet the needs of people in respect to any protected characteristics. Our staff group on equality, diversity and inclusion met regularly

and supported our activities in these areas. Our latest staff survey includes questions about equality, diversity and inclusion. Results showed that an area of concern for our staff is that our organisation does not reflect the diversity of the people we serve, and they do not think we are doing enough to show our commitment to creating a diverse and inclusive workplace. We will start to address these concerns as we embed a new people strategy in 2020, which includes work to review and improve our recruitment and selection procedures. Occupational health and safety We review our health and safety policy annually. We also have procedures, guidance and risk assessments in place to cover our core activities. A health and safety group oversees our arrangements. They meet regularly and report to our senior leadership group. However, primary responsibility for health and safety sits with people managers. We initiate independent health and safety audits of our premises each year, which involves inspecting working environments and reviewing safety management systems. These audits tell us if our arrangements are suitable and highlight any improvements we need to make. Findings from audits completed in 2019-20 were generally satisfactory and arrangements were compliant with legislation and best practice. Our environmental impact Our environmental impact We recognise that delivering our activities has an impact on the environment and we continue to work towards minimising this impact. The following information summarises our use of energy and water, and the production and disposal of waste material. We lease office space in four cities from a combination of public and private sector property owners. We do not have direct control of utility supplier and waste disposal targets and management at our premises. For a number of our offices, the property owner manages energy and water consumption as well as waste disposal and recovers costs through a consolidated service charge. This report includes consumption and waste disposal data from the London office only, which is our largest property and the base for the majority of our staff. Offices in Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast have relocated to smaller, more environmentally efficient premises in the last 10 years. The lease on our London office ends in 2020. After reviewing our accommodation options, we have decided to renew the lease. Other initiatives are in place, in order to help minimise environmental impact. Since 2011-12, we have: reduced printed resources provided to electoral administrators and other groups, focusing on electronic provision wherever possible encouraged the use of video and teleconferencing to avoid unnecessary travel with consequential CO₂ emissions operated recycling facilities in all our offices upgraded to more energy efficient information communication technology equipment Summary (London office) Area: greenhouse gas emissions 2019-20 Actual 1 2019-20 Target * 2018-19 2017-18 CO₂e in tonnes Not available 211 187 235 Area: estate energy 2019-20 Actual 1 2019-20 Target * 2018-19 2017-18 Consumption (kWh) Not available 661,061 639,526 682,595 Expenditure Not available Not available Not available Not available Area: estate waste 2019-20 Actual 1 2019-20 Target * 2018-19 2017-18 Amount (tonnes) Not available 9.84 10.00 9.67 Expenditure Not available £1,111 £1,227 £994 Area: estate water 2019-20 Actual 1 2019-20 Target * 2018-19 2017-18 Consumption Not available 795 m³ 742 m³ 847 m³ Expenditure Not available Not available Not available Not available *The annual target shown is calculated as an average of the previous two years. Emissions report (London office) Greenhouse gas emissions: Non-financial indicators (CO₂e in tonnes) 2019-20 2018-19 2017-18 2016-17 Total gross emissions Not available 187 235 268 Gross emissions - fossil fuel consumption Not available 151 198 227 Gross emissions - travel Not available 36 37 41 Related energy consumption (kWh) 2019-20 2018-19 2017-18 2016-17 Electricity Not available 446,018 487,611 495,414 Gas Not available 193,508 211,990 187,181 Financial

indicators (£) 2019-20 2018-19 2017-18 2016-17 Expenditure on energy Not available
Not available Not available Not available Expenditure on travel £138,514 £125,450
£113,852 £166,585 Performance commentary on emissions Reported fossil fuel
consumption has decreased year on year, an ongoing effect of the property owner's
introduction of measures to reduce levels of electricity consumption, including lower
'out of hours' operation of plant and machinery and the introduction of energy-
efficient lighting. Waste report (London office) General waste and recycling figures
are based on a proportion of total building waste and are not directly controllable
by us. Confidential waste disposal for the organisation is handled separately from
that for other building occupants. We shred the confidential waste we generate on-
site before it is recycled into low-grade paper Non financial indicators (tonnes)
2019-20 2018-19 2017-18 2016-17 Total waste Not available 10.00 10.01 9.67 Non-
hazardous waste: Confidential 2.13 5.58 2.81 2.48 Non-hazardous waste: General waste
reused or recycled Not available 7.22 7.26 7.19 financial indicators 2019-20 2018-19
2017-18 2016-17 Total disposal cost Not available Not available Not available Not
available Confidential £1,169 £1,227 £1,134 £994 General waste reused or recycled Not
available Not available Not available The figure for the general and
recycled waste is based on a proportion of total building waste. All general waste
produced in the building, including that generated by us, is sent to a nearby energy
from waste plant, instead of landfill sites. Using our financial resources
efficiently Using our financial resources efficiently In 2019-20, the resource
initially made available to us by the UK Parliament was £19.4m for voted activity. We
received non-voted funding of £200k to pay Commissioners' fees. In January 2020,
£2.8m was added to our resource to fund expenditure on the 2019 UK Parliamentary
general election, and our Annually Managed Expenditure (AME) budget was increased by
£285k to manage the risk of variations in legal provision. This augmented our net
cash requirements by £3m. In achieving our objectives, we have used £20.0m worth of
resources for the whole year. This was out of the available sum of £22.2m approved by
the UK Parliament in our Supplementary Estimate (HC 64) for the net resource
requirement. The graphic below summarises our financial performance on the 'voted'
element of our budget. Financial performance 2019-20 Our financial performance
follows our strategic performance, being dominated by a shifting electoral timetable.
For the year 2019-20: our staff costs represent 47% of our expenditure, which is the
same as 2018-19 our operating costs rose from 28% to 36% of our allocated budget due
to additional public awareness work for the European Parliamentary elections and the
UK Parliamentary general election we saw a similar spend for EU referendum operating
costs, which represent the costs of litigation defended net of costs received during
the year our capital expenditure had a slight increase from 4.3% to 4.5% We report
our underspend on the Treasury's usual measure ("R-DEL excluding depreciation") as
this reflects in-year operational decisions. In 2019-20 this was £1.5m against the
voted budget of £20.3m (7.4%). This was predominantly due to unused contingency and
other savings in delivering the unscheduled UK Parliamentary general election. The
cancellation, in March 2020 of the May 2020 polls, by the UK Government also caused
the deferral of significant costs into 2020-21, increasing the underspend in this
year. Excluding these exceptional factors, the underspend was £0.369m (1.8%), meeting
our corporate objective. However due to these exceptional factors we have chosen to
report that objective as unmet within our performance report. The underspend is
comprised of: £599k underspend on the UK Parliamentary general election £589k in
reduced campaign spending due to the cancellation of the May 2020 elections £96k in
reduced staffing costs £76k of unexpected income from the Senedd and Scottish

Parliament. £103k as a combination of smaller underspends £33k of unclaimed policy development grant Other £235k in depreciation due to reduced capital spend £415k in provisions due to lower than expected legal costs £111k in capital projects The £21k underspend against non-voted funding is due to lower than expected costs for Commissioners. Our income in our accounts relates to charges for registering political parties and work completed for the Senedd and Scottish Parliament. We collect fines raised against political parties and individuals for failure to comply with the rules on party and election finance and then surrender these to the Consolidated Fund as required by law. The penalties due was £232,980 in 2019-20 received by 31 March 2020 and surrendered to the Consolidated Fund. In addition to monitoring performance against budgets, we also managed within our cash limits set by Parliament. We required cash amounting to £20.2m in 2019-20 to finance our voted activities, which was £1.5m less than the sum of £21.7m approved by the UK Parliament in our Supplementary Estimate. The reconciliation of net resources outturn to net cash requirement provides a reconciliation from our outturn to the net cash we required in-year. The Statement of Cash Flows shows that the cash balance as at 31 March 2020 was £197k. The Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2019 shows negative taxpayers' equity of £0.4m due to outstanding invoices accrued for. Supplier payments Although we are independent of government, we aim to comply with the Prompt Payment Code that operates across the public sector. The target is to pay undisputed invoices within 30 days. In 2019-20, we paid 81.6% of invoices (99.9% in 2018-19) within 30 days. The reduction was due to a required change in process for purchase orders, which is now in place meaning we anticipate performance now increasing again. Freedom of Information, complaints and parliamentary questions We are committed to the principles of openness and transparency in public life and acknowledge the duty to provide information to the public. In 2019-20, we received 287 Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, a significant increase on the 224 we received in the previous year. We responded to 59.4% of these within the 20 working days statutory timeframe (against a target of 90%) due to an increased number of large and complex requests during the electoral events. The proportion of large, complex and repeated requests has also increased compared to previous years. We responded to 13 FOI internal review requests, 4.5% of the total requests answered. The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) notified us of six complaints, one related to a subject access request and five related to FOI requests; this is less than 2% of the total FOI requests answered in 2019-20. We received 20 subject access requests, compared to five in 2018-19. We responded to all of these promptly. We received one complaint and this is pending closure from the ICO. We also received six requests for erasure under the General Data Protection Regulation/Data Protection Act 2018. The holding of the European Parliamentary elections and UK Parliamentary general election contributed to most of the increase in the volume of requests we received in 2019-20. We handled 51 complaints, compared to 37 in 2018-19. We upheld three complaints and partially upheld a further three. These complaints were mainly due to administrative errors and delays in responding to queries. We received 11 requests for review. While none of these reviews changed the original outcome of the complaint, they did enable further explanation and assistance. The Parliamentary Ombudsman is considering one complaint and we are awaiting the outcome of that. In addition, we received correspondence from 709 members of the public complaining about difficulties in being able to vote due to the Brexit-related short lead in notice to the European Parliamentary elections. We responded to 49 parliamentary questions during 2019-20, including questions about digital campaigning, electoral fraud, the accuracy and completeness of the electoral

registers and the effectiveness of electoral law. Bridget Phillipson MP, a member of the Speaker's Committee, was our spokesperson in the UK Parliament and answered questions on our behalf. Supply estimate for 2020-21 Our supply estimate for 2020-21 (HC303) provides for a net resource requirement of £21.9m. The Speaker's Committee approved this on 29 April 2020. There is no reason to believe that future approvals will not be forthcoming. We plan to use these resources to continue delivering our four goals around the delivery of elections, the regulation of political finance, the use of our expertise to improve democratic processes and the best use of our resources.

1. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the data was not available from our landlord at the time of publishing. We will publish this data on our website in due course.

■ Back to content at footnote 1 a b c d Related content Testing the EU referendum question Find out about our testing of the EU referendum question Report: Voting in 2017 Read our report about voting at the general election in 2017 Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run Results and turnout at the 2017 UK general election View the results and turnout at the 2017 general election

Report: How the 2016 National Assembly for Wales elections were run | Electoral Commission Search Report: How the 2016 National Assembly for Wales elections were run You are in the Senedd elections section Home Senedd elections On this page About the elections Registration and turnout The administration of the poll The voter experience Political parties and candidates Election results Recommendations: Legislation Recommendations: Wales Delivery Group Recommendations: Candidacy Recommendations: Campaign costs Recommendations: Party registration Recommendations: Candidate spending Recommendations: The Commission's powers Recommendations: Social media Recommendations: Electoral registration Download our full report First published: 9 July 2019 Last updated: 7 August 2019 About the elections On 5 May 2016 there were a number of different polls held across the UK. This report looks specifically at the administration of the elections to the National Assembly for Wales. These elections were combined with the Police and Crime Commissioner elections in Wales, and in Ogmore a UK Parliamentary by-election was held on the same day. Whilst there were some issues, which the report will look at in greater detail, overall, our assessment is that the National Assembly for Wales' elections were well-run with few problems. Voters were generally satisfied with the process of voter registration and of voting whether in person at a polling station or by post or proxy. Registration and turnout A total of 2.246 million people were registered to vote in the National Assembly for Wales elections on 5 May 2016. This was fewer than in 2011 and fractionally lower than in 2007. Over 1.02 million voted in the elections. Overall turnout at the elections was 45.6% in the constituency election and 45.4% in the regional election. The highest turnout was 56.8% in Cardiff North and the lowest 34.6% in Alyn and Deeside. This is the second highest recorded turnout at elections to the National Assembly for Wales. By comparison, turnout at the Scottish Parliamentary election was 55.6% and at the election to the Northern Ireland Assembly was 54.9%. Section 2.13 shows turnout for all the polls held on 5 May. In total, 17.6% of the electorate had a postal vote for this election. This compares to 17.0% in 2011, 12.2% in 2007 and 6.9% in 2003. 73.9% of postal votes in the constituency election and 73.8% of postal votes in the regional election were returned. Postal votes accounted for 27.6% of votes cast in the constituency election and 27.5% of votes in the regional election. The administration of the poll The National Assembly elections in Wales were held over 40 constituencies, which mirror UK Parliamentary constituencies, and five electoral regions, those being: North Wales Mid and West Wales South Wales West South Wales Central South Wales East The voter experience Our public opinion research suggests that most voters believed the elections were well-run and were satisfied with the process of registering to vote and voting. There remains a low level of awareness on how the registration process works however. Most notably, more than one in three (35%) people believe you are automatically registered if you are of voting age and almost one in three (27%) say you can register to vote until the day before the election. In terms of the election itself, the majority of respondents said that they knew a great or a fair amount about these elections with 81% agreeing that they had enough information on how to cast their vote. Political parties and candidates Table 1: Candidates and parties that took part in the 2016 elections as compared to 2011 2011 2016 Constituency candidates 176 248 Political Parties on regional lists 13 17 Independent candidates on regional lists 1 2 From the numbers of candidates and regional lists nominated by political parties, the following trends are apparent: Once again, the Welsh Labour Party, Welsh Conservative and Unionist Party, Plaid Cymru, and the Welsh Liberal Democrats, nominated candidates in all 40 Assembly constituencies and all five

electoral regions. The UK Independence Party (UKIP) stood candidates in 38 of the 40 constituencies, and in all five regions, compared to 2011 where they did not nominate any constituency candidates. The Welsh Green Party, Abolish the Welsh Assembly Party, and Freedom to Choose, nominated candidates in constituency and/or regional elections, but not in every constituency or region. A total of 12 parties nominated constituency candidates, and 17 parties contested regional seats. In addition, eight constituencies and two regions were contested by independent candidates. Our post-election survey of candidates suggests that the majority of candidates agreed that it was easy to find out what to do to become a candidate, and nearly half agreed that the rules on spending and donations are clear. Election results Table 2: National

	Political parties	Percentage of vote	Constituency seats	Regional seats	Total seats
Welsh Labour	33.1%	27	2	29	6
Plaid Cymru	20.7%	6	6	12	6
Welsh Conservatives	20%	5			5
UKIP	12.7%	0	7	7	11
Liberal Democrats	7.1%	1	0	1	0
Other	3.2%	0	0	0	0
Green Party	2.7%	0			0
Independent	0.5%	0	0	0	0

Recommendations: Legislation Recommendation 1: Timely and accurate legislation in Welsh and English To ensure greater accuracy, we recommend that a wider discussion is had on the most effective way to check draft regulations for elections in Wales before they are laid leading to establishing a user group to consider any Welsh language regulations during the drafting period. The group should include, but not be limited to, Electoral Commission staff, and representatives of the Wales electoral community. We would also re-emphasise that all legislation relating to electoral events, including funding legislation is clear (either by Royal Assent to primary legislation, or by laying secondary legislation for approval by the Assembly / Parliament) at least six months before it is required to be implemented or complied with— this would include accurate and timely prescribed forms in both English and Welsh. Any delay to the publication of Welsh language forms puts elections teams and voters in Wales at a significant disadvantage and can pose a risk to the relevant election. Recommendations: Wales Delivery Group Recommendation 2: Wales Delivery Group A permanent Wales Delivery Group should continue to meet in order to further improve and streamline planning for future electoral events, and to provide opportunities for discussing key areas of common concern. The Commission will draft terms of reference and seek views from all key partners, with this work beginning by the end of 2016. Recommendation 3: Colour of the ballot paper For future elections the Wales Delivery Group should consider the colour of the ballot papers to be used for each election and issue an appropriate recommendation, thus providing ROs and their staff with clarity from an early stage. Recommendation 4: Regional and cross-authority working Working on a regional level represents a significant challenge for Regional Returning Officers, Constituency Returning Officers and electoral administrators and it is important that there are strong communication networks and systems in place to facilitate the planning process. For future regional elections we will facilitate discussion, through the Wales Delivery Group, on how Returning Officers and electoral administrators could work on a cross-authority basis to improve decision making and operational effectiveness. Recommendations: Candidacy Recommendation 5: Commencement of candidacy The relevant Government should ensure that the date of publication of notice of election should fall on the same day as the dissolution of the Assembly, to avoid a period of time where spending is not regulated. Recommendations: Campaign costs Recommendation 6: Costs relating to an individual's disability and translation from Welsh to English and vice versa Governments with legislative competence over elections within the UK should amend the definitions of political party and candidate spending so that reasonable expenses that can be attributed to an individual's disability are exempt, (as was recently set out in the

revised Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 rules for non-party campaigners). As the PPERA non-party campaigner rules now exempt the costs associated with translating Welsh to and vice versa, we recommend that equivalent legal provisions should be introduced by the relevant Government/s into the election rules covering campaign spending by political parties and candidates. Recommendations: Party registration Recommendation 7: Registration of party names and descriptions for use on ballot papers We continue to recommend that where a candidate represents a political party on a ballot paper, it should be clear to voters which party the candidate represents. The legal provisions for registration of party descriptions present risks of confusion for voters and restrict the participation of political parties. The Welsh Government and other Governments of the UK should work with the Electoral Commission to reform the provisions on party descriptions. Recommendations: Candidate spending Recommendation 8: Transparency and accessibility of candidate spending To improve transparency and accessibility of candidate spending returns, we have previously recommended that Returning Officers should be required to publish spending returns online as well as through the existing methods of public inspection. We support recommendation 12-5 of the Law Commissions' review 12 of Electoral Law which proposes a method for implementing this change through legislation.¹ Recommendations: The Commission's powers Recommendation 9: Extending investigative and sanctioning powers We continue to recommend extending our investigative and sanctioning powers at major elections for offences relating to candidate spending and donations, including at National Assembly for Wales elections. It will be important for Governments and Parliaments across the UK to work together on introducing the Commission's new powers for different sets of elections. Recommendations: Social media Recommendation 10: Reporting use of social media at future elections We will give further consideration to how campaigners should report spend on social media at future elections. As spend in this area grows, there is the potential for less transparency if expenditure on social media is not easily identifiable within the spending returns, because social media is not a specific reporting category. This will need to be considered as part of reviewing all of the expenditure reporting categories to ensure that they remain proportionate and relevant to future trends in campaigning. In case any of these changes would need to be implemented through legislation, we recommend that the UK Government and Welsh Government and legislatures should consider the timing needed for implementing changes before the next major elections.² Recommendations: Electoral registration Recommendation 11: Providing an online registration status check Providing a way for electors to check their registration status at the beginning of the online registration application process would reduce the action required by voters to keep their register entry up to date, and would also reduce the impact on EROs of processing duplicate applications. The UK Government should develop an online service to allow people to check whether they are already correctly registered to vote before they complete a new application to register. Any such service would need to carefully manage and protect voters' personal information. Download our full report 2016 National Assembly for Wales election report 1. Law Commission's Review of Electoral Law, Recommendation 12-3, page 161 http://www.lawcom.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/electoral_law_interim_report.pdf and recommendation 37 of the Electoral Commission's Regulatory Review of Party and Election Finance 2013 http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/157499/PEF-RegulatoryReview-2013.pdf. ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. We made the same recommendation in relation to the UK Parliamentary Election spending categories, and

for Scottish Parliament and Northern Ireland Assembly elections in our post-election reports in 2015 and 2016. ■ Back to content at footnote 2 Related content Report on the May 2021 elections in Wales Read our report about how the 2021 elections in Wales were run Results and turnout at the 2016 National Assembly for Wales election View the results and turnout at the 2016 National Assembly for Wales election Report: How the 2011 National Assembly for Wales elections were run Read our report about how the 2011 National Assembly for Wales elections were run Results and turnout at the 2016 National Assembly for Wales election View the results and turnout at the 2016 National Assembly for Wales election

Board minutes: 20 January 2021 | Electoral Commission Search
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Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Who was at the meeting Apologies Declarations of interest Minutes of the previous Board Meeting (EC 1/21) Update on elections (Oral) Business planning 2021/22 (EC 2/21) Update on Board Effectiveness review: proposed action plan (EC 3/21) Developing the effectiveness of the Commission Board (EC 4/21) Casework and the Committee on Standards in Public Life (Oral) Horizon scanning (EC 5/21) Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo) (EC 6/21) Audit Committee (EC 7/21) Chief Executive's update (EC 8/21) Commission Board action tracker (EC 9/21) Forward plan of Board business (EC 10/21) First published: 14 October 2021 Last updated: 14 October 2021 Meeting summary Date: Wednesday 20 January 2021 Time: 9.30am to 1pm Location: By video conference Date of next scheduled meeting: Wednesday 24 February 2021 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Rob Vincent, Meeting Chair Sue Bruce - As a participating observer pending receipt of Royal Warrant confirming term of office being extended Sarah Chambers Elan Closs Stephens Stephen Gilbert Alasdair Morgan Joan Walley In attendance Bob Posner, Chief Executive Craig Westwood, Director, Communications, Policy and Research Louise Edwards , Director, Regulation Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services Binnie Goh , General Counsel David Bailey, Head of Strategic Planning and Performance Carol Sweetenham, Head of Projects (items 5 and 6) Isabella Coventry, Senior Advisor, Performance and Insight (item 6) Dan Adamson, Head of Monitoring and Enforcement (item 7) Phil Thompson, Head of Research and Development (item 8) Heleen Jarvingh, Policy Advisor (item 8) Chantelle Shokar, Legal Assistant Zena Khan, Senior Advisor, Governance Apologies There were no apologies received. The Meeting Chair welcomed all to the meeting in particular Binnie Goh, the new General Counsel appointed to the Commission. Binnie takes over from Rupert Grist who acted up as Interim General Counsel for the last few months. The Board observed a moment of silence and contemplation in memory of Lizzie Tovey, a valued friend and colleague who passed away on Boxing Day. Declarations of interest There were no new declarations of interest. Minutes of the previous Board Meeting (EC 1/21) Resolved: That the minutes of the Commission Board meeting on 2 December 2020 be approved. Update on elections (Oral) The Board received an oral update from the Chief Executive, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance, Director, Communications, Policy and Research and Director, Regulation. It was noted that work had continued relating to legislation from the three governments and in supporting electoral administrators with preparing for the polls. The Board noted that a management information survey was carried out to collect a range of information and data on how polls are being organised locally. The Commission does this every year and the survey has been expanded this year to cover some of the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on planning. This will help us to understand how things are progressing in each local area and to build up a more complete picture of the arrangements that are being put in place and of the challenges and issues that are being reported. We have engaged with software and print suppliers through the Cabinet Office's suppliers group. For print suppliers in particular, the number of polls and complexity of combination are the main source of their challenges, increased by the ongoing impacts of the pandemic and the potential impacts on staff availability and production space and capacity. There had also been discussion about the costs and practical challenges of developing capacity to enable them to respond to an increase in levels of postal voters arising close to the polls. We continue to engage with Royal Mail on their preparations for

the polls, and they have confirmed that election mail will be treated as a priority. The Director, Communications, Policy and Research provided an update on research with voters which continued to indicate a clear desire among many for polling station voting, while also capturing a likely increase in the desire to vote by post. There had been ongoing public awareness and information activity, which continues according to plans, with additional activity scheduled to support voter engagement in the polls under Covid-safe conditions. The Director, Regulation updated Commissioners on the use of monitoring data and other sources of intelligence gathering that would guide campaigners to stay within the law. She updated also on an ongoing survey to understand the impact of Covid restrictions on campaign plans for the elections. The Board raised the issue of concerns around the security of postal votes. It was noted that guidance on security seals exists and awareness of the safeguards that are in place would be raised. Resolved: That the oral update be noted. Business planning 2021/22 (EC 2/21) The Board received the report, noting a draft outline closely based on previous business plans for the final draft. The Board discussed areas of the plan that needed to be more robust, looking at how we positioned ourselves outwardly and how we measured productivity during the pandemic. The Board noted that a fully developed draft would be brought to the February Board meeting. Resolved: That the proposed approach be approved. Update on Board Effectiveness review: proposed action plan (EC 3/21) The Board received the report on the proposed action plan for the Board, Audit Committee and Remuneration and Human Resources Committee following a review carried out by Advance Boardroom Excellence (ABE). The Board noted the administratively focussed nature of the consultant recommendations as opposed to focussing on a more strategic approach. The Board discussed the wider scope of the skills matrix in that it should reflect more broadly on succession planning for new Commissioners to include younger age ranges, experience of information technology and diversity. The Board thanked Commissioners Joan Walley and Sarah Chambers as well as the Head of Projects for working on this plan. Action: That the Executive Team should do some preparatory work with Commissioners on the thematic findings in the report to provide a basis for discussion with the new Chair. Resolved: That the actions and timescales outlined in the Board effectiveness action plan be agreed. Resolved: That the Executive Team should do some preparatory work with Commissioners on the thematic findings in the report to provide a basis for discussion with the new Chair.

Resolved: That the rejection of specific recommendations as detailed in the Board effectiveness action plan be approved. Resolved: That the Audit Committee would now be titled the Audit and Risk Committee. Developing the effectiveness of the Commission Board (EC 4/21) The Board received the report noting the potential governance changes to develop Commissioner non-executive contribution to the oversight and support of the Commission's work. The Board discussed more linked up working with external stakeholders across the regions of England in particular for better understanding on key issues, along with working collaboratively with the Executive Team. It was noted that this was helpful thinking for the future and planning such work on future agendas. Resolved: That the report be noted. Resolved: That an item be added to the Board effectiveness review action plan for consideration later in 2021 by the new Chair of the Commission with the Board. Resolved: That pending the arrival of a new Chair of the Commission, the Board nominate a lead Commissioner contact for each of the Directors in the intervening period. Casework and the Committee on Standards in Public Life (Oral) The Board received a presentation from the Director, Regulation and Head of Monitoring and Enforcement on the following key headlines: RoadTrip2015 BeLeave The Committee on Standards in

Public Life (CSPL) – Conservative and Unionist Party submission The Board welcomed the presentation and noted the insight it gave to how learning was incorporated into the Commission's regulatory approach. Resolved: That the presentation be noted.

Horizon scanning (EC 5/21) The Board received a report on work developed in the last year, with the aim of giving the Commission additional intelligence on how emerging trends and developments might challenge current policy and practice in relation to elections. The Board welcomed the progress on this area of work, and that this will enable input into the Board's forward looking strategic planning and risk management. It asked that social, economic, and attitudinal developments be given appropriate weight in the further development of the approach. Resolved: That the report be noted.

Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo) (EC 6/21) The RemCo Chair gave a brief update of the last Committee meeting on 2 December 2020, covering the following: Feedback from staff session People strategy Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) work Pay benchmarking exercise Resolved: That the Committee Chair approved minutes of the Committee meeting held on 2 December 2020 and oral update be noted.

Audit Committee (EC 7/21) The Audit Committee Chair had no further updates since the last update received at Board on 2 December 2020. Resolved: That the Committee Chair approved minutes of the Committee meeting held on 1 December 2020 be noted.

Chief Executive's update (EC 8/21) The Chief Executive introduced the report, drawing attention to the Bullying and Harassment report released in December 2020, the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the work of the Commission, and Commissioner recruitment. The Board thanked the Chief Executive and teams for a comprehensive update. Resolved: That the report be noted.

Commission Board action tracker (EC 9/21) Action: Deep dive financial risk item to stay open until a date has been allocated and the Forward plan of Board business updated to reflect this. Resolved: That the Commission Board action tracker with the above caveat be noted.

Forward plan of Board business (EC 10/21) Commissioners asked that a discussion of means of ensuring that the Board had contact with sections of the electorate which were not reflected in its composition should be scheduled for later in the year.

Action: A discussion of means of ensuring that the Board had contact with sections of the electorate which were not reflected in its composition be included onto the Forward plan of Board business. Resolved: That the Forward plan of Board business be noted.

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Report: How the May 2014 elections were run You are in the European Parliamentary elections section Home European Parliamentary elections On this page About this report and our role About the elections The Commission's role in encouraging voter registration Key facts and figures Download our full report First published: 20 June 2019 Last updated: 30 July 2019 About this report This report provides our assessment of how well the May 2014 European Parliamentary elections and the local government elections in England and Northern Ireland, were run. Our analysis reflects the experience of voters, based on public opinion research; electoral data; and feedback provided by Regional and Local Returning Officers and candidates and agents. It provides a forward look to future elections, highlighting the issues which the Commission considers need to be addressed to make sure that the interests of voters continue to be put first at future elections. About the elections On 22 May 2014 elections were held for the United Kingdom's 72 members of the European Parliament, for local councillors in approximately one third of local authority areas and for the 11 new councils in Northern Ireland. There were also elections for directly-elected Mayors in five local authorities (Hackney, Lewisham, Newham, Tower Hamlets, and Watford), one local referendum on proposals to introduce a directly elected mayoral system in Copeland (Cumbria) and neighbourhood planning referendums in Much Wenlock (Shropshire), Woburn Sands (Milton Keynes), and Strumpshaw (Norfolk). The voting system, number of candidates and parties standing and the number of seats contested at the elections on 22 May Election Voting system Number of candidates/parties Number of seats contested European Parliamentary elections – Great Britain Closed-list proportional representation 31 parties 70 European Parliamentary elections – Northern Ireland Single transferable vote 10 parties 3 Local government elections - England 'First-past-the-post' majoritarian c. 17,000 c. 2,400 Local government elections – Northern Ireland Single transferable vote 905 464 Mayoral elections Supplementary vote preferential 34 5 Neighbourhood planning referendum Majoritarian n/a n/a The highest number of parties standing in the European election was 17 in London. Roles and responsibilities for managing and delivering the elections For the European Parliamentary elections, a Regional Returning Officer (RRO) is appointed for each of the European electoral regions. The Deputy Prime Minister, as Lord President of the Council, was responsible in law for appointing RROs for each of the 11 electoral regions in Great Britain, while in Northern Ireland the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) fulfils the responsibility of Returning Officer at all elections, including RRO for the European Parliamentary elections. RROs have overall responsibility for the conduct of the European Parliamentary election within their electoral region. The running of the European Parliamentary election at a local level in Great Britain is the responsibility of Local Returning Officers (LROs). RROs can direct LROs to undertake certain functions and LROs have a duty to comply with such directions Where the polls for more than one election are combined the Returning Officer responsible for running the local government election will take on the majority of the functions of the LRO at the European Parliamentary election At local council elections in Northern Ireland each council has its own Deputy Returning Officer (DRO). Normally this is the Chief Executive but on this occasion a DRO was appointed prior to the elections for each of the 11 new council areas. The Commission sets, monitors and reports on performance standards for ROs in Great Britain. Building on the lessons we have learned from monitoring the performance of ROs over the last five years and taking account of the feedback we have received, we published a new performance standards framework in November 2013. The May 2014 polls were the

first at which we applied this framework, which was designed to support ROs in delivering a consistent high-quality service for voters and those standing for election. The new framework reflects what we and the UK Electoral Advisory Board agree that ROs need to do to prepare for and deliver well-run elections. The standards focus on the key outcomes from the perspective of voters and those who want to stand for election, and in particular whether ROs are taking the necessary steps to deliver the following outcomes: Voters are able to vote easily and know that their vote will be counted in the way they intended. It is easy for people who want to stand for election to find out how to get involved, what the rules are, and what they have to do to comply with these rules, and they can have confidence in the management of the process and the result. The standards cover the range of activities carried out by ROs in preparing for and delivering well-run elections including, for example, setting up and staffing polling stations, and delivering timely and accurate verification and count processes. A sample of 20% of ROs were selected for detailed monitoring at the May 2014 polls. The selection of this sample was principally risk-based, taking into account factors such as the experience of the RO and any previous issues as well as any other available information. The selection of the risk-based sample was made in consultation with the RROs. Additionally, the sample for monitoring included a random selection of ROs to mitigate the risks which could arise from only monitoring a known sample of ROs. Also, for the first time, we also monitored the performance of all RROs in carrying out their role in co-ordinating and managing the delivery of the polls. As for previous elections we provided guidance, tools and templates to support ROs in planning for and delivering the elections. The Cabinet Office established the Elections Policy Coordination Group (EPCG) to enable RROs to come together to: shape the legislative framework share and identify good practice discuss issues of common concern. The Cabinet Office should evaluate how this group worked in practice, and consider, what if any, role it might have for ensuring the effective coordination of the 2015 elections. The Commission's Elections, Referendum and Registration Working Group (ERRWG) continued to be a valuable forum for informing our approach to guidance and standards, and for discussions on practical issues relating to the delivery and coordination of the polls. Prior to the elections we identified 16 local authority areas where there could be a higher risk of allegations of electoral fraud. We worked closely with the relevant EROs and ROs, as well as the local police in the lead up to the election period to ensure that: The risk of electoral fraud had been robustly assessed locally. Appropriate preventative measures were in place in advance of the polls. Local elections staff and the police were equipped to respond quickly to any allegations of criminal activity. Our monitoring before and during the election period meant that we were confident that ROs and police forces in all 16 areas had appropriate plans in place to minimise the risk of electoral fraud and to respond effectively to any cases of alleged electoral fraud which might be reported. Some ROs sought to agree local codes and protocols with campaigners, although not all local parties and campaigners agreed to sign up to them. We will continue to share information about good practice that has been adopted with other ROs and EROs to help them plan for future elections. The Commission's role in encouraging voter registration Ahead of the elections we ran a UK-wide media campaign which aimed to increase public awareness of the need to register to vote by 6 May in order to take part in the elections. In Great Britain, our campaign ran from 1 April-5 May on TV, radio and online. In Northern Ireland our campaign ran from 14-30 April on TV, radio, online, press and outdoor (posters and billboards) As British citizens living

overseas are eligible to vote in the European Parliamentary elections, we ran an online registration campaign aimed at British expatriates in the top 10-20 countries with a high British expatriate population. The campaign ran from 24 February - 18 April in non-European countries and until 27 April in Europe. We also created radio fillers (non-date specific radio adverts) for expatriate radio stations, and worked in partnership with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, expatriate groups such as Votes for Expat Brits, and parties' overseas networks. We supplied template PR materials to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and asked them to distribute these via consulates and embassies to gain media coverage in countries with the highest numbers of British expatriates. Many consulates and embassies used these materials, which resulted in a number of pieces of coverage to support the campaign. In addition, we held an Overseas Registration Day on 26 February 2014. This was used as a hook for media releases. It was highlighted by our partners, and generated numerous pieces of coverage, both domestically and overseas. To support Overseas Registration Day Greg Clark MP (Minister of State, Cities and Constitution) also recorded a video message to expatriates urging them to register to vote ahead of the 22 May 2014 elections. In Northern Ireland we also ran a 'voter information' media campaign to remind voters to take their photographic ID with them to the polling station and to inform them that the Single Transferable Vote voting system would be used for both the local government and European elections. Our campaign ran from 7-22 May on radio, online, press and outdoor (posters and billboards). As with previous campaigns, all advertising across the UK directed people to the Commission's www.aboutmyvote.co.uk website where they could download registration forms and find out further information about the elections taking place in their area. We also set up a telephone helpline for the public awareness campaign period, allowing people to call for more information or to request a registration form. In Great Britain, 207,8157 registration forms were downloaded from our website, which exceeded both the number in 2009 (131,194) and our target of 140,000 forms. In Northern Ireland, 6,059 registration forms were downloaded from our website. This was lower than 2009 (7,007) and also fell short of our target of 10,000 forms. This may be due to our campaign going live shortly after the autumn 2013 canvass, which had seen an increase in registration levels. Due to their dispersed nature and the lack of reliable data on their numbers, British expatriates are a particularly difficult audience to target. This year we did a number of things differently for this aspect of the campaign, including working more closely with partners and holding an Overseas Registration Day. We achieved a total of 7,079 overseas registration form downloads from our website, which exceeded the number of forms downloaded during the campaigns undertaken prior to the European Parliamentary elections in 2009 (5,566) but fell well short of our target of 25,000 forms. Although we were disappointed not to hit our target, we recognise that expatriates at these elections may have chosen to register to vote in their EU countries of residence. For example, according to official figures from Spain, 82,000 out of 336,586 foreigners registered to vote ahead of the European elections were British nationals. Despite not hitting our target for this element of campaign, we did receive a very positive reaction to our adverts, with over 87,000 clicks on our online advertising being recorded during the course of the campaign. It is possible that many of these individuals felt the process of downloading, printing - and then having another British passport holder countersign - the form was too onerous a task. The introduction of online registration will make this process a great deal more straightforward in future. We will be reviewing our approach and looking to build on successes as we plan for the

UK Parliamentary general election. We intend to again set a stretching target and will report on the impact that online registration has had on this audience in our report following the general election. To evaluate the effectiveness of our UK-wide registration campaign, we carried out tracking research in two stages – before the campaign launched and just after the campaign ended. In Northern Ireland, we also carried out tracking research after the ‘voter information’ campaign. In both cases, we met our target of reaching 60-70% of the target population. Sixty nine per cent of the population in Great Britain, and 78% of the population in Northern Ireland, reported seeing at least one element of our registration campaign. We also met our target of 95-98% of people in Northern Ireland knowing they needed to bring ID with them to the polling station: 95% of the population were aware of the requirement to take a valid form of photographic ID with them to vote. Bite the Ballot held a “National Voter Registration Day” on 5 February. To support this, we provided them with a link to the public awareness resources on our website. Key facts and figures Registration and turnout 46.55 million people were eligible to vote in the European Parliamentary elections and 21.7 million and 1.2 million in the local government elections in England and Northern Ireland respectively. Turnout at the elections on 22 May Election Number of ballot papers included in the count Turnout European Parliamentary elections (UK) 16.54 million 35.6 Local government elections - England 7.95 million 36.0 Local government elections – Northern Ireland 638,332 51.3 The chart below shows the variation in turnout since the 2010 UK Parliamentary General election. Turnout at the European Parliamentary election was similar in 2014 to that in 2009. Turnout at elections between 2009 and 2014 At the European Parliamentary elections, 11.5 million people in Great Britain and 12.1 million people across the UK cast their vote in their local polling station, accounting for 70% of all votes cast. This represents a turnout of 30% in Great Britain and 30.5% in the UK. Postal votes were issued to around 6.65 million electors (16% of the eligible electorate in the UK) with a turnout rate of 69.5% among postal voters. The majority of these were issued across Great Britain where postal voting is available on demand: England, 16%, Scotland, 15.9%, Wales 16.9%. By comparison, 1.5% of the electorate were issued with a postal vote in Northern Ireland. For the European Parliamentary elections approximately 51,690 electors were appointed as a proxy for another elector, representing 0.1% of the total electorate. 1,013 were emergency proxies (Great Britain). For the local government elections in England there were approximately 19,500 proxy voters and 430 emergency proxy voters. 70 were proxies appointed as a result of medical emergencies for the local government elections in 2013. Download our full report European parliamentary and local elections report May 2014 Related content Report: Campaign spending at the 2014 European Parliamentary elections Read our report about campaign spending at the 2014 European Parliamentary elections Results and turnout at the 2014 European Parliamentary elections View the results and turnout at the 2014 European Parliamentary elections Report: May 2019 European Parliamentary elections and local elections Read our report about the 2019 European Parliamentary elections and local elections Inquiry report: the voting registration process for EU citizens resident in the UK for the 2019 European Parliamentary elections held in the UK Read our inquiry report about the voting registration process for the 2019 European Parliamentary election

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Campaigning at the elections First published: 8 October 2019 Last updated: 8 October 2019 Overview On 23 May 2019 people across the UK voted in elections to the European Parliament, which had remained scheduled in law, but had not been expected to take place. For people in Northern Ireland and parts of England, this poll closely followed scheduled local elections which took place on 2 May. Trusted election results rely on public confidence in the administration of the polls. Our research with the public shows that a majority of people were confident the May 2019 elections were well-run, and most voters were satisfied with the voting process. But overall levels of confidence about the European Parliamentary elections and the local government elections in England were lower than at other recent elections.

Summary The impact on confidence in the elections Among issues which impacted on people's confidence in the elections, most notable and regrettable were the issues experienced by some citizens of other EU member states living in the UK who wanted to vote in the European Parliament elections in the UK. We highlighted similar difficulties to government after the 2014 European Parliamentary elections and made recommendations for change. It is unacceptable that people eligible to vote should be frustrated from doing so, and deeply regrettable that this was not acted on and resolved by the UK government. Any changes to the process would have required the Government to introduce legislation, but the law was not changed ahead of the 2019 election. The difficulties were also exacerbated by government not confirming the position on these elections proceeding until very late in the lead up to May 2019, which meant that Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) had not sent declaration forms to EU citizens in the months before the election, as would usually have been the case. Overseas electors also contacted us during and after the European Parliamentary elections to express concern that they had been unable to return postal votes in time to be counted. This is not a new issue and again the UK government has not addressed this problem by making changes in the law, so effectively denying numbers of UK citizens overseas who are entitled to vote a reasonably practical way to actually vote. We will continue to urge the Government to introduce new approaches to improving access to the voting process for overseas electors, as has been readily and successfully done in other comparable democracies.

Digital campaigning Voters continued to receive information about election campaigns from a range of sources, and social media and other online campaigns were a significant source of information for voters at the May 2019 elections. The larger social media platforms took steps to improve transparency about political advertising for their users. Governments in the UK need to now make swift progress on legislation that would require campaigners to include imprints on their digital campaign material to show who has distributed it. We also want social media companies to continue to develop their political ad policies and libraries, and ensure they have them in place for the next set of national elections or any further referendums in the UK. This also requires us to have new electoral regulatory rules to ensure proper oversight and controls.

Electoral law needs to be updated Many of the issues highlighted in our report are not new, and we have said for some time that the failure of governments and parliaments to properly maintain and update electoral law, and to address pressure on local authorities, has built up significant risks for well-run elections. The 2019 elections illustrate that electoral law is increasingly

complex and outdated, and presents real risks for voters, candidates and campaigners, and electoral administrators. The difficulties experienced by some EU citizens in the UK and British citizens living abroad at the May 2019 European Parliamentary elections have again shown the impact on elections of governments not acting on recommendations to prioritise the interests of voters. Delivering well-run elections Effective electoral administration that supports voter confidence depends on good planning and management by EROs and Returning Officers (ROs). While ROs and EROs will always need to be prepared to respond to unanticipated political developments, governments should also ensure that their decisions support effective contingency planning. We will continue to strongly emphasise the need for governments to ensure there is clarity about the legal framework for elections at least six months before EROs and ROs need to deliver statutory processes. Given all of this, it is an immense credit to the ROs and other electoral staff across the country that they achieved what they did in the circumstances: largely well-run elections in the face of substantial challenges. We will continue to work with the electoral community to explore what more can be done within the current framework to address the challenges around resilience and capacity in local electoral services. The experience of voters Confidence that the elections were well-run Trusted election results rely on public confidence in the administration of the polls. Our research with the public after elections aims to understand levels of confidence in how well elections are run, and how satisfied people are with the current voting process. When asked as part of our research, most people said they were confident that the May 2019 elections were well-run. A slightly smaller proportion of people (62%) said they were confident the May 2019 European Parliamentary elections were well-run, compared to just under two thirds (64%) of people in England who said they thought the local government elections were well-run. In Northern Ireland three quarters of people said they thought the local government elections there were well-run. Across all elections, people who voted were more likely to say they were confident that the elections were well-run than those who didn't vote. Levels of confidence were lower following the May 2019 elections than in previous years, including when elections have been called at short notice (for example, the Northern Ireland Assembly and UK Parliamentary general elections in 2017). Chart 1: Confidence that elections were well-run, 2014-19 More than a fifth (22%) of people we asked said they were not confident the European Parliamentary elections were well-run. The most common reason given (mentioned by 57% of those who said they were not confident the elections were well-run) was that 'some people did not have the opportunity to vote/had the opportunity taken away'. Only 7% of people mentioned this in relation to the local elections, and 16% in relation to the Northern Ireland local elections. Around two-fifths of people (42%) who were not confident the European Parliamentary elections were well-run also mentioned that 'some people had difficulties registering to vote'. Again, this was less commonly mentioned in relation to the local elections in England and Northern Ireland, by only 7% of people who were not confident the elections were well-run. Most people who voted in the May 2019 elections also said that they were satisfied with the process of voting: 85% of voters at the European Parliamentary elections 91% of voters at the local elections in England 95% of voters at the local elections in Northern Ireland The reasons voters gave for not being satisfied were the same as why they were not confident that the elections were well run. Registration and voting by citizens of other EU countries Citizens of EU Member States living in the UK can choose to cast their vote at the European Parliamentary elections here, rather than the elections in the state where they hold citizenship. If they prefer to cast their vote here, they

first need to be on the register to vote at local government elections in the UK, and they also have to complete and submit an additional declaration (citizens of the Republic of Ireland, Cyprus and Malta do not need to complete this declaration). This in order to specify that they will not be voting in the same election in another country. In the weeks leading up to the May 2019 election, significant concerns were raised by and on behalf of some EU citizens in the UK, who said that they had experienced difficulty submitting their declaration before the legal deadline on 7 May 2019. Ultimately, this meant that some people who were entitled to vote and wanted to vote in the European Parliament elections in the UK were unable to do so. This is unacceptable in a modern democracy. Many of them rightly felt frustrated, disappointed that, and angry that they were unable to vote. We have collated information from the concerns raised with us by EU citizens and others before polling day, on polling day itself and in the days thereafter, as well as data provided by EROs. We have published a more detailed analysis of this evidence separately. In summary, the feedback and comments we received from EU citizens, their families and elected representatives highlighted three main areas of concern: that they had not been aware of the need to complete an additional declaration as well as an application to register to vote that they had not been able to submit a declaration in time before the deadline set in law that they thought they had submitted a declaration in time, but were still not included on the electoral register and were not able to vote. It is not possible to conclusively verify the numerical estimates of those affected. This is because there are no comprehensive data sources available to us or any other body that would tell us how many voters wanted to register and were unable to do so, or tell us how many attended a polling station on 23 May but were not able to be issued with a ballot paper. Data provided by Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) after the election shows that in the weeks leading up to the deadline more than 400,000 EU citizens submitted a declaration that was received and processed. This meant that they were able to vote in the UK at the 2019 European Parliament elections. In total, around 450,000 were registered to vote in these European Parliament elections as a result of returning a declaration (UC1 form). This represents just over a fifth of citizens of other EU Member States who had been included in the May 2019 local government register. Approximately four in five EU citizens (1.7 million) who had previously registered to vote did not submit an additional declaration in time to be registered to vote at the European Parliament elections in the UK. Some of these people may have wanted to vote in the UK but were not able to submit the declaration in time before the deadline, although we have no data that allows us to assess how many were in this position. Equally, it is not possible to assess how many of these people opted to vote in the EU Member State where they held citizenship, or actively decided not to vote in the election at all. This was not the first time that these types of issues had arisen at European Parliamentary elections in the UK. Our report on the 2014 European Parliament elections highlighted that citizens of other EU member states had raised similar concerns about the registration and declaration process for those elections. We said then that the UK Government needed to work with the Commission, electoral administrators, and groups representing EU citizens to find solutions in good time before the next European Parliamentary elections. Any changes to the process would have required the Government to introduce legislation, but the law was not changed ahead of the 2019 election. The UK Government indicated in February 2015 that it planned further discussions with us and other stakeholders on the registration process for EU citizens, but no such discussions were held. Immediately following the

May 2015 UK Parliamentary general election the Government introduced legislation to hold a referendum on the UK's membership of the EU, and the result of the June 2016 referendum meant that it was widely expected that European Parliamentary elections would no longer take place in the UK. The difficulties that we had identified in 2014 were exacerbated by the circumstances leading up to the 2019 European Parliamentary elections. Given that the UK had been expected to leave the European Union on 29 March 2019, the UK Government had made clear its position that the UK would not be required to take part in the 2019 European Parliamentary elections. In the event, that proved to be wrong, and government had not properly contingency planned for these scheduled elections having to proceed. One direct and harmful impact was that EROs were not in a position to send declaration forms to EU citizens who were already registered as local government electors after the annual electoral registration canvass in December 2018, as they had usually done before European Parliamentary elections in previous years. On 29 March 2019, we wrote to Cabinet Minister David Lidington highlighting the ongoing uncertainty about whether the European Parliamentary elections would be held in the UK, and on the need for assurances to Returning Officers that they would be reimbursed for any reasonable spending on contingency preparations. It was not until 8 April that the Government made the legislation confirming that polling day for the European Parliamentary elections in the UK would be 23 May 2019. EROs were then in a position to commit resources to begin sending declaration forms to EU citizens who were already registered as local government electors, including using email where they held addresses. Many EROs faced significant logistical challenges, however, given that electoral administrators and their printing and despatch suppliers in many areas of England and across Northern Ireland were also delivering the scheduled early May local government elections. The experience of EU citizens at the May 2019 European Parliamentary elections in the UK illustrates the impact of making significant decisions about elections without thinking through all the possible contingencies and making sure the interests of voters are always put first. By not taking steps to proactively identify alternative solutions soon after the 2014 election, and then simply assuming there was no chance of European elections happening again, the UK Government missed the opportunity to legislate for improvements to the process for future elections. Moreover, while the political circumstances leading up to the 2019 elections were exceptional, the continued uncertainty about whether the election would go ahead meant that EU citizens received less timely information about what they needed to do to be able to vote than in previous years. More widely, our research with the public suggests that the experience of EU citizens may have had an impact on overall levels of confidence in the 2019 European Parliamentary elections in the UK. Public confidence could again be harmed if significant decisions about whether or how elections will take place are made so close to polling day in future. Effective electoral administration that supports voter confidence depends on good planning and management by EROs and ROs. While they will always need to be prepared to respond to unanticipated political developments – such as an early UK Parliamentary general election, for example – governments should ensure that their decisions support effective contingency planning. We will continue to strongly emphasise the need for governments to ensure there is clarity about the legal framework for elections at least six months before EROs and ROs need to deliver statutory processes. Voting by British citizens living abroad British citizens living abroad were entitled to vote in the European Parliamentary elections, and more than 16,000 British citizens applied and were registered ahead of the May 2019 elections. Overseas electors were not entitled to

vote in the local government elections in England and Northern Ireland. Overseas electors contacted us during and after the election to express concern that they had been unable to return postal votes in time to be counted. We reported on the same concerns from overseas electors after the 2015 and 2017 UK Parliamentary general elections and the 2016 EU referendum. There is only a limited period for postal ballot packs to be sent by post, received by overseas electors and returned before the end of polling day. Returning Officers cannot print ballot papers until after the end of the period for nominating parties and candidates, which closed just under a month before polling day for the European Parliamentary elections. To minimise the impact of these challenges, our guidance recommends that Returning Officers should issue postal ballot packs to overseas electors as early as practicable in the election timetable. However, Returning Officers still need time to secure printers and to ensure that ballot papers and postal vote packs are checked for accuracy, which impacts on how quickly they can despatch postal votes. We also recommend that they should use an international business response licence for return envelopes to help ensure postal votes can be returned as quickly as possible from outside the UK. Returning Officers also told us that there were specific pressures at the 2019 election which meant it was even harder to ensure overseas electors received their postal ballot packs in time to return them before the close of poll. Late confirmation that the election would be held meant that Returning Officers had much less time than usual to plan and arrange postal ballot pack print and delivery contracts. Also, Returning Officers in many parts of England and in Northern Ireland were involved in delivering scheduled local government elections at the same time. Additionally, postal services outside the UK are not always reliable enough for all overseas electors to receive and return their postal votes in time to be counted. Without action by the Government to identify and legislate for realistic alternatives, Returning Officers will continue to be faced with these challenges, and overseas electors will face these problems again at the next UK Parliamentary election. Now that ROs are routinely using international business response licence for the return of overseas postal votes, the UK Government, Returning Officers and the Electoral Commission should work with Royal Mail to explore whether there are any other options to help ensure that postal votes are sent out as quickly as possible to addresses outside the UK, within the constraints of the current legislative framework. The Government has previously indicated that it intends to extend the right to vote in UK Parliamentary elections to all British citizens abroad, rather than to just those who have lived in the UK in the last 15 years. As part of any future legislation on overseas electors, we will continue to urge the Government to consider new approaches to improving access to the voting process. This could include voting at embassies and consulates, or the ability to download and print postal ballot papers. Both of these means are successfully used in other comparable democracies enabling overseas electors to readily and efficiently vote. Delivering the elections – the experience of electoral administrators While most people were confident that the May 2019 elections were well-run, and were satisfied with the voting process, we identified problems which could have had an impact on people's confidence in the elections. These issues must, however, be considered in the context that elections continue to be run against a challenging resource backdrop. Both financial pressures and a decreasing availability of expertise in the sector, with skilled administrators leaving the profession and not always able to be replaced, mean that the risks to the successful delivery of elections continue to increase. Administrators are reliant on a relatively small pool of specialist software and

print management suppliers, which can also impact on their ability to ensure that voters receive a high quality service. Furthermore, for these elections, until 1 April 2019 there was no guarantee from the UK Government that any reasonable spending on contingency preparations would be reimbursed for the European Parliamentary elections. This had a significant impact on the ability of administrators to make necessary preparations and effective contingency plans for these elections. Where administrators were also facing local elections in early May, this meant that a lot of activity for the two different polls needed to be carried out at the same time, significantly stretching already thin resources. Fundamentally, the evidence below further illustrates that current electoral law is increasingly complex, outdated and not fit for purpose, and contributes to issues which impact directly on voters, candidates and campaigners. Fundamental electoral reform is needed to ensure elections can be administered more efficiently, and that voters and candidates can have a better experience of the electoral process. In the meantime, we will continue to work with the electoral community – including with the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers, the Society of Local Authority Lawyers & Administrators in Scotland, the Association of s, the Scottish Assessors Association and the Electoral Management Board for Scotland – to look at what more we can all do to address the immediate challenges of capacity and resilience within local authority electoral services. Delivering the elections – the experience of electoral administrators Preparing to deliver the elections We asked electoral administrators to tell us about their own experiences of delivering the elections and the practical difficulties they faced. Administrators told us that the late confirmation of the European Parliamentary elections, coupled with the overlapping timetables with the scheduled local government elections, presented difficulties in booking places to be used as polling stations and count venues and securing polling station staff. Some staff were no longer available as they had not anticipated being needed to work. Many suppliers and printers were also at full capacity which meant that administrators had little flexibility to control the timing of the printing of poll cards and postal ballot packs to ensure the earliest possible delivery to electors. The impact of this was particularly notable in Northern Ireland where the deadline to apply for an absent vote for the European Parliamentary elections fell on polling day for the local elections. This put additional pressure on electoral staff and caused confusion for voters. Given the volume of stationery which had to be printed for the local elections, the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) was unable to print and issue poll cards until after the absent voting deadlines. This had an adverse impact on voters in Northern Ireland as they received this important information too late to apply for an absent vote. Contingency preparations in Northern Ireland In Great Britain, as independent statutory office holders who are typically also senior officers within local authorities, most RROs and ROs had sufficient flexibility to begin some appropriate contingency planning before it was formally confirmed that the European Parliamentary elections would take place. However, the structure of electoral management in Northern Ireland is different in that the CEO is directly appointed by and reports to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. In this context, we believe the CEO was restricted in what contingency arrangements she could put in place to manage the potential risks for voters caused by this lack of clarity. In 2011, we recommended that the UK Government should consult stakeholders in Northern Ireland on the accountability arrangements in place for the CEO's decision making. Although the context is different than in 2011, in our view this supports the continued importance of undertaking such a review. The nomination process In February

2019, ahead of the May elections, the law was changed to allow candidates at local government elections in England to choose not to have their home address printed on the statement of persons nominated and the ballot papers. We welcomed these changes, which should help to reduce the risk of abuse and intimidation of local election candidates and their families; however, candidates and ROs would have benefited from this new legislation being in place earlier. At the 2 May 2019 local elections in England, ROs told us that some candidates and agents found it difficult to understand the new nominations process, and found it harder to accurately complete the forms they needed to in order to stand for election. If the legislation had been in place earlier, there would have been more time available for the development and testing of the new nomination pack before it needed to be made available, and to provide updated guidance and template briefings sooner, which would have better supported electoral administrators and candidates to fully understand the new process. This reinforces the importance of legislation being clear six months before it needs to be complied with. We accept that the nomination packs we made available could be improved, and we are taking active steps to do so ahead of the next scheduled local elections, and will work with administrators and parties in doing this. Additionally, some candidates did not realise that their address would appear on the statutory notice of election agents if they nominated themselves as their own election agent and did not specify a different address. This would also be the case if the candidate did not appoint someone to be their agent, in which case they would automatically become the agent. Although the new rules helped candidates to protect their home address by not including it on ballot papers – where the information is not essential to enable voters to identify candidates – there are still some circumstances in which details of an address need to be made publicly available. As election agents are responsible for ensuring candidates comply with election law, details of a physical address are necessary so that any legal notices can be delivered. Removing addresses from the notice of election agents could make it harder to monitor and enforce the law. At the local government elections in England, we are aware of two instances where a candidate's address was published on the Statement of Persons Nominated when it should have been withheld. This could have compromised a candidate's safety if this was the reason why they did not want their address made public. As a result, these ROs¹ were assessed as not fully meeting our performance standards. Equivalent changes were not made for the local government elections in Northern Ireland. When nominations opened, a high profile councillor, who has a restraining order in place to protect her, announced that she would not be contesting the election because her home address would appear on the ballot paper. We welcome the Northern Ireland Office's commitment to change the law on this issue. Errors in delivering the election During the weeks leading up to polling day for the local government elections in England we became aware of several errors on election materials in a small number of local authorities. These included: errors on postal ballot papers (for example, missing off the name of a candidate) postal ballot packs sent with incorrect instructions about completing the ballot paper incorrect details on poll cards that were sent to electors Errors like these have the potential to cause confusion for voters, and may have meant that some voters were unable to have their votes counted in the way they intended. Although the ROs in all cases responded quickly to mitigate the impact of these errors, such issues can affect people's confidence in well run elections and their satisfaction with the voting process. As a result, a total of five ROs² were assessed as not fully meeting our performance standards. Errors at election counts It is important that voters, candidates and

political parties have confidence in the accuracy of the election counting process. We became aware of mistakes made in counting and totalling the number of votes in three local government elections in England in May 2019. In one local authority, a spreadsheet error in the calculation of votes meant that the wrong number of votes were allocated to some candidates in one ward. In the second and third authority, the RO declared the wrong candidate elected. The ROs accepted that they had made errors, but the law does not allow ROs to recount ballot papers or correct errors once they have declared a result. Election petitions were lodged in two to challenge the results of the elections, both of these have been upheld. All of these ROs 3 were assessed as not fully meeting our performance standards. We continue to recommend that electoral law reform is required to simplify the legal process for challenging elections, particularly so that mistakes made by ROs can be rectified more quickly without recourse to the election petition process.

Campaigning at the elections

Appropriate campaigns that communicate effectively with voters are central to well-run elections and referendums. When campaigners clearly explain their policies and political views, voters are better able to exercise their right to vote in a meaningful and informed way. Our research with the public after the May 2019 elections asked people if they had enough information about the candidates and parties standing for election. After the European Parliamentary elections 49% of people said they had enough information, but 44% said they would have liked more. These figures were similar in relation to the local elections in England, but lower than those saying they had enough information for the local elections in Northern Ireland (64%). We also asked people where they got their information from. Of those who said they saw information, the most common source across all the May elections was a leaflet or flyer from a candidate/political party. Other sources of information, including social media, are shown below.

Table 1: Most common sources of information about candidates and parties standing for election

Most commonly mentioned	2nd most common	3rd most common	4th most common	5th most common
European Parliamentary Leaflet or flyer from a candidate/political party (54%)	The press (38%)	Social media (26%)	Word of mouth/friend/ family (18%)	Candidate/ party's web-site and another website (16%)
Local Government – England Leaflet or flyer from a candidate/political party (48%)	Social media (12%)	Leaflet or flyer from another source (11%)	My local council website (9%)	Word of mouth/friend/ family (8%)
Local Government – Northern Ireland Leaflet or flyer from a candidate/political party (70%)	Poster or billboard (36%)	Word of mouth/friend/ family (26%)	Social media (25%)	Leaflet or flyer from another source (17%)

Campaigning at the elections

Transparency about election material online s are increasingly making use of digital campaign tools to influence voters during elections, including using social media and other online advertising tools. Evidence from our research with the public highlighted above shows use of social media and other online platforms as sources of information about the candidates and political parties standing in elections. Labelling and imprints for online election material Facebook, Twitter and Google all launched new advert labelling or 'Paid for by' disclaimers for some political advertising on their platforms and channels during the European Parliamentary election campaign. These new 'Paid for by' disclaimers increased transparency about who was spending money to influence voters at the European Parliamentary elections. But these disclaimers were not the same as the imprint (a short piece of text on election material that identifies who is behind it) that is required by law for printed election material, because they did not include the name and address of the campaigner. Currently, imprints are a legal requirement for any printed election material, but there are no

legal requirements for digital material. We are pleased that the UK Government has committed to implementing an imprint requirement for digital election material, and to publish legislative proposals by the end of this year. The social media companies' initiatives at the European elections have demonstrated that it is possible to add extra labelling to adverts on their platforms. They show that it should be possible for digital platforms and channels to facilitate campaigners to put imprints on digital election material if campaigners are legally required to include them in future. New imprint rules for digital election material should cover all non-printed election campaign material, not just social media advertising. They should also cover search and website advertising, campaigners' websites and emails, and any other form of online campaigning even if it is not paid-for advertising. There should be an exemption to make clear that they would not apply to individual citizens who are not 'campaigning' but only expressing personal opinions about elections or referendums online. Social media companies' advert libraries and reports Facebook, Google and Twitter voluntarily published advert libraries which contained the election advertising that ran on their platforms and channels ahead of the May 2019 European Parliamentary election. Facebook and Google published reports on the contents of their libraries. The reports listed who was campaigning, and gave summary information about how many adverts campaigners had taken out and how much they had spent. The libraries and reports helped us identify who was paying to advertise on these platforms, meaning we could advise campaigners during the campaign and giving us a new source of information to support our checks on reported spending after the poll. The ad libraries are now a way voters and others can get information about who viewed the adverts, but they do not yet provide meaningful information about how adverts were targeted. For example, they provide breakdowns of the very wide geographical areas targeted, such as England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, but not to the more detailed level of the specific constituencies targeted. The libraries will give more useful transparency if the companies increase the amount of information that they publish about targeting of advertising. Social media companies that operate in the UK should continue to develop their ad policies and libraries, and ensure that they have them in place for the next set of national level elections or any future referendums in the UK, and thereafter. It should be legally required for social media companies and other platforms that provide advertising services to run these kinds of libraries and reports, which could be enforced as appropriate, possibly through the Government's proposed Online Harms regulator. This would ensure voters can access a consistent level of information about election or referendum advertising across different platforms online. Social media companies' advertising policies Facebook, Google and Twitter all adopted policies for political advertising that ran on their platforms and channels during the European Parliamentary election campaign. But those policies did not completely align with the definitions in electoral law. Where their policies did not do this for the May 2019 European Parliamentary elections, some platforms failed to label certain types of campaigning, such as issue based campaigns, paid for by non-party campaigners. For future elections, social media companies should ensure that their election advertising policies fit the definitions of election campaigning in electoral law. This may need to become a legal requirement. Registering political parties at the European Parliamentary elections Late confirmation that the European Parliamentary elections would go ahead in the UK also meant there was not much time for new political parties to register or for existing parties to update their party identifiers before nominations opened. This was exacerbated by applications for the local elections already being processed. As a

result of the late confirmation of the European Parliamentary elections proceeding, some parties were not able to register and stand candidates at the European Parliamentary elections. Parties and campaigners deliver their reports of election spending after the poll. We will publish these as soon as possible after they are delivered. More information This report We have a statutory duty to report on the administration of the European Parliamentary election held in the UK in May 2019. We have also highlighted issues from the local government elections that were held in some parts of England earlier in May 2019. We separately wrote to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to highlight issues from the local government elections that were held across Northern Ireland on 2 May 2019. We have also produced a report on our enquiry into the registration process for citizens of other Member States of the EU in relation to European Parliamentary elections and the experience of some citizens of other EU Member States at the 2019 election, which has informed the conclusions in this report. The May elections On 2 May 2019 elections were held for 248 local councils in England, and all 11 local councils in Northern Ireland. There were also elections for five directly elected local authority Mayors, in Bedford, Mansfield, Leicester, Copeland and Middlesbrough, and an election for the Mayor of the North of Tyne Combined Authority. The electorate for local government elections in England was 27.9 million and approximately 9 million votes were cast. The overall turnout was 32.8%. Postal votes were issued to around 4.6 million electors in England and 2.9 million postal votes were included in the count. In Northern Ireland, where postal voting is not available on demand, 15,464 postal votes were issued. The European Parliamentary elections took place in the UK on 23 May, with voters choosing 73 MEPs in 12 electoral regions. A total of 46.5 million people were registered to vote in the European Parliamentary elections on 23 May 2019. Some 17.3 million votes were included in the count, representing an overall turnout of 37.2%. ■ Local

government elections 2019 data ■ European Parliamentary electoral data and information from EROs about citizens of other EU Member States Our evidence for this report We collected information from different sources to help ensure that our review of the May elections is thorough and robust. This included: a survey asking people what they thought about the May elections a survey of electoral administrators to understand their experience of running the elections electoral data including numbers about turnout, registration of EU citizens, postal voting and spoilt ballot papers Local Elections 2019 Post Poll Topline_FINAL Local government post poll topline data 2019 - technical report Local Elections 2019 Post poll_England_weighted tables_FINAL Local Elections 2019 Post poll_NI_weighted_tables_FINAL YouGov- Electoral Commission - Post-EU Elections 2019_report Electoral Commission- YouGov- Post_European_Election_Poll data tables 2019 1. Newcastle City Council and North Lincolnshire Council ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. Arun District Council, Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council, Sedgemoor District Council, Thanet District Council, Winchester City Council ■ Back to content at footnote 2 3. Allerdale Borough Council, Swindon Borough Council, Milton Keynes Council ■ Back to content at footnote 3 Related content Inquiry report: the voting registration process for EU citizens resident in the UK for the 2019 European Parliamentary elections held in the UK Read our inquiry report about the voting registration process for the 2019 European Parliamentary election Results and turnout at the 2014 European Parliamentary elections View the results and turnout at the 2014 European Parliamentary elections Past elections and referendums Read our reports and view data about past elections and referendums Results and turnout at the EU referendum View the results and turnout at the EU referendum

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Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Apologies and introductions Declarations of interest Minutes of the Commission Board meeting of 19 September 2018 Project overview 2019/20 Draft Budget and Business Plan Chief Executive's update Q2 Performance and finance report Forward plan of board business 2018/19 Action tracker Chair and Chief Executive's meeting and meetings in devolved legislatures Conclusion of the meeting Meeting wash-up (commissioners only) First published: 18 July 2019 Last updated: 18 July 2019 Meeting overview Date: 5 December Time: 9:30am to 2pm Location: Boothroyd Room, 3 Bunhill Row, London Date of next scheduled meeting: 13 February 2019 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Holmes (JH), Chair Anna Carragher (AC) Sarah Chambers (SC) Elan Closs Stephens (ECS) Alasdair Morgan (AM) Rob Vincent (RV) Stephen Gilbert (SG) Alastair Ross (AR) Joan Walley (JW) Claire Bassett (CB), Chief Executive Ailsa Irvine (AI), Director, Electoral Administration Bob Posner (BP), Director, Political Finance and Regulation Craig Westwood (CW), Director, Communications and Research Kieran Rix (KR), Director, Finance and Corporate Services Carol Sweetenham (CS), Head of Projects Tracy Blackman (TB), Financial Controller Louise Footner (LF), Head of Legal Louise Edwards (LE), Head of Regulation David Meek (DM), Senior Adviser, Governance David Bailey (DB), Head of Strategic Planning and Resourcing Petra Crees (PC), Planning, Performance and Governance Manager Apologies and introductions Apologies from Sue Bruce were noted. JH welcomed the new Commissioners, noting their observer status, pending the confirmation of their appointments, and asked staff to introduce themselves. Declarations of interest No new declarations of interest were made at the meeting. New Commissioners' declarations would need to be recorded at the first meeting following Royal Assent. Minutes of the Commission Board meeting of 19 September 2018 The minutes of the Commission Board meeting on 19 September were approved and the record of the Commission informal day of 24 October was noted.

Project overview CB introduced the paper, explaining that the Commission started working on a project basis to help broaden the work of the Commission and make progress on the outcomes of the Strategic Review. CS explained that larger projects were managed using the Programme and Project Management framework, while smaller projects were managed through operational plans. The Executive Team signed off all projects. Larger projects had assigned project managers. AI discussed the projects aimed at supporting free and fair elections and referendums. On the project to modernise the electoral observer scheme, she noted that feedback on the consultation on suggested improvements had been positive. She expected the updated Code of Practice to be laid before the UK and Scottish Parliaments before the end of the year, in line with the project plan. AI also updated on the delivering modern guidance project. While current guidance was well respected, it was not easy to navigate or maintain. The project would make the Commission's guidance more straightforward to use and update. The first tranche of guidance in the new format would be published on the new website in June 2019, with further roll-outs to follow through to 2020. On the Returning Officer/Electoral Registration Officer engagement and good practice project, AI explained that this was focused both on how we worked internally and how we worked with the electoral community to support them to deliver electoral services. This work would over time be embedded into normal business delivery. AI explained that we had also been working on modernising electoral registration through a project. This had explored the feasibility of various recommendations to improve registration such as integrating it into other public

service transactions. Good progress had been made. RV expressed an interest in how we made the most of local authorities' knowledge and experience to ensure the Commission knew what was happening nationally. He suggested that a review of the challenges, risks and issues around frontline delivery, in the light of continuing very tight resources, be considered at a future Board meeting. BP discussed projects underway to support trusted and transparent regulation. We continued to push for an update to primary legislation, but while waiting for this we had produced draft codes of practice, and had consulted on the proposed changes with political parties. All the major political parties had responded to this consultation. BP noted the ICT system for political finance transparency required updating. 10 years ago our system was world leading, but it was now out of date. We had worked closely with political parties on the features of a new system. SC asked about the transition between the current system and the proposed new system. BP confirmed that this was a key risk that we were managing, for example by moving data into the new system in tranches. He also confirmed that stakeholders across the UK would test the system before the formal launch. BP recalled that the Commission was also looking at developing its role as a prosecutor. We would focus initially on prosecutions for process offences such as failure to provide information. We had been building up our skill-base and resources internally to support this change. The next step was to consult with political parties and other stakeholders on this proposal. BP noted proposed improvements to delivery of party statements of accounts, party descriptions, and regulatory casework. We would be looking to standardise statements of account by making statutory regulations, so that comparisons across parties could be made more easily. There would be a cost to parties associated with this change, but implementation would start with the larger parties and there would be a long lead-in period. We expected to begin consultations with political parties on all this in late 2019. BP advised that we no longer register party descriptions that did not clearly identify the party and were just slogans. CW provided an update on the work to support our third goal, and our role as an independent, respected centre of expertise. He noted that our website was hard to navigate, not mobile device friendly, or fully accessible. We were redeveloping the site to address these issues, with the launch planned for June 2019. This was so far on time and on budget. CW also explained the project aimed at improving democratic engagement, which was the most 'blue sky' of all, noting that the outcome of this work would be brought back to Board in the spring. ECS noted the importance of getting 16 year olds engaged and registered in Wales and the importance of engaging them in a pilot project. On tackling electoral fraud, CW noted that this incorporated the evaluation of the UK Government's voter ID pilots plus our wider response to fraud prevention. KR provided an update on our work ensuring we delivered value for money. He noted that the Ways of Working project was not just about the possibility of a new building but was also looking at culture and working practices, technology utilisation, and the working environment. The project on accountability to the devolved administrations was moving forward well. ECS acknowledged the amount of work and consultation that had gone into the projects, and noted the substantial changes that had already been achieved. RV supported this but also questioned how we could ensure consistent commissioner engagement in the areas of work covered by the projects. CB agreed that commissioner involvement had been valuable. SC noted the importance of keeping projects under review and moving the work into normal business at the right moments. AC noted that the move to project working had been a significant culture change for many staff, and needed to be watched. JH also thanked everyone for their work and requested a further

update on project work in a year's time, alongside the more regular quarterly reports. (Stephen Gilbert (SG) joined the meeting at this point.) Agreed: That a future informal Board meeting would focus on a review of the challenges, risks and issues around frontline delivery. That an update on work to improve democratic engagement would be provided in Spring 2019. That there would be a further update on the progress of the projects in a year's time. 2019/20 Draft Budget and Business Plan CB introduced the item, and noted that the commissioners were being included earlier in this process than previously to get their steer on the proposed overall approach. The Commission had an ambitious outlook for the future, rather than just trying to do more with less resources. We had up to now found capacity to do project work within existing budgets, but we now had challenges in what more we could achieve without extra resources. The idea was therefore to ask for a little more money to meet the demands on us resulting from changes in the environment in which we operated and new responsibilities since the development of the Corporate Plan. For example the amount of contingency planning we had to do had gone up a good deal, as had the resources needed to deal with rising FOI demands. 5.2 DB confirmed that this was the second annual plan to deliver the five year Corporate Plan and that our four goals remained current and valid. Originally spending for 2019/20 had been planned to be the lowest of the five years at £16.2 million, but some assumptions had now changed, for example about likely pay rises, in line with what was happening elsewhere in the public sector, and there were new needs for both capital and current spending. If all these new activities were included the budget would be around £18.5 million, which was higher than the original projection, but not much different from 2018/19. CB confirmed that the Board would have a more detailed discussion on the Budget at the February meeting. This discussion was to explain the proposed new initiatives. DB reported that the new initiatives were additions to existing projects or new activity and that they broadly fell into two groups – building regulatory compliance and responding to government-led change. BP discussed options to build regulatory compliance. Existing litigation would flow through to the next financial year and had significant cost implications. Building internal legal capacity would cut our external spend in this area. We also needed to invest in the financial reporting side, how we audited political parties, our skills base on the digital side, and compliance accounting. We were not anticipating more major investigatory activity but this could not be excluded. There were also proposals to upgrade the casework management system. A little extra money could also be needed for research to support improving transparency in Northern Ireland. All this could cost around an extra £800,000. ECS questioned how we would respond to no extra funding in this area; CB confirmed that this would require reprioritisation. However she suggested that there was an important opportunity to broaden our agenda to respond to additional demand. AM asked about contingency and legal funding. CB explained that at the time of writing the corporate plan we could not have anticipated the amount of litigation currently underway. AI provided an overview of proposed new initiatives responding to Government led change. Some of these built on existing planned work, such as canvass reform; others related to ensuring we could respond appropriately to Scottish and Welsh Government-led electoral reform, including through additional policy support. CW noted the need for qualitative research on the projects that we were doing, such as canvass reform and evaluating the ID pilots. CW also updated the Board on consultation on ballot paper design in Scotland, a cost-neutral piece of work (because we would be reimbursed by the Scottish government) that nevertheless had capacity implications. KR noted that the Ways of Working project and the IT

improvements also involved additional cost. AM asked whether the Board would see projected figures for future financial years. CB noted that we needed to re-profile the forward years' budget figures. AC said it would be helpful to see the projected figures, and a cost-benefit analysis, such as savings from bringing resources inhouse. SC strongly supported the more ambitious approach, and recommended the case for increases should focus on the need to respond to new technology opportunities and risks. AC and RV agreed with the proposed initiatives. RV suggested the Commission should note the degree of financial discipline it had applied, and the discipline of focusing on different projects. We needed to articulate clearly that we were discerning in what we chose to push. JH strongly supported the proposed more ambitious approach, and noted that we were not talking about substantial sums of money compared with the importance of the issues involved. BP noted that we could well be asked if we were seeking sufficient funding, rather than being challenged about asking for too much. CB commented that we should not go even bigger, as we would need to increase our management capacity, but we did need to ensure we communicated our ambitions effectively. Agreed, That the paper was noted and the overall approach was agreed. The Board looked forward to seeing the figures in due course. Chief Executive's update CB explained the purpose of these updates for the new commissioners. JH invited each director to comment on issues in their area. AI highlighted our response to the three governments' consultation on canvass reform, which had been published on 30 November. CB noted our need to be in a robust place to be ready for any future unscheduled poll, including a future referendum. We had a list of legislative reforms we would like in this area, which we had broken down to what was needed and what was aspirational. There were also contingency plans in place for UK Parliamentary and Northern Ireland Assembly elections in the coming months. LE updated on the investigative efforts arising from the EU referendum campaigns, and the 2017 UK general election, which were both near completion. We would then move on to working with the political parties on compliance to try to ensure similar issues did not arise in future. LF updated on current legal proceedings. AC asked about the plans to use Instagram influencers as part of the voter registration campaign. CW advised that we approached this with caution, using the same robust process as we did when we engaged celebrities and voice actors, in order to ensure impartiality. RV asked for an update on Northern Ireland Assembly elections. AC explained that the legislation allowed for a further 5 months postponement to required elections if progress on restoring power-sharing had been made. If there were still no progress, there would need to be an election, possibly in autumn 2019. There would be a review of the donation transparency regime in 2019, but the government would probably want a focus on forward transparency, rather than retrospective transparency. Agreed, That the paper was noted. Q2 Performance and finance report AM asked about the 7% underspend in Quarter 2. CB accepted that the report could be worded better to more accurately reflect the situation. AM also asked about the challenge of publishing routine financial returns from parties and campaigners within 30 working days of receiving them. BP reported that we were not meeting our targets due to the volume of smaller party accounts and the redirection of resources to meet increasing demand for key investigations. BP explained that this capacity issue would be resolved with an updated online system. JH thanked the team for their efforts in preparing the Q2 report and continuing to improve the format. Agreed, That the paper was noted Forward plan of board business 2018/19 Agreed, That the paper was noted. Action tracker Agreed, That the paper was noted. Chair and Chief Executive's meeting and meetings in devolved legislatures Agreed, That the paper was noted. Conclusion of the meeting The

formal meeting of the Board closed. There was then an informal session on simplifying and modernising electoral law across the UK. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Chair expressed his warm gratitude, and that of the Commission as a whole, for the commitment, integrity and enthusiasm of the departing Chief Executive, CB, and wished her well for the future. He noted that CB had moved the Commission a long way in a good direction in her time, and left the Commission in a strong place for the future.

Meeting wash-up (commissioners only) The meeting ended at 14.00.

Results and turnout at the 2011 Scottish Parliament election | Electoral Commission Search Results and turnout at the 2011 Scottish Parliament election You are in the Scottish Parliamentary elections section Home Scottish Parliamentary elections On this page Summary First published: 7 August 2019 Last updated: 7 August 2019 Download You can download the: full dataset as an XLS results as an XLS You can also download our full report , written by David Denver. Summary The elections were fought on the basis of revised constituency and electoral region boundaries. As a consequence, constituency electorates were more equal in size than previously. The number of constituency candidates declined to 321 – the smallest number in a Scottish Parliament election to date. Twenty-one parties or groups were represented in the regional lists together with 11 individuals. The SNP won 53 of the 73 constituency seats with 45.4 per cent of the votes. Labour was second (15 seats, 31.7 per cent of votes) followed by the Conservatives (3 seats and 13.9 per cent of votes) and the Liberal Democrats (2 seats and 7.9 per cent of votes). When the list seats were added, the SNP had an overall majority of 69 out of 129 seats. Labour had 37, the Conservatives 15, Liberal Democrats 5, Green Party 2 and an Independent 1. Turnout at 50.6 per cent was slightly down on the 2007 figure (53.9 per cent). In the 2007 election a single ballot sheet was used for both constituency and list elections and large numbers of votes were consequently rejected. In 2011, two separate ballot papers were re-introduced and rejected votes returned to minuscule proportions - 0.42 per cent of constituency ballots and 0.34 per cent of list ballots. Across Scotland, 558,202 postal ballots were issued amounting to 14.1 per cent of the electorate. This is the largest proportion to date. Almost 77 per cent of postal ballots issued were returned. Of these, 5.8 per cent were excluded from the counts because of failures relating to personal identifiers or non-inclusion of either a ballot or statement in the envelope. Related content Report: How the 2011 Scottish Parliament election was run Read our report about how the 2011 Scottish Parliament election was run Report: How the 2016 Scottish Parliament election was run View the results and turnout at the 2016 Scottish Parliament election Results and turnout at the 2016 Scottish Parliament election View the results and turnout at the 2016 Scottish Parliament election Report on the Scottish Parliament election on 6 May 2021 Read our report about how the 2021 Scottish Parliament election was run

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The electoral community worked collaboratively to plan for and deliver the poll. The planning for and delivery of the 2021 Scottish Parliament election took place against the shifting background of the Covid-19 pandemic. Considerable preparatory work was undertaken, with the aim of ensuring that voters were able to participate confidently in the election using their preferred method of voting wherever possible. During the summer and early autumn of 2020, the Electoral Commission worked with and consulted electoral administrators, political parties and governments across Great Britain (GB) to identify a shared set of high-level objectives for delivering successful elections in the current public health environment. These objectives were used to: assess and test policy options and implementation approaches; identify and manage significant risks to successful delivery of the elections; inform research, analysis and reporting on the polls. The Scottish Government and Electoral Management Board for Scotland (EMB) supported the objectives, which were published in October 2020. Eight local government by-elections took place across Scotland in October and November 2020 – the first statutory polls to take place anywhere in the UK since the onset of the pandemic. In the spring and summer of 2020 the EMB, with input from the Electoral Commission and Public Health Scotland, developed guidance for Returning Officers to deliver these polls with the safety of voters, campaigners, and poll staff the priority concern. The Electoral Commission reported on the by-elections to ensure that learning could be taken forward and considered in the planning for the May 2021 elections across GB and reflected in our guidance to Returning Officers and polling staff. In order to anticipate and plan for any potential changes to voter behaviour at the May Scottish Parliament election, the Electoral Commission carried out public opinion research with voters to assess their attitudes to voting in the context of Covid-19. This research, carried out in August 2020 and repeated in November 2020 and February 2021, found that voting in a polling place remained the preferred option amongst a majority of voters. However, the results also indicated a likely increase in the proportion of voters opting to use a postal vote at the 2021 Scottish Parliament election compared to previous polls. The findings from this research were shared with the Scottish Government and electoral administrators to inform their planning for the poll, and also published for wider interest. Through the summer and autumn of 2020, the Scottish Government developed electoral legislation which aimed to enable the Scottish Parliament election to adapt to a range of potential Covid-19 scenarios. The development of the legislation was informed by a series of round table discussions between Ministers, The Electoral Commission, EMB, Scottish Assessors Association (SAA) and representatives of other parties in the Scottish Parliament. The resulting Scottish General Election (Coronavirus) Act was passed on 23 December 2020 and included provisions to bring forward the postal voting deadline; to enable postponement of the poll in certain circumstances; and to give Ministers powers to specify an all-postal election or polling station voting over multiple days. Voters were engaged in the election and were able to vote using their preferred method. Considerable work was undertaken by Electoral Registration Officers, Returning Officers, and the Electoral Commission in the run up to the election to raise awareness amongst voters of the measures in place to protect them from the risk of Covid-19. This included social media activity, work with national and local press and broadcasters and direct communications to voters. In October 2020, the Commission produced a set of resources focusing on voting options, including posters, social media posts and template messaging. The messaging on these resources encouraged voters to start thinking about their preferred voting option early and reassured them that voting in person would be a safe experience. Of those Returning Officers who

completed our post-poll survey, 90% said that they used these resources locally. In February 2021, Electoral Registration Officers wrote to all households to inform them of who was registered to vote at that address, and whether they were registered for a postal or proxy vote. The letter included information on the safety measures planned for polling stations and how to apply for an absent vote. This write out was funded by the Scottish Government. During the same period we also worked with the Chief Medical Officer to issue a letter to all shielders advising them on how to apply for an absent vote.

were voters deterred and voter turnout Voters do not appear to have been deterred from taking part in the election Turnout at the election suggests that the pandemic did not deter significant numbers of potential voters from participating as turnout at the poll was 63.5% for both constituency and regional votes – the highest turnout at any Scottish Parliament election. This was an 8% point increase on turnout at the previous Scottish Parliament election in 2016. Turnout at Scottish Parliament elections (constituency votes) 1999 56% 2003 50% 2007 54% 2011 51% 2016 56% 2021 64% Among those who said they did not vote at the election, the most common reasons given included illness (14%); that voting took too long (11%); that they don't trust politicians (10%); lack of information (7%); that you should be able to vote over a few days (6%) and that there was not enough information/media coverage (5%). People were confident that they could vote using their preferred method Among those who voted on 6 May, the vast majority (94%) said that this was by their preferred voting method, with 5% saying that they did not vote via their preferred method. Nearly all voters (95%) said they were satisfied with the process of voting in the 6 May elections, with three in five (61%) saying they were very satisfied. Just 4% of voters said they were dissatisfied. People who voted in person felt safe to do so A number of safety measures were put in place in polling places to ensure the safety of voters. These measures, in line with our guidance for electoral administrators , were informed by the learnings from the local government by-elections which had taken place during the pandemic and by advice from Public Health Scotland. Measures included: one way systems in polling places face coverings hand sanitisation for voters, along with regular cleaning of equipment single use pencils for voters The significant majority of polling place voters (97%) told us that they had felt safe to vote at the polling place. Just 2% said that they had felt unsafe. Those aged 55 or over were more likely to say that they felt voting was 'very safe' compared to those aged 16-54 (77% vs 61%). On polling day queues were reported at a small number of polling places as a result of the safety measures in place. Where queues did occur before the close of poll, anyone still in the queue at 10pm was still able to be issued with a ballot paper. Of those polling station voters in 2021, who also usually vote in person, more than half (55%) said that voting took about the same time as usual despite the increased safety measures. However, nearly two-fifths (39%) said that it took longer (although 5% said it was quicker). Electoral administrators reported that the safety measures worked well for voters: We were very happy with the way our staff managed a very challenging situation and we received no complaints from electors about the strict procedures which were in place at polling stations. Layouts in polling places were agreed with our Protective Services Team to ensure the safety of staff and voters. Some queueing due to physical distancing, but not a problem. Additional staff were in multi station places to assist voters. Returning Officers appointed additional staff to the polling place in order to provide information for voters. Almost four in five electors (79%) who voted in person said that the help and support available from polling station staff was useful with half (49%) describing it as 'very useful'. People who didn't want to go to a

polling station had options for voting remotely. People who didn't want to vote in person could apply to cast their vote by post or appoint someone to vote on their behalf, known as a proxy. Postal voting is available on demand at elections in the UK and the deadline for application is usually 11 working days before the poll. Due to concerns about a potential surge in last minute postal vote applications as a result of Covid-19, the Scottish Government brought forward the deadline to 21 working days before the election. This was to ensure that any increase in applications could be processed in sufficient time so that postal votes could be issued to everyone who had requested one. The February write out to voters by Electoral Registration Officers, coupled with the Chief Medical Officer's letter to shielders in early 2021 highlighted the earlier deadline for voters. The Scottish Assessors Association (SAA), which represents Electoral Registration Officers, also carried out a TV advertising campaign to raise awareness of the different options for voting and the earlier postal vote deadline. Legislation proposed by the Scottish Government was passed by the Scottish Parliament to enable anyone who was self-isolating as a result of Covid-19, to apply for an emergency proxy vote up until 5pm on polling day. Nearly one-third of all votes counted were cast by post. Postal voters at elections in Scotland 1,014,745 voters were registered for a postal vote for the 2021 Scottish Parliament election, amounting to 24% of the electorate. This is an increase of 288,190 postal voters on the 2016 Scottish Parliament election (a 40% increase). Nearly nine in 10 (87%) of postal voters returned their postal vote, meaning that nearly one-third (32%) of all votes counted were postal votes. Postal voters at elections in Scotland 2016 Scottish Parliament election 17.7% 2017 Local government election 17.8% 2017 UK General election 19.4% 2019 UK General election 18.1% 2021 Scottish Parliament election 23.7% A third (34%) of electors who voted by post say that this election was the first time they voted by post, while two thirds (66%) say they have voted by post at previous elections. Two-thirds (66%) of younger postal voters (aged 16-34) voted by post for the first time, compared to just three in 10 (28%) 35-54 postal voters and a quarter (26%) of postal voters aged 55+. Of those electors who were first-time postal voters, approaching half (46%) say that they voted by post because they did not want to go to the polling station because of Covid-19-related safety concerns, while a third (33%) cited convenience as a reason. A quarter (24%) say that their local authority informed them they could register for a postal vote, prompting them to vote by post for the first time, while one in 10 say that advertising from the Electoral Commission (12%) informed them they could register for a postal vote. Of the first-time postal voters, nine in 10 (91%) said that it was easy to understand what to do in order to return their postal vote application, including nearly three in five (57%) who said it was very easy. Just one in 10 (9%) said it was difficult. Postal voters knew what they needed to do to return the postal ballot paper. Of all postal voters, an overwhelming majority (93%) said it was easy to understand what was needed in order to complete and return their postal vote, including two-thirds (63%) who said it was very easy. 7% said it was difficult. First time voters were more likely to have said that it was difficult to understand what was needed in order to complete and return their postal vote, compared to repeat voters (28% vs. 3%). Among all postal voters in Scotland, an overwhelming majority (95%) said that the written instructions on the ballot paper were useful, including two-thirds (64%) who said they were very useful. 4% said they were not useful. Rates of postal vote rejections did not rise significantly, even with the numbers of new postal voters. When a postal ballot pack is returned to the Returning Officer, the signature and date of birth (known as the personal identifiers) provided on the

postal vote statement (PVS) are checked against those previously provided by the elector. Where either or both the signature and date of birth are missing or do not match, the postal vote is rejected and is not included in the count. This is a security measure to ensure that the ballot paper has been returned by the elector it was sent to. Data provided by Returning Officers shows that 21,327 of returned postal votes were not included in the count after the required checks on voters' personal identifiers. The percentage of all returned postal votes not included in the count (2.4%) is lower than at the 2016 Scottish Parliament election, where 3.3% of postal votes were not included at the count. Reason for postal votes not included in the count

Postal voting statement unreturned 0.5%	Ballot paper not returned 0.3%
Mismatched signature and date of birth 0.1%	Mismatched date of birth 0.4%
Mismatched signature 0.6%	Missing signature and date of birth 0.3%
Missing date of birth 0.1%	Missing signature 0.2%

While the percentage of postal votes not included in the count continues to fall it remains a matter of concern that some postal votes do not get included in the count because voters do not complete the PVS correctly. The Electoral Commission will continue to work with ROs and EROs to support voter understanding of how to complete and return their postal ballot pack correctly so that it can be counted. The postal vote stationery used by ROs and EROs plays an important role in aiding voter understanding with the application and voting process, and they should continue to review the information they provide to make sure it is as clear and helpful as it can be to voters. EROs successfully encouraged early postal vote applications The Scottish Government legislated to bring forward the deadline for new postal vote applications for this election to 21 working days before the poll, instead of the usual 11 working days. In practice, this meant that the deadline to apply was 6 April 2021 instead of 20 April 2021. The deadline was moved due to concerns that the pandemic may drive a significant increase in postal vote applications for this election. In the event of a surge of postal ballot applications close to the usual deadline for the poll (11 working days before polling day) EROs were concerned about whether they would be able to process the applications in time for the postal votes to be issued. Any delays would have risked postal voters not being able to receive and return their postal ballots in time for them to be counted. The Scottish Government also provided additional funding to EROs to manage any additional demands for processing absent vote applications. Feedback from EROs indicates that the February write out to voters played a key role in encouraging earlier applications both to register to vote and for absent votes, which helped to avoid a peak of applications close to the deadline. Data from EROs indicates that 4,072 applications for postal votes were received between 6 April and 20 April which would have been eligible to be processed for the poll had the deadline not been brought forward. Recommendation 1 Recommendation 1 The February write out to voters by EROs was successful in helping to avoid a late surge in postal vote applications and also had the wider benefit of improving the completeness and accuracy of the electoral register ahead of the election. We therefore support equivalent activity being undertaken ahead of future major polls. This activity was funded by the Scottish Government on this occasion and we expect that it would need to be similarly resourced in future years if EROs are to be able to carry out it out effectively and consistently across Scotland. Voters were still able to vote by proxy if they had to self-isolate All voters were entitled to apply for a proxy vote if they are unable to attend the polling place on polling day. This enabled someone they trust to vote on their behalf. Voters whose situation changed close to the election due to work or disability could appoint an emergency proxy up to 5pm on polling day to vote on their

behalf. The Scottish Government extended the eligibility for an emergency proxy vote so that anyone testing positive for COVID-19 close to polling day, or having to self-isolate due to someone close to them testing positive, could apply for an emergency proxy. 9,472 voters had a proxy at this election which counted for 0.2% of all voters. This is a similar level to the 2016 Scottish Parliament election where 9,887 (0.2%) of voters had a proxy in place. 14% of all proxies in 2021 were appointed using the emergency proxy provisions, and 8% of all proxies were for COVID-19 reasons. The provision of an emergency proxy for COVID-19 reasons was therefore an important backstop for ensuring that people were still able to participate in the poll. Some EROs continue to raise concerns that eligibility for emergency proxy does not extend to carers. The practical implication of this is that where a voter has to travel for medical treatment (for example, from the islands to the mainland), they are eligible for an emergency proxy but anyone accompanying them is not.

Recommendation 2 Recommendation 2 Legislation introduced for these elections to allow emergency proxy votes for anyone who tested positive for COVID-19 or had to self-isolate helped to provide a safeguard for anyone whose circumstances changed close to the polls and ensure that they were not prevented from participating. Although the provision was not widely relied upon in practice, it was nevertheless an important safeguard to make sure that no one lost their ability to vote. We recommend that the Scottish Government should ensure this option continues to be available if people are required to self-isolate as part of the public health response to COVID-19. We continue to recommend that the Scottish Government consider ways to extend the provisions for emergency proxy to carers. Voters found it easy to access information on how to take part in the election. The Electoral Commission ran a public awareness campaign ahead of the election which included information on how to register to vote, the safety measures in place for voting in the context of COVID-19 and information on alternative ways of voting for those who did not want to attend the polling station.

This included a voter information booklet sent to all households in the week commencing 22 March 2021. EROs and ROs also ran local voter information campaigns. The Commission also worked with a number of partner organisations including Scottish Care, RNIB, Sight Scotland and Guide Dogs for the Blind to distribute COVID-19 tailored information to those who may be particularly impacted by the pandemic and any changes to the way of voting. Nearly all respondents to our public opinion survey said that it was easy to find information about the election, including: Ease of finding information about the election 85% What the Scottish Parliament is/do 87% How to register to vote 88% How to cast their vote 91% The Electoral community and civil society worked to support newly enfranchised voters to register and vote. The Scottish Elections (Franchise and Representation) Act 2020 extended the franchise for Scottish Parliament and local government elections to include all qualifying foreign nationals (those who are resident in Scotland and have permission to enter or remain in the UK, or who do not need such permission). 16 and 17 year olds had the right to vote extended to them ahead of the 2016 Scottish Parliament election. The Commission ran a new voter registration campaign targeted at the newly or more recently enfranchised. ‘Welcome to your vote’ ran in summer 2020 and again in March 2021, alongside our ‘Got 5?’ registration campaign. The ‘Welcome to your vote’ campaign targeted all potentially eligible Scottish voters, but was more heavily weighted towards known under-registered groups including private renters and those aged under 35. During the campaign period (9 March to 19 April) there were a total of 127,866 applications to register to vote, including 6,913 16-17 year olds and 3,091 qualifying foreign citizens. The foreign nationalities with the most

applications were USA, Syria, China and Turkey. Newly enfranchised voters information The Commission worked with a range partners to provide voter information for qualifying foreign nationals The Commission worked with a number of partners to distribute information to qualifying foreign nationals, including consulates, regional equality councils and other organisations that support foreign nationals in Scotland. Working with the Scottish Refugee Council, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and local authority resettlement officers, the Commission developed and promoted a set of political literacy resources for refugee communities. The resources, which were created for professionals and community based groups working with New Scots, were launched at an online event attended by 100 people. The Scottish Refugee Council used the resources to deliver 19 online sessions for New Scots in the lead up to the election. The New Scots community in Scotland is very diverse and the Commission's ability to reach relevant communities is highly dependent on working through partner organisations who provide face to face support for these communities at the grass roots level. However, some community based organisations, representing refugees or other migrant groups, raised concerns with the Commission about the capacity of their organisations to continue to support this area of work without additional resourcing. New processes were put in place to support eligible prisoners to vote The Scottish Elections (Franchise and Representation) Act 2020 also extended the right of prisoners serving a sentence of 12 months or less in a UK prison, who would usually be resident in Scotland, to vote at Scottish Parliament and local government elections. The Commission worked with Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) in Scotland to develop a set of prisoner voter application forms, including registration and absent vote forms which could be distributed by the Scottish Prison Service (SPS). EROs also developed protocols with the SPS to ensure that they received notification where any eligible voters entered the prison system so that they could invite them to register to vote. Voting information for prisoners was also circulated by the SPS through all prisons ahead of the election. In partnership with Citizens Advice Scotland, the Commission also developed a guide for professionals working with prisoners, which was distributed to their network of member bureaux. Data from EROs indicates that 38 eligible prisoners were registered to vote for the Scottish Parliament election in 2021. We understand that COVID-19 had a significant impact on prisons in Scotland, including the turnover of short-term prisoners. However, it is important to ensure that those who have the right to vote are fully aware of their options for registration and voting and that processes are in place to support this. There is a legislative requirement for the Scottish Government to review the arrangements for prisoner voting after the May 2022 local government elections. In the interim, we will work with the Scottish Prison Service and any other relevant partners to explore opportunities to provide political literacy education for prisoners. Efforts to reach young people in school continued despite the pandemic To support young people's engagement in democracy the Commission published a new set of online resources to educate young people about their vote and the democratic process. The tools, designed for use in classrooms and with youth groups across Scotland, aimed to help young people who were voting for the first time. We also provided resources and support for those tasked with teaching political literacy. We worked with our partners to promote and gain feedback on the resources and they were also shared by Education Scotland and the Scottish Parliament Education Service. Working with Education Scotland, the Scottish Parliament Education Service, Association of Directors of Education in Scotland and other education partners, we ran 'Welcome to Your Vote' week in February 2021, to encourage schools to deliver

voter registration sessions for their students. The pandemic meant a lack of face-to-face opportunities to engage with new voters directly in schools, community groups or youth clubs and to get their direct feedback on our resources. However, ahead of the election we worked with the Scottish Parliament Education Service, Education Scotland, West of Scotland Education Service and other partners to trial virtual sessions with educators to support them to use the materials in a classroom setting (whether virtual or face-to-face). These sessions were attended by 140 educators in total. Looking ahead we want to build on this work by engaging further with young people and educators across Scotland to identify more themes and topics our resources can address. We plan to expand the reach and impact of our education work ahead of the local government elections in 2022 and Scottish Parliament election in 2026. We will work with education and youth organisations in Scotland to deliver this.

16 and 17 year olds registered to vote and were more likely to report confidence in voting than 18-25 year olds (77,809). 16 and 17 year olds were registered to vote at the election. In general, the 16-17 year old age group reported higher levels of confidence in accessing information about the election than 18-24 year olds. Three-quarters (75%) of 16-17 year olds said that they had enough information on candidates and parties to make an informed decision on who to vote for, compared to 62% of 18-24 year olds. They were also more likely to report finding it easy to participate in the election than 18-24 year olds (80% vs 68%).

ROs took steps to assist disabled voters at the election but further improvements can be made. The Scottish Elections (Reform) Act 2020 places a duty on the Electoral Commission to report on the steps taken by ROs to assist disabled people to vote at the election. To inform our report we asked all Returning Officers to tell us about: provisions within the polling places and for postal voting to support disabled voters; training of polling station staff; outreach work with disability groups; any other steps they took to support disabled voters. We also looked at the views of disabled voters who responded to our public opinion research; evidence gathered by disability organisations; and views from people who had worked at polling stations. Returning Officers provided a range of support for disabled polling station voters and postal voters. Returning Officers are required by law to put in place a range of measures to support disabled voters. These include:

Large print sample ballot papers, both handheld and for display; Tactile template voting device (TVD) for blind and visually impaired voters; Assistance to disabled voters in marking their ballot paper for them where requested (whether by the Presiding Officer or by a companion); large print versions of postal voting pack contents on request; and helpline numbers for postal voters requiring assistance. These provisions are important as they help to ensure a consistent, minimum level of support for disabled voters. However, we have become aware of some issues with how these were delivered in practice, which we will continue to work with individual local authorities to understand and address. For example, one Returning Officer reported being unable to secure large print sample ballot papers due to problems with their print suppliers, and they reported providing magnifying sheets in polling stations instead. Also, there was a notable increase in the number of parties and individual candidates contesting the 2021 Scottish Parliament election in comparison to 2016, which created difficulties for some ROs in supplying a TVD which could accommodate the longer ballot paper. We also heard anecdotal evidence from blind and visually impaired voters about tactile voting devices being sellotaped together to accommodate the longer ballot paper. Our research has also shown us many examples of Returning Officers providing additional support beyond that prescribed in law, such as: magnifying glasses / sheets; induction loops allowing voters to use their own aids.

such as electronic readers or phone magnifying devices training contact centre staff to answer questions about accessibility of voting providing additional seating in polling stations for those with mobility issues Local authorities also reported conducting Equality Impact Assessments ahead of the election to ensure that designated polling places were as accessible as possible. This included ensuring that there was provision for: disabled parking access ramps to the building, where necessary low level ballot booths and ballot boxes Returning Officers reported carrying out training for all staff which included accessibility considerations Returning Officers largely reported using our materials to train their polling staff, including the Polling Station Handbook , and polling station accessibility checklist . They also reported using materials from disability organisations during their training sessions for polling station staff to further enhance their awareness of the needs of disabled voters. This included videos from RNIB and Mencap. Disabled voters were less satisfied with the process of voting than non-disabled voters Respondents to our voter survey who defined themselves as disabled or with a long term health condition were slightly less likely to be satisfied with the process of voting than non-disabled voters with 93% of disabled voters reporting satisfaction, compared to 96% of non-disabled voters. However, disabled voters were more likely to value the assistance from staff in polling places: 83% of disabled voters said they found the help/support from polling station staff useful, compared with 77% of non-disabled voters. Disabled voters also reported finding it easy to get inside their polling station to vote (97%), including 70% who said it was very easy. 3% of in person voters said it was difficult. However, disabled people were less likely to have said that it was easy to vote by post and complete their ballot paper. 87% of disabled voters said it was easy to complete and return their postal vote, whereas 97% of non-disabled voters said it was easy. The proportion of disabled voters who found it easy to find their chosen party/candidate on the regional ballot was lower than amongst non-disabled voters (89% vs 94%). These findings were supported by organisations representing disabled people who found that some of their members and service users experienced particular challenges in relation to the accessibility of the voting process. They reported feedback from disabled voters about polling staff being unaware of the measures that should have been in place to support disabled voters.

When I arrived, they had no idea where the template was and had to go round the whole hall to find one. Then when I was assisted by one of the staff in the booth she told me she had never used them before so she would have to have a look and see how to do it. I asked them if they had the tactile voting device and the large print ballot paper, it took them ages to find it and when they came back they could only find the tactile voting device and couldn't find the large print ballot paper. They also had never used the tactile voting device before so they weren't sure how to set it up properly so they ended up having to mark my ballot for me meaning I couldn't actually vote in private. ROs have reported facing challenges in recruiting experienced polling station staff in the specific circumstances of this election, and it is possible that these challenges impacted on the level of customer service that some disabled voters experienced. Both the Scottish and UK Governments are considering options for improving accessibility at elections, including utilising new technologies. However, well trained and customer focused polling staff continue to be the key to supporting disabled people to vote confidently and independently.

Recommendation 3 Recommendation 3 Ahead of the 2022 council elections, the Electoral Management Board (EMB) should work with the electoral community and disability organisations to strengthen accessibility training for polling staff. This includes

learning from and sharing the good practice of ROs who took additional steps to support disabled voters, above those prescribed in law. The Electoral Commission will continue to provide guidance and resources to support this area of work. We will report on progress after the 2022 Scottish council elections. Campaigning at the elections s had confidence that the election was well run but many felt restricted in their ability to campaign as a result of Covid-19 s were still able to communicate with voters face-to-face, online and through printed material, even though restrictions remained in place during the campaign. Voters reported that they had enough information to decide who to vote for. s largely understood and were able to comply with the new rules for imprints on digital campaign material. However, further measures need to be put in place to compel information from digital platforms in the event of campaigners' non-compliance with the rules. Overview Ahead of the election, the Scottish Government worked with the electoral community and political parties to agree the framework for the Scottish General Election (Coronavirus) Act 2021, taking account of the agreed objectives for well-run elections in the current public health context. This included a series of roundtable meetings involving Ministers, representatives of other political parties in the Scottish Parliament, the Electoral Commission, EMB for Scotland and the Scottish Assessors Association. This collaborative approach ensured that, in the main, there was cross party support for the measures in the Act. In March 2021, the Scottish Government published guidance for campaigners on the public health restrictions in place which would restrict aspects of campaigning, including leafletting and door-to-door canvassing. The approach in the guidance was developed in consultation with the political parties represented in the Scottish Parliament. This guidance was updated during the campaign to reflect the relaxation of public health restrictions. In line with public health guidance, leafletting was able to commence on 15 March and face to face canvassing from 12 April. Parties and candidates did not appear to be deterred from participating in the poll A total of 357 candidates stood for election in the 73 Scottish Parliament constituencies, an average of 4.9 per seat. The number of constituency candidates represents an increase from the 313 candidates who stood in 2016. Constituency candidates at Scotland Parliament elections 1999 338 2003 406 2007 334 2011 321 2016 313 2021 357 The 2021 election saw an increase in the number of parties and independent (non-party) candidates standing in constituencies. 16 parties stood candidates in the constituencies compared with 10 in 2016. Similarly the number of independent candidates standing in constituencies rose from seven in 2016 to 15 in 2021. A total of 24 parties and 12 individual candidates stood for the 56 seats across the eight electoral regions. The number of parties was up from the regional total of 16 in 2016. Changes to nomination processes to minimise public health risks were welcomed and candidates agreed the process was well-run In order to appear on the ballot paper at an election, candidates and parties must submit nomination forms to the relevant Constituency Returning Officer (or Regional Returning Officer) at the election. While the law still required completed nomination forms to be submitted by hand, these changes were made elsewhere in the process to minimise risks to those involved: candidate and agent briefings were often held using video conferencing informal checking of nomination forms prior to submission was more frequently offered using email arrangements for the safe hand delivery of nomination forms ensuring physical distancing measures were in place Nine in 10 candidates (90%) who responded to our survey agreed that the nominations process was well-run. Having the option of sending nomination papers electronically for checking first was a great help prior to lodging the papers. Most of our candidates took the option of electronic payment of

the deposit which also helped the process go as smoothly as it could". Electoral administrator Returning Officers used digital platforms to run briefing events for candidates and agents ahead of the poll. Feedback from Returning Officers indicates that these online sessions were better utilised than the 'traditional' face to face meetings which are normally offered at elections. Some had confidence that the election was well run but many felt restricted in their ability to campaign as a result of Covid-19. Nearly nine in 10 (88%) of respondents to our candidate survey were confident that the election was well-run. However, some candidates reported that they felt restricted in their ability to campaign as a result of Covid-19 and the public health restrictions on campaigning which were in place until 12 April. While 43% of respondents agreed that they were able to get their message across to voters, the same proportion disagreed. Those who disagreed were most likely to cite Covid-19 as the reason. Our research showed that: over four in five (86%) of candidates said that the reduced opportunities for face to face campaigning as a result of the pandemic affected their campaigning 'a lot' concerns for the health of others involved (e.g. family, volunteers, and voters) was more likely to impact campaigning than personal health concerns. 55% of candidates said that concerns for the health of others affected their campaign a lot, compared to just 25% who said concerns for their own health impacted it a lot I feel like we missed out on the opportunity to hear from the public - it took a bit of creativity for me to campaign well and get my message across but it was do-able. I missed out on hearing directly from voters though. The restrictions severely hampered our ability to have face to face dialogue with voters, not just door to door but street stalls and invited events. The lack of clarity around the changing of rules compared to those in society at large and timeline for loosening restrictions made it difficult to plan campaign activities. Most voters felt that they had enough information on campaigners to decide who to vote for. Over three-quarters of people (76%) agreed they had enough information on candidates/parties to make an informed decision on who to vote for. However, this was slightly down from the 80% who agreed with this statement following the 2016 Scottish Parliament election. People reported that the most common way of them seeing information on parties or candidates were via printed material (leaflet or flyer). The most commonly reported sources of information were: Sources of information On a leaflet or flyer, either from a candidate/political party (57%) Party leaders debate on TV (29%) In newspapers (26%) On news websites (22%) On social media (19%) Posters or billboards (19%) By word of mouth (19%) Four in five people (84%) recalled receiving a leaflet from a candidate/party at their home in the run up to the election. The 2021 Scottish elections were the first time that digital imprints rules applied for any UK election. The 2021 Scottish elections saw the introduction of a requirement for imprints on digital campaign material for the first time in any election in the UK. An imprint includes details showing who has produced and paid for the material. The new rules apply at both Scottish Parliament and council elections. They build on the approach adopted during the Scottish independence referendum in 2014, and the rules set out in the Referendums (Scotland) Act 2020. The rules apply to all material that promotes electoral success of a candidate, group of candidates, party or parties, whether it is paid for or not. The rules contain 'personal opinion' exemptions so as not to capture the general public under the regime. As this was the first election at which the rules applied – and the rules were introduced very shortly before the poll, limiting opportunities to promote awareness of them – it is too early to reach any firm conclusions on how successful they were. This is particularly the case in regard to ascertaining the usefulness of the rules in

tracking digital campaign spending as spending returns are not due for all campaigners until November this year. However, we have set out some initial findings below. Digital Campaigning and Imprints information Our monitoring found that campaigners engaged with the new digital imprint rules across multiple platforms with different approaches Ahead of and during the campaign period, the Electoral Commission provided advice and guidance to campaigners on the digital imprint rules, to support them to comply. During the campaign period, we monitored how campaigners included imprints on their digital campaign materials. We found that different kinds of approaches were used by candidates, political parties and non-party campaigners across different kinds of platforms and social media in order to comply with the regime. The different approaches were often determined by the platform they were using to promote their message. The success of these different approaches proved that it is possible and campaigners can find a variety of methods to include an accessible explanation of who they are on digital campaign materials. Most people noticed who digital material was promoted for, but not necessarily who was promoting it Following the 2021 Scottish Parliament election, we asked voters about their experiences of digital campaign material. Seven in 10 (71%) respondents to our public opinion research agreed that it is important for them to know who has produced the political information they see online and three in five (60%) agreed they would trust digital campaigning material more if they knew who produced it. Nearly three in five (56%) respondents said that they noticed who the material was being promoted for (the candidate or party) on the digital campaign material they saw in the run up to the Scottish Parliament election. However, only a third (34%) said that they noticed the promoter (the person/group/organisation which arranges for the advert to appear). 16-34 year olds were significantly more likely than those aged 35-54 and 55+ to have said that they noticed the promoter (52% vs. 31% and 24%, respectively) of election campaign materials and who it was being promoted for (63% vs. 54% and 52%, respectively). Most candidates and parties understood and complied with the new rules Nearly nine in 10 (87%) of respondents to our candidate survey said that they understood the requirement to include imprints on digital campaign materials and 76% agreed that it was easy to meet the requirement. Nearly three-quarters (72%) agreed that digital imprints would improve the transparency of digital campaigning. Our monitoring found that most political parties, candidates and campaigners complied with the rules and were able to add an imprint to their campaign material on different digital platforms. Where we found evidence of non-compliance amongst parties and their candidates we were able to contact the political party and ask them to come into compliance. However, there were a number of non-party campaigners who did not include an imprint on their digital material. As with the imprint rules on printed materials, it is often difficult to trace the source of some of this material and contact those responsible. We engaged with digital platforms around the new rules Ahead of the campaign period, the Commission met with representatives of the major social media companies and digital platforms. None of the platforms made adaptations in light of the new rules, and said they felt campaigners could include imprints within existing functionality for sharing content or placing adverts. It was difficult to identify and contact some campaigners We also asked the platforms if they were able to assist us in contacting campaigners or advertisers whose material did not include an imprint. They told us that they could only assist with contacting platform users if we were formally investigating. This has highlighted the gap in the rules that there aren't any informal routes for us to obtain information should we need to look into non-compliance without taking the step of opening a formal

investigation. There are two different methods that could provide useful ways to address this gap. The Scottish Parliament has legislated for a power for the Commission to obtain information for compliance and regulatory purposes in the Referendums (Scotland) Act 2020. The UK Government, as part of its Elections Bill, has also considered this gap. It has proposed a duty for people and companies to provide us with information to look into compliance issues with the digital imprints regime. Recommendation 4 The Scottish Government should ensure that the digital imprint legislation for Scottish Parliament and local government elections includes a power for the Electoral Commission to obtain information from social media companies. This will enable us to support compliance with the rules. Regulators strengthened collaboration during the election period Following recent elections in the UK, concerns have been raised by politicians and civil society groups about how easy it is for voters to assess the veracity of any campaign arguments they see online. For the May 2021 elections, we worked with our regulator partners (including the Information Commissioner's Office and the Office for Statistics Regulation) to run a UK-wide online public awareness campaign and encourage voters to find more information from a new section of our website. The campaign aimed to encourage people to think more carefully about political campaign adverts they see online, and it provided information about which regulators or other organisations they could contact if they had concerns. Evaluation of the campaign showed that over 7.6 million people saw our adverts on websites and social media platforms. The number of people who clicked through to find more information from the adverts was encouraging, and provides a good foundation for further awareness-raising activity at future elections. A group of representatives from six regulators met regularly throughout the election period to share issues. This initiative built on a regulators' forum that we have coordinated since 2016. Regular discussions during the campaign period allowed the regulators to develop a greater understanding of their roles in helping to support public confidence in elections. We will continue to work with other regulators during election periods to strengthen this type of collaboration for future polls. The Commission processed a high volume of applications for party names and identifiers ahead of the poll The Electoral Commission has a key statutory role for registering political parties in the UK. Political parties must register party identifiers with the Commission for use on ballot papers. These are names, descriptions, and emblems. The rules are in place to help make ballot papers clear and easy to use. It's important that voters can look at the ballot paper and cast their vote with confidence. Parties applying to be registered on the GB register of political parties also select which parts of GB they want to be registered to contest elections in. Parties can choose all or any combination of England, Scotland, and Wales. There is a separate register for parties in Northern Ireland. The Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) sets out criteria that applicant parties or new party identifiers must meet in order to be placed on the register of political parties. Where an application meets those tests, the Commission must register the party and their identifiers. All applications to register new party descriptions are subject to assessments against the criteria set out in law, with all proposed identifiers put on our website for public comment. To allow time for this assessment process, in October 2020 we advised all parties that we would guarantee a decision in time for the elections on applications to change their details or descriptions, provided these were properly submitted to us by 31 January 2021. Applications were assessed on a 'first come' basis. The Commission's party registration processes ensured that decisions were taken fairly and properly Some

political parties contesting the Scottish Parliament election applied for new party descriptions after 31 January, leaving in some instances insufficient time for us to process and take a decision on their applications before the close of nominations. One party challenged this by means of a judicial review. The courts dismissed the challenge. The Commission will continue to work with parties to ensure they are aware of the process and the timescales involved in applications for new party identity marks. The Commission applied the legal tests for party identifiers Following the election some voters in Scotland raised concerns about the inclusion on the ballot paper of an emblem prominently using the word ‘green’ that was not for the Scottish Green Party. A small number expressed concern that they had been confused by another party using this word in its identifiers. There is a legal test related to the likelihood of a voter confusing the emblem for one party with another party. The law requires the Commission to refuse an emblem if in our opinion it is likely such confusion would result. The legal test rests on whether confusion is ‘likely’, which is a higher threshold than it being ‘possible’. We remain satisfied that the emblem was not likely to confuse as a result of the prominent inclusion of the word ‘green’, as otherwise it was significantly visually distinct from the emblem of any other party. The concerns raised about this emblem also questioned whether the emblem accurately reflected the party’s policies. This is not a legal criterion for approval of an emblem. Delivering the elections This poll was well-run, notwithstanding the significant challenges presented by the pandemic, including the difficulties for Returning Officers and electoral administrators to find and train staff to work on polling day. The experience of this poll has again highlighted concerns about the resilience and capacity of electoral administration structures, which are coupled with the challenges of delivering elections within an outdated and increasingly complex electoral law framework. We will work in partnership with the EMB, the wider electoral community, Scottish Government and local authorities to develop and deliver proposals to support resilient electoral services for future elections. Electoral administrators delivered a well-run poll despite the uncertainty While the Scottish General Election (Coronavirus) Act was not passed until 23 December 2020, discussions around the measures in the Bill had been ongoing with the electoral community since the summer of 2020. This helped to ensure that Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers were aware of the likely changes to processes for the election in advance of the legislation being made. The Act did contain a provision for the poll to be postponed at relatively short notice in the event of adverse changes to the public health context. While this was an understandable precaution in the circumstances, it did impact on electoral administrators. Over four-fifths (83%) of electoral administrators responding to our survey said that uncertainty about whether the elections would go ahead made it difficult to plan for the poll. Nearly nine in 10 people in Scotland (85%) said that they were confident the election was well-run. Less than one in 10 said they were not confident (7%). The significant majority of voters (95%) said that they were satisfied with the process for voting, with 61% saying they were very satisfied. The vast majority of candidates that responded to our survey (88%) said the elections were well-run and a similar proportion (87%) were satisfied with the Covid-19 measures in the polling places. Electoral administrators faced particular challenges at this election because of Covid-19 It is clear that Covid-19 caused problems for electoral administrators, increasing their workload, causing uncertainty, and creating challenges with recruiting sufficient numbers of polling staff. Without doubt this was the most challenging election I have ever been involved in. The amount of additional work required to conduct the poll safely should

not be underestimated and the fact that the polls seem to have gone ahead without incident across the UK is testament to the amount of hard work and effort put in by election teams.” When asked how Covid-19 restrictions had impacted on their work: All respondents (100%) said that the restrictions had made their job more difficult and that their workload had increased because of the restrictions during this election.

Just under half (42%) said that they were concerned for their own health because of Covid-19 COVID had a massive impact on polling place preparation in terms of risk and space assessing, provision of PPE, screens etc. and deep cleaning/water testing of premises which hadn't been used over the past 14 months or so. The initial uncertainty delayed planning at the outset, which was theoretical for a while before it turned into practice. Electoral administrators faced particular challenges at this election because of Covid-19 Electoral administrators struggled to recruit experienced polling station staff Three-quarters (75%) of respondents to our electoral administrators' survey reported difficulties in recruiting polling station staff for the election. With levels of lock down still in place, many staff wished to follow government advice and 'stay at home' so recruiting polling staff was difficult, leading to a hugely inexperienced cohort of staff manning polling stations. Even once polling station staff had been appointed, administrators told us that there were high levels of drop out due to Covid-19 which had to be managed at short notice. While there were no issues initially with staff recruitment we had high number of call offs than normal in some cases due to staff being required to self-isolate and making sure we had sufficient reserves to cover these was challenging. Polling station staff appointments had approximately a 25% turnover with people shielding or not comfortable to work.” We asked administrators whether they had sought to recruit poll staff from new areas in order to supplement their usual pool of staff. Half (50%) of those who responded on this question said that they had used the Civil Service, 30% had used local students and one-fifth (20%) had approached private companies. Administrators also told us that they had made use of furloughed council leisure staff and exam invigilators. In this challenging context Returning Officers worked to appoint additional staff to manage the additional impacts of Covid-19 We had very few issues on polling day. The additional polling clerk (COVID marshal) role worked well. We increased our numbers of polling station inspectors and had polling information officers and COVID marshalls deployed for multiple polling stations. Having polling information officers and polling marshals for multiple polling stations were good and a way forward if budget allows. Where Commission representatives observed polling places with the additional ‘information officer’ staff in place, we found it worked well for voters by improving the flow of voters through the polling station and also helped to identify any voters with additional support needs who could then be offered tailored support for their journey through the polling place. Elections teams updated their count procedures to maintain transparency while minimising risks for count staff and candidates Returning Officers put in place new ways of providing transparency and enabling scrutiny of count processes Overall, electoral administrators in Scotland seemed to have less difficulties in preparing for the count than they did in setting up polling stations: Only 17% of administrators responding to our survey said they had difficulties recruiting count staff. This is far less than the 75% who had difficulties in recruiting polling staff. The impact of Covid-19, and the resultant public health advice around physical distancing, created challenges for administrators in enabling the same level of access to the count for candidate and party counting agents as at previous elections. Half (50%) of administrators who answered our survey either

strongly agreed or agreed that the Covid-19 restrictions made it difficult for candidates and agents to observe at the count. There was some negative feedback about agents and press limitations on numbers attending, whilst it was accepted as necessary was not welcomed in terms of their experience of the process. As a result of COVID the number of attendees at our count venue was greatly reduced but we were still able to accommodate parties in terms of counting agents and to allow some sampling. Candidates and agents, whilst acknowledging COVID was an issue, continued to want things to be done as they always had been. This was particularly evident with the numbers who were permitted (due to COVID and the size of the building) to attend. We had some robust challenges to our numbers. The majority of candidates that responded to our survey (80%) told us they were satisfied with the efficiency of the count and verification processes. A similar proportion (81%) told us that staff made it clear what was happening at all stages of the count. However, candidates were less satisfied with their ability to observe and scrutinise the count with just over half (52%) agreeing that it was possible to do so effectively (and 39% of candidate respondents disagreed with this statement). Very difficult to observe effectively due to distancing, especially at sorting stage when there was almost no chance of seeing whether the ballots were going into the correct piles/boxes. Covid measures included one direction path around the counting tables, but over an entire gym hall this meant it was impossible to move back to see and sample other ballot boxes being opened from neighbouring tables processing relevant polling stations. To do so meant walking all the way around the perimeter of the hall, by which time it would be too late. The distance of the screens from the table, combined with use of pencil made ballot papers mostly impossible to see at a distance. Most people witnessing the count gave up trying to see ballots. The process was not always clear and consistent with some officers using trays and others not. Electoral Commission representatives observing at counts saw examples of the use of large screens and technology for the adjudication of doubtful ballots. This generally involved projecting images of the ballots in question on to large screens so that candidates were able to see the doubtful ballot papers and have the opportunity to challenge the Returning Officer on their adjudication decision. Recommendation 5 Candidate and agent confidence in an election result is dependent on a transparent count. All aspects of the verification and count should be carried out in clear view of all those entitled to attend. Sufficient numbers of counting agents need be allocated to effectively scrutinise the process. The arrangements for the counts at this election were exceptional due to the impact of Covid-19. The EMB has been working to improve the consistency of arrangements for transparent counts across Scotland, including the allocation of counting agents, and this work should continue ahead of future polls. The electoral community should also consider what learning can be taken from the counts at this poll, including any to build on the use of technology at counts to improve scrutiny for future polls, and continue to ensure transparency for those entitled to attend in-person. Pressure on electoral administration capacity is building (not related to Covid-19) Electoral administrators continue to be dependent on a small marketplace of expert suppliers of electoral management software and specialist election print services. Although many electoral administrators were satisfied with the support provided by their suppliers, others experienced problems. For example, there were some instances of delays to supplier delivery of materials, with some Returning Officers not getting the ballot papers they expected and needed on time, and some not delivered until very close to polling day. As well as introducing additional risk by reducing the time available to deal with any issues

with delivered material before the opening of polls, the delays meant that administrators needed to invest significant time and energy into managing issues with their printers at a crucial time in the election timetable. While the supplier delays had some impact on the despatch of postal vote packs to voters in some areas, the impact on the polls as a whole should polling station papers not have been produced and delivered on time would have been significant. This illustrates the very real risk to the effective delivery of future polls as a result of the continued reliance of administrators on such a limited number of specialist suppliers of electoral services.

Recommendation 6

We have repeatedly highlighted concerns about the resilience and capacity of electoral administration structures in the UK, which are coupled with the challenges of delivering elections within an outdated and increasingly complex electoral law framework. We will work in partnership with the electoral community, governments, and local authorities to develop and deliver proposals to support resilient electoral services for the future. The EMB for Scotland has begun planning to mitigate supplier capacity risks ahead of the 2022 local government elections. This is a particularly important piece of work as the e-counting of the elections will see a single supplier tasked with the printing of all local authority ballot papers. Through the Electoral Advisory and Coordination Board, which includes the EMB, senior Returning Officers, electoral administration professional bodies and officials from all governments, we will establish a programme of activity to gather evidence about the challenges facing electoral administration teams and identify solutions to address them. The EMB continues to support consistency and improvement

The EMB for Scotland has now been provided for in statute for 10 years for local government elections, and has more recently – as a result of the Scottish Elections (Reform) Act 2020 – had its remit extended to Scottish Parliament elections. This statutory basis enables the Convener of the EMB to issue directions to Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers in respect of their duties in the delivery of a Scottish Parliament election. Directions issued by the Convener at the 2021 election included: colour of ballot paper date of dispatch of poll cards and postal votes count timing numbers of voters allocated to polling stations

The first set of directions were issued on 21 December 2020 and additional directions were issued on 3 February. In general, most respondents to our electoral administrator survey welcomed the support of the EMB. The directions from the EMB convener were helpful as they introduced consistency across the country. On a positive note the EMB in Scotland was incredibly helpful, supportive and forthcoming with proactive information. Directions are helpful and provide consistency, but also the pre-consultation on the directions help so that you had insight on what is coming.

Recommendation 7

The EMB should now consider how to develop its capacity to offer further support to the electoral administration community in Scotland. This should include considering resourcing and legal status in respect to overseeing contracts, such as for the e-counting contract for local government elections. This will help to ensure that all aspects of the delivery of the polls remain under the control and oversight of independent electoral officers who are accountable for the delivery of the elections. The Electoral Commission and Scottish Government should work with the EMB to support its development and to ensure effective alignment of responsibilities and activities across the different organisations.

Supporting Evidence

Scottish Parliament Elections Public Opinion Tables 2021

Scottish Parliament Election Administrative Data 2021

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You are in the Party panels section Home How we make decisions Party panels On this page Information Commissioner's Office Q & A Minutes, and actions of the meeting and matters arising (ECPPP 06/09/2016) Assessment process for party descriptions PEF Online redevelopment plans Commission structural changes update Commission update report AOB Actions First published: 6 December 2016 Last updated: 2 September 2019 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Conservative Party: Andrew Stedman (AS) Victoria Carslake (VC) Labour: John Stolliday (JS) Sophie Goodyear (SG) Liberal Democrats (Chair): David Allworthy (DA) Darren Briddock (DB) SDLP Social Democratic & Labour Party: Claire Tighe (CT) Scottish National Party: Scott Martin (SM) Electoral Commission: Bob Posner, Director of Political Finance and Regulation & Legal Counsel (BP) Craig Westwood, Director of Communications and Research (CW) Karim Aziz, Media and Public Affairs Manager (KA) Information Commissioner's Office Q & A Judith Jones (Group Manager – Government and Society) and Sue Markey (Stakeholder relations) from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) conducted a Q & A with the group on a range of matters to do with use of the electoral register and data protection. The group discussed the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which will be live in 2018. The ICO noted that their website has a '12 steps to get ready' guidance document and also a microsite with more information. Action: Commission to send a link to the PPP with details of the microsite and the guidance document. The group also discussed that it would be useful for another meeting with the ICO to take place at the September 2017 PPP meeting in preparedness for 2018. Action: Commission to organise meeting. Minutes, and actions of the meeting and matters arising (ECPPP 06/09/2016) The minutes from 06/09/2016 were agreed. It was noted that the Commission's Head of Guidance was not at this PPP meeting to discuss Commission guidance. BP noted that the role was vacant but that hopefully a new Head of Guidance will be in place for the next meeting. BP also gave apologies on behalf of the Chief Executive who could not attend this PPP meeting Assessment process for party descriptions BP referred to the Commission Update Report and that the Commission has been considering how candidates standing for a party are described on election ballot papers and that it should be clear to voters which party the candidate represents. BP noted that in recent years there had been an increasing trend where smaller parties were registering descriptions and it was not clear who the party was. BP informed the group that there was little chance that the UK Government would have parliamentary time to make legislative changes to the Political Parties Elections and Referendums Act 2000. This is why the Commission is considering implementing a proposed clarification of the definition of a 'party description' subject to the Electoral Commission Board approving the approach at its February 2017 meeting. Any changes would come into effect after the May 2017 polls. SM commented that regarding the Scottish Parliamentary elections ballot papers, a process took place following the Gould Report, which has meant that the party name has to appear on Scottish Parliamentary elections papers. SM added that an approach may be to look at ballot paper legislation and that it's more likely that the UK Government could find time for a change to secondary legislation rather than primary legislation. DB sought clarification that if the party has to be identifiable from a description, the Welsh version would also be included. BP confirmed that was correct and also noted that for local government and UK parliament constituency elections in Scotland, the party name does not have to appear on ballot papers. BP reminded the group that the Commission would communicate any changes after its Board meeting in February. PEF Online

redevelopment plans BP informed the group that funding had been identified to do scoping work on improvements to PEF Online. The redevelopment should be done hand-in-hand with the main users and that all members of the PPP had a chance to influence the redevelopment of PEF Online. BP also informed the group that there was an opportunity for members of the PPP to be 'super users' and to be a part of the Commission's project board overseeing the redevelopment. It was agreed that SM and DB would act as 'super users' on behalf of the PPP. Commission structural changes update BP explained the make-up of the Commission's 'Party Finance Regulation' (PFR) department and its 'Electoral Administration and Guidance' (EAG) department. BP noted that this included an important change bringing all of its guidance functions into one team. BP noted that changes to the organisational charts on the Commission's website should be made early in the New Year. Commission update report BP noted that regarding item 6 – 'Regulations and Codes of Practice' the Commission would be making some proposals that would be consulted on to the PPP represented parties to enable welcome suggestions to ensure workability. BP singled out the standardisation of accounts where spending and / or expenditure is over £250,000 would be subject to regulations. Members of the PPP raised the issue that in one year an accounting unit may have exceeded that income, for example via a legacy, but then may not ever again exceed that threshold. BP noted that it is possible that the regulations could have some flexibility to them to take into account specific factors relevant for one set of accounts. AS asked if the Commission had had any contact with the Charity Commission who have a process for volunteers to help them meet legal requirements. BP said he would check whether the Commission had liaised with the Charity Commission. BP also noted that the Commission would in 2017 consult PPP represented parties with more details regarding the standardisation of accounts. BP noted that regarding item 7 – 'Principles for the political finance framework' that the Commission was building on the work done in 2011 by the Committee on Standards in Public. This item was just to keep the PPP informed. AOB BP raised the issue of Policy Development Grant (PDG) audits. BP said that whilst the Commission was prepared to conduct audits for the 2016 / 17 allocation, from 2017 / 18, parties would be responsible for conducting their own audits of their PDG spending, through their appointed external accountants / auditors. The parties did have an option to do this for 2016 / 17 if they chose. DA asked if this could be done as part of the changes to Statement of Accounts which need to be audited if they have income / expenditure over £250,000. AS asked if the audits had to be done for the financial year or for the calendar year. BP said that timing for when the audits need to be conducted was driven by the secondary legislation, so it was an issue for the Cabinet Office. Accordingly, it may therefore be possible that a change could align the PDG audit with the Statement of Accounts audits. BP said that the Commission would write to the PPP represented parties with more information about PDG audits. JS asked about an Ofcom consultation proposing to remove the description of 'larger parties'. CW confirmed that the Commission had not yet responded to the consultation. Action: KA to send a copy of Commission response to the Ofcom consultation and share Ofcom contact so members of the PPP can send their own submission if they choose too. The next PPP meeting will take place on Tuesday 21 February at 11am – Conservatives to chair. Actions Actions from December 2016 PPP meeting Action Owner Status EC to send link to ICO 12 steps guidance and microsite KA Sent 9 December 2016 EC to arrange for ICO to attend September PPP meeting KA Invite sent 9 December 2016 EC to send its response to Ofcom consultation to the PPP KA Sent 9 December 2016 Future agenda items Agenda item When Electoral Commission presentation on May 2017 public awareness campaign February PPP Discussion

with Electoral Commission [Head of Guidance] its on its future approach to guidance including 'digitalisation'. February PPP ICO to present update on requirements parties must adhere to in 2018 September PPP Related content Party registration decisions View our decisions on political party names, descriptions and emblems View current applications View the political party names, descriptions and emblems which we are currently considering as part of our assessment process Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Registers of unincorporated associations Download and view the registers of unincorporated associations

Looking ahead to 2022/23 You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 On this page Summary The Commission's objectives for 2022/23 – 2026/27 Three key factors will help us achieve our objectives: Looking ahead First published: 20 July 2022 Last updated: 1 August 2022 Summary Looking forward to 2022/23 our focus will be on beginning to deliver on the ambitions in our new corporate plan. Our Corporate Plan 2022/23 – 2026/27 , which we laid in the UK Parliament and Scottish Parliament in April 2022, and the related Corporate Plan for Wales, establish our strategic objectives for the period. The Commission's objectives for 2022/23 – 2026/27 1. Accessible registration and voting We will work to ensure: increased levels of voter registration, especially amongst groups that currently have difficulty engaging in the process; the removal of barriers, especially those that affect people who currently have difficulty trying to cast their vote. 2. Transparent political campaigning and compliant political finance We will work to ensure: increased levels of confidence shown by candidates, parties and other campaigners in their ability to understand, apply and comply with the law on campaigning and political finance; high levels of compliance with registration, reporting and other political finance laws. 3. Resilient local electoral services We will work to ensure: sustained and consistent high performance in the delivery of well-run elections; increased levels of confidence shown by electoral administrators in the resilience of the electoral system 4. Fair and effective electoral law We will work to: support governments and parliaments to reform electoral law to make it less complex; reduce the risks and inefficiencies associated with electoral law which impact our electoral system. 5. A modern and sustainable electoral system We will work to ensure: data and technology are harnessed to meet the needs of voters, campaigners and electoral administrators; the changing risks to the election system from the misuse of data and technology are understood and acted upon; strong relationships and streamlined working practices with all bodies that are part of the electoral system are developed; governments and the wider electoral community are supported to adopt a strategy and implementation plan which reduces the environmental impact of our electoral system. Three key factors will help us achieve our objectives: 1. We demonstrate independence and integrity We will continue to demonstrate how we fulfil this by: taking decisions on the evidence and being transparent about the reasons for them; basing our policy positions and recommendations on analysis of evidence; effectively communicating our work and views; providing responsive services to those we support; maintaining effective governance arrangements 2. We are a skilled organisation where diversity is valued We will: implement refreshed working practices to reflect wider changes in our work environment and culture; attract, retain and develop the people we need; maintain and improve high standards of management, with a focus on developing our people; further embed equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of our work 3. We are a learning organisation where improvement is continuous and resources are used effectively We will: procure and implement value for money technology that improves service delivery as appropriate; maintain a sound prudent financial strategy; continue to develop techniques to learn from experience, seek continuous improvement and become more efficient and effective; develop a corporate environmental strategy that meets policy and legislative requirements. Looking ahead For 2022/23, we highlight the following key risks, challenges and opportunities: Our immediate priority is the delivery of the May 2022 polls, including the Northern Ireland assembly elections and early voting pilots in Wales. We will report on the conduct of

the elections in the autumn of 2022. The UK Government's Elections Bill received Royal Assent on 28 April 2022, making wide-ranging changes to how elections are run, the way people vote, campaigning, and political spending and funding. This initiates a substantial programme of work for across our functions. We will work closely with the UK government, electoral administrators and other stakeholders in developing and delivering our implementation plans. Timescales for implementing the required changes will be set by the UK government and are likely to be challenging for both for us and for the wider electoral community. We are working to ensure the risks are understood and to do what we can to mitigate them, with dedicated resources, specific project, and risk management in place to support the successful delivery of our own activity. We have ambitious plans for investing in technology, upgrading our infrastructure and delivering the new Political Finance Online system to the first users. Updating our internal infrastructure will be a key priority for the first part of year, improving efficient working practices and providing a solid basis to set a new digital strategy consistent with our ambitions for the Commission and modern elections. Refreshing our working practices and culture. Priorities for 2022/23 will include substantially developing our approach to diversity and inclusion, upgrading our learning and development, and improving recruitment and induction processes. To support our financial strategy and deliver value for money we also plan to improve financial forecasting and budgeting. Navigation Previous Next Focus on Northern Ireland Using our resources to support the delivery of our goals 2021/22

Cabinet Office consultation: The Wales Act 2017 (Consequential and Saving Provisions) Regulations 2018 | Electoral Commission Search Cabinet

Office consultation: The Wales Act 2017 (Consequential and Saving Provisions) Regulations 2018 You are in the Our responses to consultations section Home Our responses to consultations On this page Introduction Digital Service Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) elections Welsh Assembly Elections First published: 1 February 2018 Last updated: 19 August 2018 Introduction The Electoral Commission has been formally consulted on the above draft regulations that the Cabinet Office proposes to make under powers in the Wales Act 2017. We understand that proposed regulations will make consequential amendments and saving provision in respect of certain pieces of electoral legislation. These provisions are required as a result of the provisions in the Wales Act (sections 3 and Schedule 1 and 2, and sections 5 to 8 of the Act) that devolve powers in relation to Welsh Assembly and local government elections in Wales, and in particular the devolution of the franchise for local government elections and the registration of electors for local government in Wales. The Welsh Language Legislation Advisory Group has been asked to respond separately on the Welsh language aspects of the proposed draft regulations. The Commission's response to each of the areas covered in the regulations is set out below.

Digital Service We have no comments to make on the amendments that are proposed to regulation 26 of the Representation of the People Regulations 2001 (SI 2001/341) (applications for registration) to make consequential provision in connection with the reservation of the digital service.

Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) elections We understand the reasons for changing the way the PCC franchise is expressed, as a consequence of the devolution of the franchise for local government elections in Wales. We feel, however, that the proposed definition of the "register of electors" at a PCC election in Wales is too lengthy and complicated and thought should be given to making it more easily understandable and to avoid confusion by electoral administrators.

Welsh Assembly Elections We are pleased that the proposed draft regulations provide clarity that the existing National Assembly for Wales (Representation of the People) Order 2007 that sets out the rules for the conduct of the Welsh Assembly Elections will continue to be in force after the provisions of the Wales Act take effect. We note that this is with the exception of provisions for the combination of polls at Welsh Assembly and local government elections in Wales, as the combination of an ordinary local government election and an ordinary general election of members of the National Assembly for Wales will be reserved under changes made by the Wales Act.

Related content

- Consultation: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
- Statutory consultation on guidance for Returning Officers: Assistance with voting for disabled people
- Draft guidance for Returning Officers: Assistance with voting for disabled voters (statutory consultation)
- Response to inquiry into voting rights for prisoners

Read our response to inquiry into voting rights for prisoners from January 2019

Scottish Parliament Political Parties Panel Minutes: 7 June 2019 | Electoral Commission Search Scottish Parliament Political Parties

Panel Minutes: 7 June 2019 You are in the Party panels section Home How we make decisions Party panels On this page Inclusion Scotland - Update on Access to Politics Charter Minutes of 8 February 2019 European Parliamentary Elections Electoral Management Board (EMB) update Police Scotland update Scottish Government Update Scotland Office update Scottish Boundary Commission update Electoral Commission update Date of next meeting Action items First published: 18 February 2020 Last updated: 18 February 2020 Meeting overview Date: 7 June 2019 Time: 11am to 12:50 pm Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Scottish Conservatives: Matthew Edmonds (Chair) Scottish Labour Party: Lorna Finlayson Scottish Green Party: John Hardy Scottish National Party: Scott Martin Scottish Liberal Democrats: Paul Moat Scottish Government: Maria McCann (MMcC) Rebecca Whyte (RW) Penny Curtis Scottish Boundary Commissions: Isabel Drummond-Murray (IDM) Electoral Management Board for Scotland (EMB): Chris Highcock (CH) Scottish Assessors Association: Kate Crawford The Electoral Commission: Alastair Ross, Commissioner Andy O'Neill, (AON) Head of Electoral Commission, Scotland Martin McKeown, (MMcK) Senior Elections & s Adviser Roisin McDaid, (RMcD) Senior Officer - Political Parties Liaison Also present: Ethan Young, Inclusion Scotland (EY) Superintendent Pat O'Callaghan, (POC) Police Scotland Chief Inspector Paul Douglas, Police Scotland Sergeant Garry Kelly, Police Scotland Apologies for absence: Paul Thomson, Senior Policy Adviser, Scotland Office Dame Sue Bruce, Commissioner, Electoral Commission Alastair Morgan, Commissioner, Electoral Commission Pete Wildman, Scottish Assessors Association Welcome and introductions, apologies The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting and invited introductions. Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Dame Sue Bruce, Alastair Morgan, Pete Wildman and Paul Thomson. Inclusion Scotland - Update on Access to Politics Charter EY provided an overview of the Access to Politics Charter that was launched at the Scottish Parliament on 14 June 2018 and was signed up to by leaders and representatives of all five of the political parties represented in the Scottish Parliament. Following the launch, Inclusion Scotland wrote to the five parties seeking information on what practical steps they had undertaken to take forward the 8 commitments contained in the Charter which aim to address barriers that prevent disabled persons actively participating in politics – including standing for election. EY provided an update on progress to date. Overall, the results were positive with each party engaging with the Charter and taking steps to recognise and improve their policies and practices for disabled members. Whilst recognising the good work undertaken to date, EY stressed that more could be done and offered to work with political parties and others to push for more representation and involvement from the disabled community. Minutes of 8 February 2019 The minutes from the previous meeting were approved. There were no actions arising from the meeting. European Parliamentary Elections The PPP discussed the delivery of the European Parliamentary Elections (EPEs) in Scotland. The following issues were raised: Need for consistent timings on issue of key information to candidates and agents; Issues around the experience of EU citizens in trying to vote in the UK; Need for making key forms available online in editable formats; Possible voter confusions arising from national elections and local by elections occurring in the same timeframe; Issues around how overseas electors cast their votes; Inability of count agents to undertake sampling when ballot papers are faced down. Perceived lack of facilities for parties during the count collation process in Edinburgh. Police arrangements for dealing with issues during the poll and tone of advice on candidate and campaigner safety; Need for

closer liaison between Police and party central offices in the run up to, and during, electoral events; Impact of lower campaign spending limits in Scotland; Need to consider arrangements for publicising location of polling places on a national basis.

Noted. Electoral Management Board (EMB) update CH advised that the Regional Returning Officer (RRO) for the Scotland Electoral Region, Kenneth Lawrie of Falkirk Council, had overall responsibility for the delivery of the EPEs, assisted by local ROs across Scotland. The EMB took on a coordinating role and assisted the RRO to deliver the poll and collate the result. CH provided an overview of the role played by the EMB during the elections. Overall the EPEs were delivered successfully but there are always learning points. The short timeframe of the EPEs provided particular problems around staffing. The EMB continues to be aware of the need to strengthen the resilience of the electoral community in Scotland e.g. through mentoring of Returning officers. CH advised the EMB intended to hold a post event review in early July where lessons for future events will be discussed. He agreed to raise the issues discussed under the previous item of business as appropriate. Police Scotland update POC provided the PPP with an overview of the arrangements put in place by Police Scotland during the European Parliamentary elections to co-ordinate responses to any issues around disorder or electoral integrity across Scotland. In particular he highlighted the role of the Divisional SPOCs in liaising with Returning Officers and their teams.

Police Scotland also work closely with the EMB and the Electoral Commission to ensure that SPOCs are trained in their specific roles. The PPP discussed the need for clarity on how party activists and others could timeously report issues of concern to the Police during elections and the response they should reasonably expect from Police Scotland. Noted. Scottish Government update MMcC and RW provided the PPP with progress reports in respect of (i) the forthcoming Franchise and Electoral Reform Bills; (ii) preparations for canvass reform in Scotland; (iii) ballot order testing to be undertaken by The Electoral Commission; and (iv) the Referendums (Scotland) Bill. It was agreed that the PPP be kept informed of future developments in these areas as appropriate. Scotland Office update MMcK advised that the Scotland Office would not be represented at the meeting but had produced a written report. He agreed to circulate the report following the meeting. Noted. Scottish Boundary Commission update IDM provided the PPP with updates on (i) a judicial challenge to the Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland's proposals for new constituencies; (ii) recruitment of new Boundary Commissioners for Scotland; (iii) progress of Island Council reviews; and (iv) administrative reviews. Noted. Electoral Commission update The PPP was provided with information on the following areas: Response to Inquiry on Electoral Law Reform MMcK advised that the UK Parliament's Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee had launched an inquiry examining the case for a comprehensive review of electoral law. The Commission had responded to the call for evidence and a copy of the response was tabled. The response supported the need for simplified and modernised electoral law and confirmed the Commission's willingness to work with Governments and legislatures to achieve that aim. MMcC stressed the importance of involving the Scottish Law Commission in any future work to simplify and modernise electoral law. Ballot Order Testing AON confirmed that the Commission had been invited by Scottish Government to undertake research to find solutions to the "list order effect" for Scottish Council elections. He provided an overview of the approach being taken to test two alternatives – order by lot and A-Z, Z-A ordering. Ipsos Mori were engaged to carry out testing with electors and fieldwork would be carried out over summer. The Commission would also be consulting with key stakeholders, including political parties, with a report produced by September. Codes

of Practice RMcD provided an update on the work being undertaken to produce two Codes of Practice: one on candidate election spending and one on Party spending. The codes were prepared primarily in relation to UK Parliamentary elections. The codes had been re-drafted following the formal consultation that ran in autumn 2018. Copies of these were shared with the PPP. The Codes would now be finalised, following a roundtable with representatives of the Westminster PPP earlier in the week. The Commission was working to develop similar Codes of Practice for devolved elections in Scotland and Wales. Date of next meeting Wednesday 20 November 2019 Action items Action items Owner(s) Deadline 6 Chris Highcock July 8 MMcC, RW Future meeting 9 MMcK ASAP

1. The electoral system in Wales | Electoral Commission Search

1. The electoral system in Wales You are in the Corporate Plan for Wales 2022/23 to 2026/27 section Home Our plans and priorities Corporate Plan for Wales 2022/23 to 2026/27 First published: 25 April 2022 Last updated: 25 April 2022 The electoral system The electoral system enables democracy across and within the nations, regions and local areas of the UK by: encouraging people to register to vote, and to trust and value elections and referendums achieving high levels of compliance with registration, reporting and other political finance laws ensuring the delivery of free and fair elections and referendums A range of bodies operate within the electoral system to enable it to function efficiently and effectively. These include: the Senedd and Welsh Government the UK Parliament and Government candidates, parties and campaigners local electoral services led by the Electoral Registration Officers and Returning Officers, who are responsible for directly delivering elections throughout Wales and the UK, and the Wales Electoral Coordination Board the Electoral Commission which has specific duties related to the oversight of elections, running referendums and the regulation of political finance, along with other bodies that have regulatory and law enforcement responsibilities relating to elections Scheduled elections in Wales in the period April 2022 to March 2027 May 2022 Welsh Local Government May 2024 Police and Crime Commissioners (England and Wales) No later than January 2025 UK Parliamentary May 2026 Senedd Navigation Corporate Plan for Wales 2022/23 to 2026/27 The five objectives in our corporate plan for Wales focus on our work in Wales, and the plan was submitted to the Senedd in 2021. 2. The Electoral Commission in Wales Section 2 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan for Wales

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Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run Report: The costs of delivering the June 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union Read our report about the costs of delivering the 2016 EU referendum 2017 electoral fraud data about electoral fraud in 2017 and view the data Draft guidance for Returning Officers: Assistance with voting for disabled voters (statutory consultation)

Northern Ireland Assembly's Parties Panel: 1 October 2019 | Electoral Commission Search Northern Ireland Assembly's Parties Panel: 1 October 2019

You are in the Party panels section Home How we make decisions Party panels First published: 6 November 2020 Last updated: 3 February 2021 Meeting overview Date: 1 October 2019 Time: 9:30am Location: Boardroom, Ormeau Business Park, Belfast Date of next scheduled meeting: 28 January 2020 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Alliance Party: Sharon Lowry DUP: Lee Reynolds Green Party: Kate Barry Sinn Féin: Gary Fleming and Seamus Drumm SDLP: Catherine Matthews UUP: Barbara Knox The Electoral Commission: Anna Carragher, Commissioner Cahir Hughes, Head of Electoral Commission NI Roisin McDaid, Senior Officer (Political Parties Liaison) Craig Westwood, Director of Communications, Policy and Research Laura Palts McCarthy, Senior Public Affairs Officer Electoral Office for Northern Ireland: Virginia McVea, Chief Electoral Officer for Ireland Welcome and introductions The Chair, Anna Carragher, welcomed everyone to the meeting and round table introductions were made. Anna congratulated Cahir on his new role and updated the panel on other Commission staffing changes. Notes of previous meeting on 11 June 2019 The panel agreed the notes of the previous meeting. There were no matters arising. Issues raised by the political parties No items had been raised by the parties in advance of the meeting. Electoral Commission updates Anna commented on the current political environment and said that the Commission had contingency plans in place for any unscheduled poll. Electoral Commission assessment on May 2019 local government elections Cahir told the panel that on 8 July we wrote to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland giving our assessment that the local elections in Northern Ireland had been well run, with feedback from voters and observers being positive. A copy of the letter was provided. The Commission identified a number of minor legislative issues that we have highlighted to the Government. These included issues relating to home addresses on ballot papers, the management of the count and polling scheme reviews. In response the Government has already consulted with us on draft legislation to remove the requirement for home addresses to be on ballot paper and other minor issues. Commission response to draft legislation Cahir updated the panel on draft legislation that the Commission had responded to the Government on: Representation of the People (Electronic Communications and Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2020 In August we responded to draft legislation for the canvass, welcoming the opportunity it would give voters to respond to a canvass online for the first time in Northern Ireland. Overall we were content with the draft legislation, although we are waiting on a further draft of the Regulations from the NIO. The Local Elections (Northern Ireland) (Amendment) Order 2020 We have also responded to a draft Order from the NIO that makes some amendments to local government elections. Most notably this brings local government elections into line with other elections by removing the requirement for a candidate to have their home address published. It also addresses the issue relating to the use of capital letters for a candidate's name on the ballot paper. We have welcomed the amendments made by the Order. Report on the accuracy and completeness of the electoral registers On 26 September we published our latest assessment on the accuracy and completeness of the electoral registers in Northern Ireland. A copy of the report was provided. Cahir highlighted the headline figures from the report. Private renters remain the least likely to have up to date register entries (38%) compared to people who owned their houses outright (88%). Registration levels are also low among young people aged 18-34, with only 51% correctly registered, compared to 94% for people aged 65 and over. The 2018 figures show a return to the levels of accuracy and completeness recorded in 2012. The last Northern

Ireland canvass was in 2013, with the next one scheduled for 2020. The Commission has renewed calls for modernisation of the electoral registration system in Northern Ireland, recommending that public data could be better used to help keep the electoral register accurate and complete throughout the year. Modernising electoral registration feasibility studies Craig updated the panel on the feasibility studies the Commission published in July. The studies explored how the system could be modernised further to make it easier for people to register to vote and for Electoral Registration Officers to maintain accurate and complete electoral registers. Craig said that our studies provided an evidence base for any future policy. Anna added that compared to NI, it is a more complex picture in GB with 381 separate registers. Gary said that they have serious concerns about the register but they support automatic registration of attainers when they get their national insurance number. Lee made the point of being careful with data and that people have the right not to participate. Anna acknowledged the point but added that people should be registered even if they choose not to vote. Craig mentioned the debate about automatic or automated registration. Update from Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland The CEO welcomed Cahir to his new role and thanked the Commission for its accuracy and completeness report. There are now 1.3m people on the register which is one of the highest levels it's been at. From 1 January to 1 October 2019 there were 21,849 paper applications and 117,089 online applications. The mid-year estimate for attainers is at 50%. EONI is looking at different data options to analyse registration levels and target outreach. Working with property services' data, EONI should be able to identify streets with the lowest levels of registration. The CEO would welcome opportunities to work with the Commission and parties on more raising more targeted public awareness. The CEO is also considering how to contact attainers and an option is to use a C2K network which would allow contact with every pupil on the network. Working with CCEA the EONI is planning to provide lesson plan materials for 11-14, 14-16 and 16+ to support electoral registration. The CEO is working with Start 360 to reach those not in education or training. EONI is working with RQIA to improve engagement with care home residents and to develop care home standards that would support this. There was a discussion about the difficulties of getting access to care home residents and how this needs to be balanced with the pressures and priorities of care homes and families. This led to a discussion around access to apartment blocks and their residents' turnout rate. Anna asked if more could be done to improve and modernise access to electoral ID for attainers and the elderly. The CEO said that a legislative change is needed but highlighted some options that could modernise the process. This included using photos on the C2K network for young people. However GDPR legislation would have to be carefully considered alongside this. These are longer term projects and might need pilots to test if they work in practice. The CEO suggested working with the Commission given its experience of the ID pilots in Great Britain The polling station review is due to be published on or before 1 December. The CEO will confirm with parties when it will be published. The CEO will arrange a meeting with the panel to discuss how data sources could be more effectively used to manage the electoral register. Electoral Commission updates – recent Commission publications Codes of Practice on election spending Roisin updated panel members on the Codes of Practice. In July we submitted two codes of practice on election spending to the Minister for Constitution. One on candidate and one on party spending. The Minister now needs to decide whether to make any amendments to the codes before laying them before parliament to approve. The draft codes and our report on the responses to the consultation process were circulated to members in July and

are available on our website. The codes, if enacted will apply to elections to Westminster, Northern Ireland Assembly and Councils in Northern Ireland. These codes would also apply at local government elections in Northern Ireland where the regulated period was combined with the regulated period for another election If you have any questions about the codes, please contact Roisin. Political finance – statutory return deadlines Parties were reminded of the following deadlines: Donation and loan returns for 1 July 2019 – 30 September 2019 (Q3 2019) must be submitted by 30 October 2019. Donation and loan returns for 1 October 2019 – 31 December 2019 (Q4 2019) must be submitted by 30 January 2020. Lee raised concerns about advice received regarding the reporting of loans. Roisin said that we can meet to discuss any individual concerns. AOB – none raised Proposed 2020 meeting dates Tuesday 28 January Tuesday 24 March Tuesday 9 June Tuesday 6 October

Transparency in digital campaigning: response to Cabinet Office technical consultation on digital imprints | Electoral Commission Search

Transparency in digital campaigning: response to Cabinet Office technical consultation on digital imprints You are in the Transparent digital campaigning section Home Transparent digital campaigning On this page Overview Approach to answering consultation questions Proposal 1: Extension of regime Proposal 2: Material subject to the regime Proposal 3: Details on the imprint Proposal 4: Location of the imprint Proposal 5: Appearance of the imprint Proposal 6: Re-publishing of election material Proposal 7: Territoriality Section 8: Enforcement Section 9: Regulatory costs and benefits to business First published: 1 October 2020 Last updated: 14 October 2020 Overview The UK Government's technical proposals for a new digital imprint requirement will deliver an important increase in transparency for voters, campaigners and regulators. There has been significant growth in digital campaigning at elections and referendums, but campaigners still do not have to identify themselves as the source of that material. These proposals will help to close this gap in transparency, and should help to improve public confidence in digital campaigns at future elections and referendums in the UK. Our response to this consultation draws on our experience of supporting campaigners to comply with the current imprint rules for printed election or referendum material since 2000, and our more recent experience of working with digital platform providers to help improve transparency for users of their services. In the majority of cases we support the proposals, and have set out detail on our reasoning. There are two main areas where we have identified concerns: The proposed rules would mean that unregistered non-party campaigners would not need to include imprints on campaign material that they had not paid to promote. This would leave a gap of material, potentially involving significant production costs and having considerable reach and impact with voters, with no ability to identify who was responsible for producing it. Under these proposals, campaigners would not have to include the imprint as a permanent part of the campaign material if it is not reasonably practicable. The benefits of improved transparency would be reduced if campaigners were allowed to choose to locate the imprint elsewhere (for example in a profile or bio) and there risks being no incentive to include the imprint on the material itself. We note that the consultation invites views about expanding the scope of a digital imprints regime to cover wider forms of political advertising. We agree that it is a timely moment to ask this question and our response sets out some initial considerations. Further consideration can be contributed as the policy develops, including on the scope of political material under consideration by the Government and the problems that any future proposals would be intended to address. Cabinet Office digital imprints consultation Cabinet Office's proposals and questions are published in Transparency in digital campaigning: technical consultation on digital imprints, 2020 We have grouped together our answers to some questions. Where asked for a view, we have used the 5 point Likert scale as requested in the consultation document: Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree. Proposal 1: Extension of regime Questions 1 and 2: Extending imprints to digital election material Questions 1 and 2: Do you agree or disagree with this proposal for the extension of the imprints regime to digital election material? Please provide any further detail to explain your response here. We strongly agree with this proposal. We have previously drawn attention to the significant implications of a lack of transparency in digital campaigning. As the consultation acknowledges, data from election and referendum spending returns show a significant growth in digital campaigning in the

last decade. While digital communication can be transformative in engaging the voter with campaigning messages, our research with the public has found evidence that significant public concerns about the transparency risks overshadowing the benefits. In our survey after the 2019 UK Parliamentary general election 1 we found that: Nearly three quarters of people (72%) agreed that it was important for them to know who produced the political information they see online Less than a third (29%) agreed that they can find out who has produced the political information they see online Nearly half (46%) agreed that they were concerned about why and how political ads were targeted at them. Although the majority of more established registered political parties and campaigners follow our guidance to include some form of identifying information on their digital material, there is no legal obligation at present to do so. This means that material can be published and promoted to influence voters without the campaigner ever having to identify themselves as the source. The UK Government's proposals will help to close this gap in transparency. The UK Government has also said that it intends to legislate so that all printed election material in Northern Ireland will need an imprint. We strongly support this proposal, as it would address a longstanding anomaly and will ensure greater consistency in the imprint rules. This change would mean that voters in Northern Ireland would be able to see who is responsible for all election or referendum campaign material that is produced by candidates, parties or other campaigners. Questions 3 and 4: Improving the transparency of digital election material Questions 3 and 4: Do you agree or disagree that this regime will improve the transparency of digital election material? Please provide any further detail to explain your response here. We agree that this regime will improve transparency about the source of most digital campaign material aimed at voters in the UK. However, it will not cover all digital material, and we set out our concerns about the proposal to exclude some material in our response to questions 11 to 14. Questions 5 and 6: The main benefits of the digital imprints proposal Questions 5 and 6: What do you consider to be the main benefits of the digital imprints proposal? Do you have any other comments on proposal 1? The main benefit of the proposal is that voters, other campaigners and those responsible for enforcing electoral law will be able to more easily identify who is spending money on campaigning at elections and referendums. We believe that this will help to improve public confidence in campaigning. We also welcome the proposal that the regime should be broad enough to cover all relevant digital technologies and communication channels and able to keep pace with technological change. Proposal 2: Material subject to the regime Questions 7 and 8: Extending the regime Questions 7 and 8: Do you agree or disagree that the regime should be extended to registered political parties, registered third party campaigners, candidates, holders of elected office and registered referendum campaigners - both paid and unpaid (or 'organic') material? Please provide any further detail to explain your response here. We agree that the requirement should be extended to election or referendum material produced by the specified individuals and organisations. These campaigners are responsible for the majority of the digital campaign material that voters see during elections and referendum campaigns. We also agree that it should cover material that is produced and distributed through paid or unpaid means by these groups of campaigners. As formally recognised participants in an election or referendum, these campaigners should have to identify themselves as the source of all of their campaign material regardless of whether they have paid to advertise or promote it. Making this change will reassure the public that these campaigners are not able to run unofficial 'stealth' campaigns (alongside their official campaigns) without the law requiring

them to identify themselves as the source of that material. We describe an example of recent public concerns about this possibility in our response to question 12.

Questions 9 and 10: Extending the regime to prospective office holders Questions 9 and 10: Do you agree or disagree that the regime should be extended to prospective office holders (both paid and unpaid, or ‘organic’, material)? Please provide any further detail to explain your response here. We agree that the imprints regime should apply to “prospective office holders”. This would mean that the requirement would apply to candidates, people intending to stand as candidates, and also to other campaigners who share campaign material about these people. It would help voters to have additional transparency outside a formal campaigning period. There are complexities to defining when someone is legally regarded as being a prospective candidate for the purpose of the imprint rules. Currently, candidacy is linked to other events in an election timetable, such as when a Parliament dissolves or when a notice of election is published. It can be relevant whether a person has self-declared or been declared by their agent as intending to stand. There are also rules on pre-candidacy spending which apply for several months before UK and Scottish Parliamentary general elections; these concepts could be considered when developing a definition of a prospective office holder. Question 11: Extending the regime to unregistered campaigners Question 11: Do you agree or disagree that the regime should be extended to unregistered third party campaigners promoting paid material only? We disagree. We support the proposal that unregistered non-party campaigners should be required to include an imprint on campaign material. However, we recommend that this should apply to any election or referendum campaign material that promotes an outcome, regardless of whether a campaigner has paid to promote or advertise it. We have several interrelated concerns about the implications of limiting the scope as proposed. These concerns relate to the impact on voters of campaigns that are designed to be shared ‘organically’ or ‘virally’ by supporters, and the impact of algorithms. Under this proposal: Unregistered campaigners could coordinate unpaid ‘organic’ campaigns without identifying themselves as the original source of the campaign material. Material could be shared widely through organised networks of a campaigner’s supporters, without anyone paying to promote or advertise it. Social media platforms’ algorithms could boost distribution to a potentially large number of people, who would have no way to identify the source of that material. Existing registered campaigners could run unofficial organic campaigns without revealing that they were ultimately responsible for them – although this would not comply with the imprint requirement, the arrangements could be difficult to trace or prove. An unregistered campaigner could spend significant amounts of money producing campaign material but would not be required to include an imprint on the material if they hadn’t paid to distribute it – if we or the police had concerns that a registration threshold or spending limit might have been breached, it may not be possible to contact the campaigner to find out these production costs. Question 12: Explaining our response about unregistered campaigners Question 12: Please provide any further detail to explain your response here. We saw some of these kinds of issues at the 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election. Members of the public raised concerns with us about digital adverts and other unpaid material published by non-party campaigners which people suspected were front organisations for a political party. However, these were independent campaigners and had no connection with any registered party. An imprint requirement would have shown clearly that a political party was not the source of the material. At the time of the election, Facebook, Google and Snapchat had put in place their own policies to require political adverts to be labelled with

information about their source. Facebook also required labelling on some ‘profile pages’ belonging to organisations. Some of the labels were useful, but others only contained a campaign slogan rather than meaningful information about who paid for an advert or was responsible for the content. This led to members of the public raising concerns with us about who was responsible for this material. The UK Government’s proposals for future elections would go some way to addressing these concerns because adverts would have to include an imprint, but other content such as profile pages would not. These kinds of gaps in digital imprint rules are likely to reduce the positive impact that these changes have on public confidence in campaigns. There are particular risks if campaign material includes misleading or controversial material with no way for voters or regulators to identify who is responsible for it. Gaps in transparency rules could also be exploited by malicious actors who know how to ‘game’ social media platforms’ algorithms and seek to influence voters anonymously. These issues should be considered further as the Government’s proposals are developed.

Nevertheless, the regime proposed by the Government will represent a significant step forward. It will ensure greater transparency about the source of the majority of digital campaign material that previously would not have been required to include an imprint.

Questions 13 and 14: Distinction between paid and unpaid material

Questions 13 and 14: Do you agree or disagree with the distinction made in this proposal between paid and unpaid material? Please provide any further detail to explain your response here.

We disagree. Both kinds of material involve design and production costs, which may be regulated campaign spending under election law. The difference is that ‘paid material’ has also involved the payment of a distribution fee by a campaigner (including paying to target distribution of the advert to particular users). Applying the digital imprint regime to both kinds of material from registered and unregistered campaigners would give voters a key part of the information they need to assess the credibility of campaign information. It is important that the public, other campaigners and regulators can all find out who is behind both paid and unpaid campaign material – they are both intended to influence the perceptions and choices of voters. It is particularly important that material that has been specifically designed to gain authenticity through organic or viral sharing is clearly labelled with its source so voters can assess its credibility.

Public focus group research we published in 2018² showed that participants did not always readily identify material about political or social issues as being linked to a campaign, and that using humorous graphics or video clips made these materials more engaging. We recognise that the UK Government has proposed this distinction between paid and unpaid material for specific reasons. The consultation paper proposes that members of the public expressing their personal political views in a private capacity should not be required to include an imprint. We agree with this aim, and a regime that does not apply to unpaid material by unregistered campaigners is one way to achieve this. The Scottish Government has recently published legislation which adopts a different approach for digital imprints at Scottish Parliament and local council elections. These requirements will cover both paid and unpaid material by registered and unregistered campaigners, and will include an exemption for individuals expressing their personal opinion. This builds on the experience of the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum, when imprints were required on digital materials. We will report on the experience of regulating this requirement at the May 2021 elections.

Question 15 and 16: Expanding the regime beyond election material

Question 15 and 16: Do you agree or disagree that the regime should be expanded beyond what is considered election material (as set out in this proposal), to wider online political

advertising? Please provide any further detail to explain your response here. We recognise that a wider regime covering online political advertising could support the aims of transparency and voter confidence, and agree that it is a timely moment to ask this question. Political campaigning can have a wide variety of aims, including supporting and opposing political objectives or supporting and opposing political parties. Election campaigning is a sub-set within political campaigning. Election law covers campaigns that are intended to promote or prejudice the success of an individual or group of parties or candidates an election, and campaigns that promote an outcome in a referendum. The well-established and clearly defined requirements in election law for printed campaign materials to include an imprint should provide a solid basis for extending the regime to digital election or referendum materials. In contrast, there is currently limited regulation of other forms of political material and advertising in the UK. We would welcome contributing to discussion and consideration about the scope and impact of such a change, in the event the Government decides to progress development of this policy, and to defining the harm the policy change would seek to address. We can contribute expertise from regulating the election and referendum imprint rules to any consideration of regulating other forms of political advertising. It would be important to adopt a clear definition of political advertising so that the requirement is clear and workable for all parties, including advertisers and host companies of advertising, as well as from a regulatory perspective.

Questions 17, 18 and 19: Applying digital imprint rules to all forms of elections and referendums

Questions 17, 18 and 19: Do you agree or disagree that the digital imprints rules should apply to all forms of elections and referendums (beyond those already listed in the proposal and excluding devolved elections and referendums)? Please provide any further detail to explain your response here. Do you have any other comments on proposal 2? We agree with the principle that voters at any election or referendum should be able to understand the source of the material which is trying to influence how they vote. We recognise that enforcing a digital imprint requirement for local elections such as parish council elections could present additional challenges (given the large number of candidates that can be nominated in these elections, for example). Enforcement of the law for these elections would be the responsibility of local police forces.

Proposal 3: Details on the imprint

Questions 20, 21 and 22: Details contained within the imprint

Questions 20, 21 and 22: Do you agree or disagree with the proposal on the details to be contained within the imprint i.e. the name and address of the promoter of the material and the name and address of any person on behalf of whom the material is being published? Please provide any further detail to explain your response here. Do you have any other comments on proposal 3? We strongly agree with the Government that requiring this information will support the dual policy aims of the digital imprints regime. It will provide transparency for voters about who is trying to influence their vote. It will also help the police and the Commission to enforce the spending rules. Requiring the name of the promoter and any person on behalf of whom the material is being published means that campaigners cannot simply include a campaign slogan which cannot be traced to an individual. Requiring an address means that we or the police can contact campaigners if there is a need to look into anomalies or concerns with the spending rules or other relevant law, such as defamation law. An address will also help demonstrate that a campaigner is based in the UK and reduce perceptions of foreign interference. We recognise that some candidates or campaigners who do not have an office address may not want to include their home address on campaign materials. In these cases, a PO Box or mailbox address may still enable us and the police to

correspond with a campaigner or serve legal papers, provided it is a genuine address of theirs. Proposal 4: Location of the imprint Questions 23 and 24: Location of imprints Questions 23 and 24: Do you agree or disagree with the proposal for the location of the imprint - that the imprint must be located as part of the material where it is practical to do so and where it is not practical, must be accessible from the material? We agree that the imprint must be part of the campaign material itself so the public can easily identify who is responsible for it. However, we disagree with the proposal that this will only apply where it is reasonably practical to do so, and where it isn't, the imprint can be located elsewhere. A 'reasonable practicability' provision like this could mean that: s could remove or alter the imprint from a 'bio', 'profile' page or a website, at any time. Transparency would be reduced and campaigners would be more difficult to trace after the event. Fewer people would see the imprint because some users will be less willing to click on a hyperlink, for example because of the risk of downloading malicious software. s could exploit loopholes, and those responsible for enforcing the law would face uncertainty about what is reasonably practicable in many different individual scenarios. If such an approach is included, it should be drafted very tightly to ensure that the concept of 'reasonable practicability' only applies in exceptional circumstances. The proposal in the consultation document would not incentivise a campaigner to include the imprint on the material itself. It would allow the imprint to be included in different places away from the campaign material, based on the campaigner's own judgment about what was practicable. The final proposals should seek to strengthen the onus on campaigners to take steps to include an imprint in the graphics of their material, or to use a platform that offers a clear method to add an imprint alongside an advert or other material published. This kind of approach would act as an incentive for tech companies to continue to make changes to their platforms to facilitate campaigners to include imprints on the material itself, as some have successfully done with voluntary measures to add labels to political adverts.

Questions 25 and 26: Digital platforms and facilitating digital imprints Questions 25 and 26: How do you think digital platforms can facilitate campaigners to include imprints? Do you have any other comments on proposal 4? In recent years, some of the major digital platforms have required those running political advertising on their platforms and channels to include 'disclaimers' on those adverts. The disclaimer is like an imprint which provides basic information about the source of political adverts. These initiatives have been a positive step in providing information to the public and are a clear demonstration that digital imprint rules could work in future on these platforms and channels. As mentioned under Q12, the information provided in these disclaimers has varied considerably. We think more consistent guidance from the platforms, backed by new legal requirements, would facilitate campaigners to include imprints and help avoid confusion over who is responsible for campaign material. In their voluntary efforts, the companies have devised their own solutions to facilitate political advertisers to include the necessary information about themselves in their disclaimers. Such initiatives include creating new fields in posts for the information. We support these approaches and would look to assist digital platforms with building on their existing experience to develop additional solutions that allow people to view a full imprint as part of the message itself. Proposal 5: Appearance of the imprint Questions 27 and 28: How imprints should look Questions 27 and 28: Do you agree or disagree with the proposal for what the imprint should look like - permanent, embedded and visible/audible, clearly readable/legible/audible and replicable? Please provide any further detail to explain your response here. We

strongly agree that the imprint should be: a permanent and embedded part of the campaign material itself; clearly readable, legible or audible regardless of the platform or device (e.g. mobile or laptop) it is being accessed on; and replicable when re-shared, and must not distort when re-published or shared. This would mitigate the risk that transparency could be inadvertently reduced, even where campaigners may claim to have complied with the requirement when originally publishing or promoting the material. Information about the source of campaign material should be accessible to the public, and available before and after an election or referendum. Many people, including journalists, academics, regulators and enforcement bodies, may need to access material and verify its source after the event.

Questions 29 and 30: How digital platforms can support campaigners to comply

Questions 29 and 30: What would campaigners need from digital platforms in order to comply with the rules? Do you have any other comments on proposal 5? Digital platforms should provide campaigners with the tools and functionality they need to easily add a full imprint onto all their campaign material. We would support technical solutions that facilitate campaigners to include full imprints on campaign material.

Proposal 6: Re-publishing of election material

Questions 31, 32 and 33: The republishing or 'sharing' of material

Questions 31, 32 and 33: Do you agree or disagree with the proposal for the re-publishing or 'sharing' of material? Please provide any further detail to explain your response here. Do you have any other comments on proposal 6? We agree with this proposal, which would address a potential loophole in the new rules and deter campaigners from publishing or recirculating campaign material without an imprint. It will ensure that where campaigners alter other people's digital material to promote their own campaigns and then republish it, they will have to include their own imprints (provided they are in scope of the new rules). They won't be able to claim their own imprint isn't necessary because the original material already has another campaigner's imprint, or because the rules don't require an imprint on the original material. It will also mean that if a registered campaigner republishes another person's or an unregistered campaigner's (unaltered) unpaid material, they will have to put their own imprint on the material. They won't be able to claim their own imprint is not necessary because the original publisher wasn't in scope of the rules.

Proposal 7: Territoriality

Questions 34, 35 and 36: How the regime will apply to election material promoted from abroad

Questions 34, 35 and 36: Do you agree or disagree with the proposal that the regime will apply to all election material regardless of where it has been promoted from? Please provide any further detail to explain your response here. Do you have any other comments on proposal 7? We agree with the principle that all election and referendum material that appears before UK voters should have an imprint, whether the material originates in the UK or abroad. If the imprint rules don't apply to material that originates overseas, this creates an obvious loophole. The consultation document notes the challenges of enforcing UK law on campaigners outside the UK who are targeting UK voters. It also proposes a 'notice and take down' rule which would give limited responsibilities to digital platforms that host material. Digital platforms will have to remove content without an imprint expeditiously once they are made aware of it. Platforms would commit an offence and could be fined if they fail to do so. While there will be practical questions to work through with Government, police and digital platforms, we agree that the 'notice and take down' proposal seems to provide a practical way of helping to remove non-compliant material and limiting its impact on voters. We recognise that platforms based in the UK or which have subsidiaries here may be more likely to comply, whilst platforms without a UK presence may refuse to comply with requests to

take down material. Enforcing the law on foreign-based platforms may pose the same enforcement challenges as enforcing it on campaigners overseas. However, it is encouraging that we have heard from election regulators in other countries like Australia and Canada with digital imprint regimes that the major digital platforms have cooperated with their enforcement of the rules. We also found that overseas organisations, including international companies and state bodies, have cooperated with us as the UK regulator and complied with UK law at major electoral events.

Section 8: Enforcement Questions 37 and 38: The role of enforcement bodies Questions 37 and 38: Do you agree or disagree that the relevant authorities are in a position to effectively enforce digital imprints? Please provide any further detail to explain your response here. It is important for voter confidence that campaigners understand and comply with the new digital imprint requirements, and that voters see non-compliance being addressed swiftly by the enforcement bodies. We partially agree that we are in a position to effectively enforce the digital imprint regime as set out in these proposals. We have previously highlighted concerns about the limits of our existing powers to obtain information as part of delivering our regulatory responsibilities. As the consultation paper sets out, the police are responsible for enforcing the rules covering campaigning for a particular candidate standing in a particular electoral area. We are responsible for regulating the rules covering campaigning for one or more political parties or groups of candidates, and campaigning at referendums. The majority of campaigners comply with the current imprint regime for printed material, and we expect that the same would be true with the digital imprint requirement; we will therefore be able to focus our regulatory activity on a minority of cases. We do not want our approach to implementing the new digital imprints regime to rely solely on using our formal investigation powers, particularly where allegations may involve an inadvertent error by a campaigner and especially in a new regime. Consistent with our approach to regulating all other aspects of the regime, we would seek to secure compliance through support, guidance, swift and early intervention to bring campaigners into line with the rules and, only if necessary, enforcement. To ensure that we are able to effectively ensure compliance at the earliest opportunity we would want to gather information about potential issues quickly, in order to determine what if any regulatory action is appropriate. For example, where we identify material without an imprint we would want to be able to contact the campaigner immediately and give them the opportunity to amend or remove the material to comply with the law. This would mean we could resolve the matter without the need to consider opening an investigation, which would often be a more effective and proportionate approach to securing compliance with the law. But we can only take this course of action where we are able to identify and contact the campaigner. We have existing powers to obtain information from registered political parties or non-party campaigners to secure compliance with the law, separate from our powers to gather evidence for the purpose of an investigation. However these powers do not extend to third parties such as digital platforms, advertising suppliers or unregistered campaigners themselves. Currently, we can only require information from suppliers or unregistered campaigners if we have reasonable grounds to suspect an offence has been committed and open an investigation. We will aim to make agreements on a platform by platform basis for them to share information about non-compliant campaigners with us. This would specifically include information that we would need to identify and contact campaigners responsible for producing material that should include an imprint, or companies advertising the material on their platforms. However, we would be reliant on those companies to provide us with

information on a voluntary basis, which could reduce our ability to act quickly or proportionately. To ensure that we are able to effectively secure compliance with the requirements, we would therefore welcome clear powers in the legislation for digital imprints that would enable us to obtain information from suppliers of advertising services and unregistered campaigners outside of an investigation. Powers to obtain information from third parties (such as digital platforms) would assist many aspects of our regulatory work, but this change would be particularly important in the context of new digital imprints rules. As mentioned above, the Government is proposing to apply a ‘notice and take down’ rule (which is briefly described in paragraphs 26 and 27 of the consultation document). It will be based on the UK’s existing liability regime for digital platforms. They will be required to remove material without an imprint once they are made aware of it. The rule will cover content originating in the UK as well as from abroad. We support the idea of making it clear what digital platforms providers’ responsibilities are for dealing with material that doesn’t include an imprint, and would welcome further information about how it would work in practice. We note that this means the proposed regime would have two different routes to securing compliance. Non-compliant material could be removed by a digital platform under the ‘notice and take down’ rule. Alternatively, a campaigner could be investigated for publishing non-compliant material by us or the police. In some instances, both routes could be followed. However, if we are not able to obtain contact details or other information necessary to investigate campaigners, then the regime will rely more heavily on digital platforms taking down non-compliant material, which could have a low deterrent effect against future breaches of the law.

Questions 39, 40 and 41: Extending civil sanctioning powers Questions 39, 40 and 41: Do you agree or disagree that civil sanctioning powers should be extended for use in relation to offences committed concerning election material in support of candidates? Please provide any further detail to explain your response We agree. We support the use of civil sanctions as a proportionate alternative tool to criminal prosecution for dealing with imprint offences. We are experienced in using a civil sanctioning regime for offences under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA). We have long recommended that an equivalent civil sanctions approach should be put in place for some candidate offences in the RPA 1983. For administrative or careless breaches of the rules, criminal investigation is a disproportionate step; a civil sanctions regime would be a more proportionate way of dealing with such breaches. The civil sanctions for offences under PPERA were designed to be an alternative to criminal prosecution and has been successful in delivering transparency of political finance. This experience will be valuable in designing a civil sanctions powers to use in relation to offences committed concerning election material in support of candidates. **Section 9. Regulatory costs and benefits to business** We note that the consultation document seeks views from businesses, political parties and the third sector to estimate the cost of compliance with the new regime. The resulting insight will help the Government when designing the rules, as well as helping the police and the Electoral Commission to enforce the rules when they are in place.

1. Report on the 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election
Electoral Commission, 2020 ■ Back to content at footnote 1
2. Political finance regulation and digital campaigning: a public perspective GfK UK report prepared for the Electoral Commission, 2018 ■ Back to content at footnote 2

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2019 meetings 2018 meetings First published: 31 May 2019 Last updated: 12 December 2022 About our chief executive's external meetings Our Chief Executive meets with parliamentarians, MPs and other groups to discuss: what we're working towards and what's important to us how we can work together on the priorities we share our areas of expertise and experience We publish information about these meetings so you can see who our Chief Executive is meeting with, and why. 2019 meetings September Date About the meeting 19 September Louise Edwards spoke at the Electoral Law Forum seminar, and John Holmes and Bob Posner also attended 18 September Bob Posner, Sue Bruce and Andy O'Neill gave evidence on the Referendums (Scotland) Bill to the Scottish Parliament's Finance & Constitution Committee 11 September Bob Posner met Jes Ladva, Partner - Local & Central Government at Odgers 10 September Bob Posner, Ailsa Irvine, Craig Westwood and Tom Hawthorn to meet Shadow Cabinet Office Team to discuss the electoral registration feasibility studies 10 September John Holmes and Bob Posner to meet James Cleverly MP, Conservative Party Chairman August Date About the meeting 9 August Bob Posner met Sasha Havlicek, Chief Executive of the Institute for Strategic Dialogue for an introductory meeting and to see if there were any common areas of interest between our two organisations 6 August Bob Posner met Elizabeth Denham, the Information Commissioner, for an update meeting July Date About the meeting 29 July Bob Posner and Louise Edwards met with Dame Glenys Stacey of the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation as part of their review of online targeting 25 to 26 July Bob Posner attended the Cambridge Conference on Electoral Democracy. The main theme for this year's conference was strengthening the capacity of electoral commissions 23 July Bob Posner and Louise Edwards gave evidence to the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee's inquiry into electoral law 23 July Bob Posner and Craig Westwood gave evidence to the Exiting the European Union's enquiry into the progress of the UK's negotiations on European Union withdrawal 22 July Bob Posner and Louise Edwards had an introductory meeting with Commander Alex Murray, the Commission's new contact at the Metropolitan Police Service 16 to 18 July John Holmes and Bob Posner attended the Four Countries Conference, which included a stakeholder reception, hosted by the UK Electoral Commission at Speaker's House on the evening of 18 July 9 July Bob Posner chaired, and Ailsa Irvine attended, a meeting of the Electoral Coordination and Administration Board. The main discussion focused on experiences of the May polls and reflecting on lessons learnt for the future coordination of electoral events June Date About the meeting 22 June Bob Posner and John Holmes met with Jo Swinson MP to discuss European Election issues 20 June Bob Posner, Craig Westwood and Ailsa Irvine spoke to the London Assembly Police and Crime Committee about electoral law reform 18 June Bob Posner and Louise Edwards gave evidence to the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee at their hearing on digital campaigning and payments to parties, especially following the European elections. 17 June Bob Posner attended a discussion at the House of Commons hosted by Baiba Braže, Ambassador of Latvia, and Damian Collins MP, Chair of the Digital, Culture, Media & Sport Select Committee 'Digital interference in elections and democratic processes' March Date About the meeting 28 March An update meeting with Brandon Lewis MP, Chairman of the Conservative Party 20 March Reception at 11 Downing Street with Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation 18 March Approval of Business Plan and Main Estimate with the Speaker's Committee 14 March Speaking at seminar at Electoral Law Forum 8 March Workshop on Board appraisals, with Deloitte's Board Advisory Practice with Association of Chief Executives (ACE) 6 March Discussion

of issues around election spending with Lord Haywood, Lord Kennedy of Southwark, Baroness Kennedy of Cradley, Lord Tyler, Lord Rennard and Lord McInnes of Kilwinning

6 March An update meeting with Chloe Smith MP, Minister for the Constitution, and Gary Cann and John Askew, from the National Police Chief's Council

6 March An update meeting with Security Services officials

February Date About the meeting 20 February

An update meeting with Chris Flatt, Director of Strategy and Legacy, and Stefano Imbriano, Head of Political Policy, Strategy and Implementation, Northern Ireland

Office 19 February Approval of Supplementary Estimate with the Speaker's Committee

12 February An update meeting with Craig Mackinlay MP

8 February Regular meeting with Electoral Fraud Reduction and Prevention national seminar

7 February Round table 'The do's and don'ts of giving evidence to a select committee', with Margaret Hodge MP, former Chair of the Public Accounts Committee with Association of Chief Executive (ACE)

6 February Introductory meeting with Bridget Phillipson MP, spokesperson for the Speaker's Committee

January Date About the meeting 30 January An update meeting with Charles Kriel, Specialist Advisor to DCMS Select Committee

28 January Roundtable 'Challenges arising from digital campaigning' with representatives from the Committee on Standards in Public Life, Advertising Standards Authority, UK Statistics Authority, Equalities and Human Rights Commission, Ofcom, Information Commissions Office and the Broadcasters' Liaison Group

25 January An update meeting with Peter Lee, Director of the Cabinet Office's Constitution Group, and Simon James

8 January An update meeting with officials from the Joint Intelligence Agency

2018 meetings During this time, Claire Bassett was our Chief Executive.

November Date About the meeting 29 November Seminar on Regulating Digital Campaigning with the Constitution Unit

15 November An update meeting with Peter Lee, Director of the Cabinet Office's Constitution Group

14 November Briefing with John Alty, Director General of Trade Policy, Department for International Trade at the Whitehall Industry Group (WIG)

Breakfast briefing 13 November Event discussing the future of political campaigning with Demos and the ICO

13 November An update meeting with Chloe Smith MP, Minister for the Constitution

13 November A catch up meeting with Tom Rogers, Electoral Commissioner, Australian Electoral Commission

8 November Event with McKinsey: 'Futurology: the future of public services and how to get from here to there' with Association of Chief Executives

6 November Evidence to disinformation and fake news inquiry from the House of Commons Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee

1 November Event with GatenbySanderson looking at the relationship between Chair and Chief Executive with Association of Chief Executives

1 November A catch up meeting with Rowena Ironside, Non-Executive Director for the Cabinet Office Elections and Registrations Division

1 November Ministerial Round Table to discuss issues raised in stakeholders' reports on the 2017 with Chloe Smith MP, Minister for the Constitution

October Date About the meeting 30 October An update meeting with National Crime Agency

22 October An update meeting Darren Hughes, Chief Executive of the Electoral Reform Society

17 October An update meeting with Elizabeth Denham, Information Commissioner

Update meeting 11 October Regular meeting with Wales Electoral Coordination Board

10 October An update meeting with Bridget Phillipson MP, spokesperson in the House of Commons for the Speaker's Committee

September Date About the meeting 3 September A catch up meeting with Jes Ladva, Head of Government, Odgers Interim

August Date About the meeting 14 August Regular catch up with Peter Lee, Constitution Group Director, Cabinet Office

July Date About the meeting 9 July Final report pre-briefing Independent Commission on Referendums

9 July An update meeting with Rowena Ironside

June Date About the meeting 25 June Evidence session at European Parliament Select Committee /Cambridge Analytica and the impact on elections

20 June Meeting with Mairead Ryan, Assistant Principal Officer, and the Principal Officer and colleagues from Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
Dublin 19 June Speech at event 'Digital Threats to Democracy: Learning from the #Brexit & #8thRef'. Transparent Referendum Initiative hosted event 13 June Regular meeting with Electoral Advisory and Coordination Board 13 June An update meeting with Chloe Smith MP, Minister for the Constitution 8 June Summer conference with Constitution Society 5 June Regular meeting with Westminster Parliamentary Parties Panel May Date About the meeting 15 May Evidence session at Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, House of Commons 2 to 4 May Polling station and count observation at local government election April Date About the meeting 30 April An update meeting with Jolyon Jackson, Chief Executive, Local Government Boundary Commission for England 24 April Lunch with John Atly 17 April Introductory meeting with Brandon Lewis MP, Chairman of the Conservative Party 17 April An update meeting with Chloe Smith MP, Minister for the Constitution, and Gary Cann, National Police Chiefs' Council 5 April An update meeting with Alan Renwick, Jess Sergeant and Jenny Watson of the Independent Commission on Referendums Related content Our Executive Team Meet our Executive Team, and find out more about them Our Senior Leadership Team Meet our Senior Leadership Group, and find out what they're responsible for Travel and subsistence Interests, gifts and hospitality Look at the record of our Executive Team's interests, gifts and hospitality

Report: Scottish Independence Referendum | Electoral Commission Search Report: Scottish Independence Referendum You are in the Scottish Independence referendum section Home Scottish Independence referendum On this page About this report Who was responsible for what The referendum result Key issues and lessons learnt Early legislation Extending the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds Standalone poll Scotland's future electoral structures Regulating the campaigns Recommendations: Future referendum legislation Recommendations: Recommendations: Campaign regulation Recommendations for the future conduct of the referendums and elections Download our full report First published: 17 March 2015 Last updated: 17 March 2015 About this report On 18 September 2014, the people of Scotland voted in a referendum on whether Scotland should be an independent country. In the months leading up to the day of poll Scotland was energised by the debate and the voters engaged in the discussion around the referendum question. The question asked, to which voters were required to vote either yes or no, was: Should Scotland be an independent country? This is a report to the Scottish Parliament fulfilling our statutory duty to report to the Parliament, under the provisions of the Scottish Independence Referendum Act 2013 (SIRA), on the conduct of the referendum. It reviews the experience of voters, the referendum campaign and the delivery of the referendum as well as how the Electoral Commission carried out its functions under SIRA. We also report on the expenditure which we incurred in carrying out our functions. We will publish a further report on campaign spending in 2015 after the registered campaigners who spent more than £250,000 have submitted their spending returns in March 2015. The report is informed by many sources of information and focuses on the administration of the referendum. It reflects the experience of voters based on public opinion research, as well as electoral data provided by the Chief Counting Officer (CCO), Counting Officers (COs) and Electoral Registration Officers (EROs). It also reflects the feedback and views we received from campaigners, those responsible for delivering the referendum poll, as well as other participants and observers in what was Scotland's biggest electoral event ever. The referendum was well-run by the CCO and her CO and ERO colleagues because of careful planning (in part possible because of existing administrative structures in Scotland), sufficient resourcing and careful delivery of the administrative process through much hard work by all those involved. Who was responsible for what The "Edinburgh Agreement" 1 was signed between the Scottish and UK Governments on 15 October 2012. Under the Agreement, the respective Governments agreed to work together to ensure that a referendum on independence for Scotland would take place. An Order 2 was subsequently made in both the Scottish and UK Parliaments under Section 30 of the Scotland Act 1998, enabling the Scottish Parliament to legislate for the referendum. SIRA, the Act subsequently passed by the Scottish Parliament, provided for the roles undertaken by the various bodies in Scotland, with regard to the referendum, to be slightly different to a referendum run under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA). SIRA gave the following roles which are outlined below. The Chief Counting Officer SIRA required Scottish Ministers to appoint the Convener of the Electoral Management Board for Scotland (EMB), Mary Pitcaithly, as CCO for the referendum. She appointed Sue Bruce, Chief Executive of The City of Edinburgh Council, as Deputy Chief Counting Officer. The CCO also appointed COs for each of the 32 local government areas in Scotland, who in turn were entitled to appoint deputies to carry out some or all of their functions as appropriate. The CCO was responsible for: The proper and effective conduct of the referendum, including the conduct of the poll and the counting of votes. The appointment of COs for each of the 32 local government areas. The

provision of guidance and, where appropriate, direction to COs and EROs on the exercise of their functions. Encouraging participation in the referendum. Certifying the overall outcome of the referendum in Scotland. The Electoral Commission The Electoral Commission was responsible for: Advising, registering and regulating campaigners in the referendum where appropriate, including in relation to campaign spending and donations. Assessing applications from campaign groups wishing to be appointed as the designated organisation campaigning for each referendum outcome. Promoting public awareness in relation to the referendum. Administering an accreditation scheme for individuals and organisations wishing to act as observers at key proceedings in relation to the referendum, including the preparation of a Code of Practice specific to the event. Reporting on the conduct of the referendum Advising on the referendum question and campaign spending limits, before SIRA was introduced into the Scottish Parliament The referendum result Voting in the referendum commenced in late August 2014 with the dispatch of postal votes prior to polling day on 18 September 2014. Levels of voting were high and steady throughout polling day, with many polling staff experiencing queues at the door when voting opened at 7am, such was the engagement of the electorate keen to express their preference on the referendum question. The atmosphere in polling places was reported by police, staff and observers to be good natured throughout the day. There were some reports of incidents during the campaign and on polling day but the prospect of a widespread air of intimidation, which had been raised prior to polling day, did not materialise. The count commenced shortly after the close of poll at 10pm on 18 September and continued throughout the night. The result was declared by the CCO at approximately 9am on 19 September 2014. There were 3,623,344 (representing 84.6% of the electorate) votes counted 2,001,926 people (55.25% of all voters) voted No 1,617,989 people, (44.65% of all voters) voted Yes Some key statistics 4,283,938 registered voters for the referendum 109,593 16 and 17 year olds registered 796,835 (18.6%) postal voters 3,429 (0.1%) ballots rejected at the referendum count 5,579 polling stations within 2,608 polling places Maximum 800 electors per polling station 42 campaign groups or individuals registered with the Commission (21 campaigning for a Yes vote and 21 for a No vote) 2.5 million EC Voting Guides delivered to Scottish households Scottish Independence Referendum - Electoral data Key issues and lessons learnt This report contains recommendations for the conduct of any future referendum legislated for by the Scottish Parliament on any issue. Although we are not aware of any such future plans, we consider it proper that the lessons learnt from this event are brought to the attention of the Parliament so they can be recorded and considered in the future. Some of the lessons learnt are of course also relevant to future elections for which the Parliament is responsible and they should be considered in that light. There are also lessons that are relevant to legislation for future referendums and elections, not only in Scotland but also those held across or in other parts of the UK. Where appropriate these lessons are directed at the other legislatures across the UK, including the UK Parliament. Early legislation Following the May 2011 referendums on additional powers for the National Assembly for Wales and the Parliamentary Voting System for the House of Commons, we recommended that, for future referendums, detailed rules should be in force at least 28 weeks in advance of polling day (or by 6 March 2014 in the case of the Scottish Independence Referendum). SIRA and the Scottish Independence Referendum (Franchise) Act 2013 (the Franchise Act) were commenced on 18 December 2013 and 8 August 2013 respectively, giving clarity to all. For the Commission this meant we could provide guidance on the campaign rules nearly nine months ahead of the poll, as opposed to three months which was the case for both

2011 referendums. The CCO also had additional time to develop and provide guidance and direction on matters relating to registration and the conduct of the poll. The benefit of this additional time was passed on to campaigners, EROs and COs in preparing for their respective roles at the referendum. They were able to engage constructively with the legislative process and had time to develop an understanding of the relevant guidance and rules, before they came into force. EROs and COs benefitted from sufficient time to put robust plans in place for the delivery of their responsibilities under the legislation, from targeted public awareness activity to the booking of polling places and the training of staff. While the provisions relating to many aspects of the referendum were commenced some nine months before the event, those relating to the franchise, contained in the franchise Act, were not. The provisions which allowed for the compiling of the Register of Young Voters were not commenced until two months before the start of the canvass of 16 and 17 year olds. In addition, similar timing considerations are also relevant when developing a public awareness strategy and political literacy initiatives, both at the national and local level, when introducing votes for 16 and 17 year olds. We believe that the experience of legislating for the Scottish Independence Referendum provides, in the main, a model for the future development of referendum and electoral legislation. Sufficient time was allowed by the Scottish Government to consult on the proposed legislation, followed by the Scottish Parliament having sufficient time to properly scrutinise proposals and legislate, with Royal Assent for the primary pieces of legislation being in place nine months before 18 September. We recommend that in planning for any future referendums, not only in Scotland but also those held across or in other parts of the UK, governments should aim to ensure that legislation (including any secondary legislation) is clear at least six months before it is required to be implemented or complied with by campaigners, the Chief Counting Officer, Counting Officers or Electoral Registration Officers. This would mean that: Legislation for any changes to the franchise for a referendum should be clear at least six months before EROs are due to begin any scheduled annual canvass activities. Legislation for the regulation of referendum campaigners should be clear at least six months before the start of the regulated referendum period. Legislation relating to the conduct of a referendum poll, including secondary legislation such as Fees and Charges Orders, should be clear at least six months before polling day. Extending the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds The Commission's view was, and remains, that decisions about the franchise are for the relevant Parliament to decide. Our focus in the referendum was ensuring that, as the franchise had been extended to 16 and 17 year olds, they were able to participate fully, including being registered to vote. As noted above, the Franchise Act did not receive Royal Assent until two months before the start of the canvass of 16 and 17 year olds. While we were aware that the Scottish Government was talking with Scotland's EROs in order to ensure the legislation was capable of being implemented in a timely manner, we would, however, have expected the legislation to be in force at least six months before the annual canvass to give EROs sufficient time to plan and effectively implement the changes. This will also help public awareness and political literacy initiatives, both at the national and local level, when introducing votes for 16 and 17 year olds. We therefore recommend that, when any policy maker or legislator is considering future legislation for referendums or elections with a franchise including 16 and 17 year olds, they consider the need to ensure legislation concerning the extension of the franchise is commenced six months prior to the beginning of the canvass in order to allow administrators to plan for the canvass and public awareness activities, including political literacy

initiatives. Standalone poll The “Edinburgh Agreement” required that no other referendum legislated for by the Scottish Parliament could be held on the same day as the referendum on independence for Scotland. The circumstances of the referendum and the campaigning tactics adopted by campaigners meant that a number of different political parties worked together to campaign for the same outcome. Both lead campaigners attracted various political parties to their cause and a large number of people who were not associated with any political party. Lots of non-party campaign groups were also established, some of whom were registered with the Commission whilst others were not. Cross-party campaigning at referendums provides a coordinated message to voters and helps them to make an informed decision. However, had an election campaign been taking place at the same time as the referendum campaign, some parties might have been working together in one contest, whilst campaigning against each other in the other. This has the potential to be confusing for voters and to place parties in a campaign context within which it would be extremely difficult to operate. Given the intense level of campaigning in the referendum and the focus of campaigners and voters on a single issue, we believe that if an election had been held on the same day, this could have led to voter confusion. We recommend any government introducing legislation for future referendums, not only in Scotland but also those held across or in other parts of the UK, should also publish at the same time its assessment of the implications of holding other polls on the same day. This will enable legislatures (including the Scottish Parliament and the UK Parliament) to consider the relative benefits and risks of the proposal as they scrutinise the referendum Bill.

Scotland’s future electoral structures Since its establishment in 2008, the EMB has supported successfully the delivery of several elections and the 2011 Referendum on Parliamentary Voting Systems. Although the EMB did not have a statutory role in the referendum on independence for Scotland, its Convener was appointed under SIRA as CCO for the referendum and it played an integral role in providing advice and support to the CCO to ensure the proper and effective conduct of the poll. The current legislative and administrative structures for electoral matters in Scotland are part-reserved and part-devolved. Although we have recommended that the statutory role of the EMB be expanded to include elections to the Scottish, UK and European Parliaments, to date this has not happened. It remains the case that its only statutory role relates to local government elections, though it continues to undertake roles in parliamentary elections on a non-statutory basis. The EMB has again demonstrated the added-value it brings to electoral events in Scotland and is recognised by stakeholders throughout the electoral community as providing effective leadership as it seeks to develop consistency of approach. In our view, the future statutory electoral framework for Scotland should include the EMB as it supports the provision of efficient and effective electoral administrative processes in the interests of the voter.

Following the referendum, the Smith Commission on further devolution of powers to the Scottish Parliament was established and presented its proposals, referred to as ‘the Smith Commission Agreement’, on 27 November 2014. This proposed that the Scottish Parliament be given powers over how its members are elected, together with powers to extend the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds, allowing them to vote in the 2016 Scottish Parliamentary elections. The Parliament would also be given additional powers in relation to local government elections. While ‘the Smith Commission Agreement’ envisages that the Electoral Commission will continue to operate on a UK-wide basis, it proposes that the Scottish Parliament will have competence over the functions of the Electoral Commission in relation to Scottish Parliamentary elections and local government elections in Scotland. The

Electoral Commission would report to the UK Parliament in relation to UK and European Parliamentary elections and to the Scottish Parliament for Scottish Parliamentary and local government elections. The Commission has written to both the Scottish and UK Governments offering our assistance as they take forward the work needed to produce draft clauses implementing these proposals. Given the continuing development of the EMB and the need to secure its long-term funding and statutory arrangements, the Electoral Commission believes that 'the Smith Commission Agreement' presents an opportunity to secure the future restructuring of electoral matters in Scotland with the EMB playing an important role, delivering services which are in the interests of the voter. We recommend that the EMB's statutory remit is extended to Scottish, UK and European Parliamentary elections and that the Convener is given a power of direction at these elections. We also recommend that the long-term funding and legal status of the EMB be secured and clarified so that it can undertake fully the tasks it was envisioned it would carry out when the idea of the Board was recommended and accepted by governments in 2008. In making the above recommendations, the Commission would re-state its comment in the 2008 report 'Electoral Administration in Scotland' that it recognises that, as the EMB develops, this would impact upon our work. We said we would review our work in that light, which we continue to do. Regulating the campaigns SIRA contained a number of changes to the rules that applied at the 2011 referendums on increased powers for the National Assembly for Wales and the UK-wide referendum on UK Parliamentary Voting Systems. These changes were intended to clarify aspects of the regulatory controls, reduce burdens on those that wished to campaign, and ensure that voters had access to information to enable them to make an informed decision when they cast their vote. Overall, we believe that the regulatory controls that applied at the referendum worked well. There are, however, lessons that can be learnt for further refinement of the legal framework and for government spending during the referendum period.

Recommendations:

Future referendum legislation

Recommendation 1: Timing of legislation for future referendums

When considering proposals for any future referendum on any issue, not only in Scotland but also those held across or in other parts of the UK, governments should ensure that the timetable for developing and introducing all legislation provides sufficient opportunity for legislatures (including the Scottish Parliament and the UK Parliament where appropriate) to properly scrutinise those proposals, including considering the Electoral Commission's advice about the wording of the proposed referendum question. Governments should also acknowledge the importance of allowing sufficient time for campaigners, the Chief Counting Officer and Counting Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and the Electoral Commission to prepare for their respective roles in any referendum. In particular, legislation should be clear in sufficient time to allow robust and detailed guidance to be developed and provided to campaigners, Electoral Registration Officers or Counting Officers. We recommend that in planning for any future referendums, not only in Scotland but also those held across or in other parts of the UK, governments should aim to ensure that legislation (including any secondary legislation) is clear at least six months before it is required to be implemented or complied with by campaigners, the Chief Counting Officer, Counting Officers or Electoral Registration Officers. This would mean that: Legislation for any changes to the franchise for a referendum should be clear at least six months before EROs are due to begin any scheduled annual canvass activities. Legislation for the regulation of referendum campaigners should be clear at least six months before the start of the regulated referendum period. Legislation relating to the conduct of a referendum poll, including secondary legislation such as Fees and Charges Orders, should be

clear at least six months before polling day. Recommendation 2: Extending the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds We recommend that, when any policy maker or legislator is considering future legislation for referendums or elections with a franchise including 16 and 17 year olds, they consider the need to ensure legislation concerning the extension of the franchise is commenced six months prior to the beginning of the canvass in order to allow administrators to plan, both for the canvass and for related public awareness activities, including political literacy initiatives. Recommendation 3: Timing of polling day for future referendums We have previously recommended that any proposals to hold a referendum poll on the same day as the poll for other electoral events should be considered on a case-by-case basis and this remains our view. The priority in considering any such proposals has always been that voters and campaigners should be able to understand and easily participate in all of the polls, and that those responsible for running the polls are able to do so effectively. Governments and legislatures should take into account the anticipated level of public interest and potential for cross-party campaigning when considering proposals for the timing of any future referendum. Where significant cross-party campaigning for a future high-profile referendum is likely (such as, for example, a referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union), we would not expect the poll to be held on the same day as another set of polls. This would help ensure voters and campaigners are able to easily participate in the referendum and minimise the risk of voter confusion. Any government introducing legislation for future referendums, not only in Scotland but also those held across or in other parts of the UK, should also publish at the same time its assessment of the implications of holding other polls on the same day. This will enable legislatures (including the Scottish Parliament and the UK Parliament) to consider the relative benefits and risks of the proposal as they scrutinise the referendum Bill. Recommendations:

Recommendation 4: Public awareness activity undertaken by the CCO and COs The public awareness activity undertaken by the CCO and COs benefitted voters through the provision of timely and localised information about their vote. In order to enable the CCO and COs to undertake activity to promote voter registration and voter information, and following a Commission recommendation from the 2011 referendums, the referendum legislation specifically exempted the CCO and COs from the ban on public bodies producing information relating to the referendum in the last 28 days leading to polling day. This exemption had important benefits for voters and we recommend that it be applied at any future referendums. Recommendation 5: on count procedures The Commission and others involved in the provision of public information regarding referendums and elections in Scotland and the rest of the UK need to address the issue of how we make the public more aware of count procedures. Recommendation 6: Issuing ballot papers to voters queuing at polling stations Legislation for future referendums, not only in Scotland but elsewhere in the UK, should ensure that eligible electors who are in the queue at their polling station at the close of poll are issued with a ballot paper and allowed to vote. Recommendations:

Campaign regulation

Recommendation 7: Eligibility to register as a referendum campaigner and donate The legislation for future referendums, not only in Scotland but also those held across or in other parts of the UK, should ensure that the list of individuals and bodies eligible to register as a referendum campaigner and to donate to other campaigners is extended to mirror the list of eligible registered non-party campaigners under PPERA.

Recommendation 8: Responsible person The legislation for future referendums, not only in Scotland but also those held across or in other parts of the UK, should ensure that the same person is not able to be the responsible

person for more than one registered campaigner; and, in addition that: the person named as the responsible person is required to sign the application for registration as a campaigner, and for non-PPERA referendums, s.25 PPERA is replicated so that a political party's campaigns officer can take on the Treasurer's role of responsible person. Recommendation 9: Grounds for rejecting applications to register as a referendum campaigner The legislation for future referendums, not only in Scotland but also those held across or in other parts of the UK, should ensure that the Commission is not required to accept a declaration for registration as a referendum campaigner if the campaigner proposes a registered name which: Would be the same as that of a permitted participant which is already registered. Is obscene or offensive. Includes words the publication of which would be likely to amount to the commission of an offence. Includes any prohibited word or expression. Recommendation 10: Approach to designation We would welcome the opportunity to work with relevant governments, not only in Scotland but also in other parts of the UK, when they are considering the legislation for future referendums, to consider the implications of enabling the Commission to designate one side of the referendum debate rather than requiring designation to be on both sides or not at all (as is required under PPERA). Recommendation 11: Early designation and the length of the referendum period The legislation for future referendums, not only in Scotland but also those held across or in other parts of the UK, should ensure that designation is able to take place shortly before, rather than during the first six weeks of, the referendum period. We also recommend that consideration be given to the benefits of early designation when setting the legislative timetable. If circumstances mean that the legislative timetable is such that early designation is not possible, then our 2011 recommendation to extend the length of the referendum period to at least 16 weeks should be adopted. This would go some way to giving designated lead campaign groups more time to plan and use the benefits available. Recommendation 12: Pre-poll reporting The legislation for future referendums, not only in Scotland but also those held across or in other parts of the UK, should ensure that pre-poll reporting of donations and loans over £7,500 received by registered campaigners (except political parties) for referendum purposes is again included as a reporting requirement. Recommendation 13: Grants to designated lead campaigners It is important that relevant governments, not only in Scotland but also those in other parts of the UK, give careful consideration to the principles of 'core funding' raised by the Committee on Standards in Public Life in its 1998 report when considering whether a publicly funded grant should be made available. For future non-PPERA referendums, relevant governments, not only in Scotland but also those in other parts of the UK, should be aware that the Commission may wish to comment on whether a grant should be available to designated lead campaigners. Recommendation 14: Imprints We continue to recommend that there should be proportionate imprint requirements on non-printed material at referendums and elections across the UK. However, we would welcome the opportunity to work with relevant governments, not only in Scotland but also in other parts of the UK, when they are considering future legislation for referendums, to ensure that the imprint rules strike the right balance between ensuring there is transparency about who is campaigning and proportionate and modern regulatory requirements. Recommendation 15: Restrictions on the publication of promotional material by central and local government Relevant governments, not only in Scotland but also those in other parts of the UK, should publicly commit to and refrain from, in practise, any paid advertising, including the delivery of booklets to households, which promotes a particular referendum outcome for the full duration of the

referendum period. We agree in principle that a period of 28-days is an adequate duration for the restrictions on the publication of other promotional material by central and local government. However, to mitigate the risks of the relatively short period, it is important that relevant governments give careful consideration to the impact on the campaign and voters' trust in the rules of any referendum related information they publish before the restrictions come into force. It is also important that there is a clear explanation of the rules and how to comply with them for relevant public bodies to follow during that period. Recommendation 16:

Regulating campaign arguments We invite relevant governments, not only in Scotland but also those in other parts of the UK to restate for each future referendum that a role in regulating the campaign arguments is inappropriate for the Commission, or any other organisation tasked with regulating the referendum. Recommendations: Future conduct of the referendums and elections

Recommendation 17: Use of the mini-count approach to the verification and counting of votes Breaking down the verification and counting of votes into areas smaller than the total electoral or referendum area is a particularly effective method in achieving an accurate, timeous result with clear audit trails. Consequently, COs and returning officers in Scotland and elsewhere in the UK should consider utilising this approach when planning their verification and count at future electoral events.

Recommendation 18: National recounts The key factor in delivering a single national result for future any referendums is that high quality counts are undertaken in each counting area, so that confidence and trust in the overall result is achieved, as was the case at the independence referendum. We do not believe that it would be necessary for legislation for any future referendum on any issue, not only in Scotland but also those held across or in other parts of the UK, to provide powers for the Chief Counting Officer to direct national recounts to be carried out across all counting areas. Legislatures scrutinising future referendum legislation will want to consider the powers provided to Counting Officers for recounts at the local counting area level.

Recommendation 19: Prohibition on appointment of staff previously involved in campaigning The legislation for future referendums, not only in Scotland but also those held across or in other parts of the UK, should ensure that the prohibition on COs appointing people as polling station staff who have been involved in the campaigns for either outcome in the referendum, is extended to explicitly cover people employed by the CO at the verification and counting of votes.

Recommendation 20: Appointment of counting agents Limitations on the number of counting agents who can be appointed at count centres mean that in some circumstances agents of any given registered campaigner may be unable to properly scrutinise the conduct of the counting of votes. Although a restriction on the number of counting agents who can be appointed is necessary for logistical reasons it may be that changes are required to the way in which the representation of each referendum outcome is calculated. For example, it may be that a system which prioritises the appointment of an appropriate number of counting agents acting on behalf of the designated lead campaigners would be more effective. During the course of the referendum the Commission drew the attention of both lead campaigners and several other campaign organisations to the limitations on numbers of counting agents to ensure they were aware of a potential issue before it arose. For future referendum legislation in Scotland and elsewhere legislators may wish to consider if large numbers of registered campaigners are anticipated.

Recommendation 21: Instructions to voters on the folding of ballot papers and the Unique Identifying Number SIRA required and the guidance issued by the CCO highlighted the requirement of polling station staff to inform voters to fold the ballot paper after they had made their

mark and then show the Unique Identifying Number to the Presiding Officer before placing the ballot paper in the box. Counting Officers and Returning Officers at future referendums and elections in Scotland and elsewhere in the UK should ensure that at training sessions for polling station staff the requirements for how the ballots are to be presented prior to their deposit in the ballot box are emphasised to staff. Recommendation 22: The future of the Electoral Management Board for Scotland Given the continuing development of the EMB and the need to secure its long-term funding and statutory arrangements, the Smith Commission Agreement presents an opportunity to secure the future re-structuring of electoral matters in Scotland with the EMB playing an important role, delivering services which are in the interests of the voter. We would therefore recommend: That the EMB's statutory remit is extended to all parliamentary elections and that the Convener is given a power of direction at these elections. The long term funding and legal status of the EMB must also be secured and clarified so that it can undertake fully the tasks it was envisioned it would carry out when the idea of a Board was recommended and accepted by governments in 2008. Recommendation 23: Integrity administrative issues: a single point of contact The Commission, while recognising the complexity of having many more police forces across the whole of the UK and their independence in operational terms, recommends that for future referendums at the UK level, Police Scotland, the Association of Chief Police Officers and the Police Service of Northern Ireland explore the possibility of establishing a single command structure to co-ordinate where necessary at UK level. Download our full report Our report on the Scottish independence referendum 1. Agreement between the United Kingdom Government and the Scottish Government on a referendum on independence for Scotland (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/Government/concordats/Referendum-on-independence>) ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. Order under Section 30 of the Scotland Act 1998 (http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/242/pdfs/uksi_20130242_en.pdf) ■ Back to content at footnote 2 3. Although established on an interim, non-statutory basis in November 2008, the EMB was not created in a statutory sense until given roles in Scotland's local government elections by the Local Electoral Administration (Scotland) Act 2011, which gave the Board "the general function of co-ordinating the administration of local government elections in Scotland." Its overall aim is to promote a consistent approach to electoral administration across Scotland with the interests of voters at the fore. Members of the Board are Returning Officers (Counting Officers for the referendum), their Deputies and Electoral Registration Officers and it is led by a Convener who is currently appointed by Scottish Ministers. It is advised by various professional electoral bodies, both the UK and Scottish Governments and the Electoral Commission. ■ Back to content at footnote 3 Related content Our advice on the proposed Scottish independence referendum question Read our advice on the proposed Scottish independence referendum question Donations and loans reported by campaigners at the Scottish referendum View donations and loans reported by campaigners at the Scottish referendum Campaign spending at the Scottish referendum View data about campaign spending at the Scottish independence referendum Report: Regulation of campaigners at the independence referendum held on 18 September 2014 Read our report about regulation at the Scottish independence referendum

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Appendix 7 Code of Conduct Anti-Fraud and Anti-Bribery

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Commissioners Code of Conduct for Electoral Commissioners On this page Introduction

Definitions Responsibilities Identifying, investigating and responding to fraud and

bribery Administration First published: 6 March 2023 Last updated: 19 June 2023

Introduction The Commission requires all staff, at all times, to act honestly and

with integrity. This includes safeguarding the public resources for which they are responsible and any other resources that fall within the Commission's responsibility.

The Commission has zero tolerance for fraud and bribery and is committed to ensuring that its systems and practices reduce the risk of fraud occurring. In addition, cases of actual or suspected fraud will be vigorously and promptly investigated and

appropriate action will be taken. The purpose of this policy is to:

Set out staff responsibilities (as an individual and/or a manager) with regard to the prevention and detection of fraud;

Describe the procedures for notifying and investigating any allegations of fraud or bribery; and,

Provide advice and procedure for notifying any knowledge or suspicion of money laundering Audience

The policy applies to any fraud or suspected fraud, or any bribery or suspected bribery, involving employees in their work for the Commission, and in their dealings with stakeholders, consultants,

vendors, contractors, outside agencies doing business with employees of such

agencies, and/or any other parties with a business relationship with the Commission.

It also addresses how the Commission will collaborate with other public bodies in

their efforts to tackle fraud or bribery. For the avoidance of doubt, issues of fraud

or bribery in bodies regulated by the Commission or identified as a result of the

Commission's regulatory work are addressed in the Commission's regulatory policies.

Definitions Fraud The Fraud Act 2006, which came into effect on 15 January 2007,

creates a general offence of fraud with three ways of committing it: Fraud by false representation; Fraud by failing to disclose information; Fraud by abuse of position.

It also created new offences: Obtaining services dishonestly Possessing, making and

supplying articles for use in frauds; Fraudulent trading applicable to non-corporate traders. For practical purposes fraud may be defined as the use of deception with the intention of obtaining an advantage, causing loss to another party or exposing

another to a risk of loss. Actions which constitute fraud include: Any dishonest or fraudulent act; Forgery or alteration of any document or account belonging to the

Commission; Forgery or alteration of a cheque, bank draft, or any other financial

document; Misappropriation of funds, securities, supplies, or other assets;

Impropriety in the handling or reporting of money or financial transactions;

Profiteering as a result of insider knowledge of the Commission's activities,

possibly by making unauthorised use of information not yet released; Disclosing confidential and proprietary information to outside parties; Disclosing to other

persons activities engaged in or contemplated by the Commission; Accepting or seeking anything of material value from contractors, vendors or persons providing

services/materials to the Commission; Destruction, removal or inappropriate use of

records, furniture, fixtures, and equipment; and/or Any similar or related

inappropriate conduct. It is difficult and perhaps inadvisable to be prescriptive as

to where these issues might affect the Commission. There are always new and

unforeseen ways of using organisations in such operations. However, some examples of

areas where the risk of fraud may be more likely to arise are: Making false claims

for overtime, flexi-time, travel and subsistence claims; Falsification and

duplication of invoices in order to generate a false payment; Misappropriation of

grant funds; Unauthorised use of purchasing systems in order to misappropriate goods or use services for personal gain; Short deliveries of goods or services may be accepted as a result of collusion; Acceptance of unsolicited goods or expanded orders as a result fraudulent acceptance of attractions such as free gifts (see also clause 3.1 of the Code of Conduct on the Hospitality and Gifts Register); Misuse of procurement or credit cards; A contractor could be selected as a result of favouritism or who does not offer best value for money; Payments made for work not carried out as a result of collusion between the contractor and official; Theft or unauthorised use of assets; Theft of sensitive/restricted documentation or information. Money Laundering Money laundering is a specific form of fraud which is dealt with under specific laws. Money laundering is the process whereby criminals attempt to give the impression that money that they have is actually legally theirs and, therefore, they are legitimately able to spend it. If something is purchased with this money then it can either be used or sold and those proceeds of sale appear to be legitimate. Money laundering may involve: The physical disposal of cash proceeds derived from illegal activity; Creating complex layers of financial transactions to conceal the source of funds; Legitimising the proceeds of crime by returning them into the system as proper business funds. Offences, duties and responsibilities are contained in the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 as amended and related regulations. You are personally required, by law, to report any knowledge or suspicion of money laundering. Do not confront the person with your suspicions. There are criminal offences around Money Laundering, particularly if you disclose information that enables a suspect to conceal evidence and prejudices an investigation. It is very important, therefore, that if you have suspicions you keep these to yourself and in the first instance, report your suspicions to the Commission's General Counsel who is the Commission's Money Laundering Reporting Officer. General Counsel will inform appropriate senior managers, including the Chief Executive, internal and external auditors. This will enable initial consideration to be given to the matter. General Counsel will, if there are appropriate grounds report the matter to the relevant investigating authorities. Bribery The Bribery Act 2010 sets out offences that include: Bribing another person Being bribed Holding an organization to account if a person associated with the organization bribes another person. Having adequate procedures in place to prevent bribery is a defence to this offence. Bribery will occur in circumstances involving: The offering, giving, solicitation or the acceptance of any inducement or reward (whether financial or otherwise); To or from a person or company, wherever they are situated and whether they are a public official or body or private person or company; By any individual employee, Board Member or Commissioner, acting on the Commission's behalf; Which is intended to amount to or bring about improper performance of a relevant function or activity of the person or company; A relevant function will be: any function of a public nature; any activity connected with a business (including a trade or profession); any activity performed in the course of a person's employment; or any activity performed by or on behalf of a body of persons (whether corporate or unincorporate). Improper performance will occur where there has been a breach of a relevant expectation – i.e. the expectation that the function or activity will be performed in good faith, impartially and in a certain manner by the person who is in a position of trust. The Commission could therefore be affected by the bribing of others by its employees, or through its own officials being bribed by others.

Responsibilities

Staff responsibilities

Every member of staff is responsible for:

Acting with propriety in the use of resources and the handling and use of public

funds whether they are involved with cash or payments systems, receipts or dealing with suppliers; Conducting themselves in accordance with the Commission's Code of Conduct and any other policies specifying staff behaviour ; Being alert to the possibility that unusual events or transactions could be indicators of fraud; Reporting details immediately through the appropriate channel if they suspect that a fraud has been committed or see any suspicious acts or events; and Cooperating fully with whoever is conducting internal checks or reviews or fraud investigations.

Manager responsibilities In addition to their responsibilities as staff members, all managers must be familiar with the types of improprieties that might occur within their area of responsibility, and be alert for any indication of irregularity.

Managers must also be alert for fraud and bribery across the Commission. This requires knowledge of the business as a whole, as well as specialist knowledge of their area of responsibility. Management at all levels within the Commission is responsible for the prevention and detection of fraud and bribery. In particular, they are responsible for: Identifying the risks to which systems, operations and procedures are exposed; Developing and maintaining effective controls to prevent and detect fraud; and Ensuring that controls are being complied with. Accounting

Officer's responsibilities The Accounting Officer, who is the Commission's Chief Executive, is responsible for establishing and maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of departmental policies, aims and objectives.

The system of internal control is designed to respond to and manage the whole range of risks that a department faces. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify the principal risks, to evaluate the nature and extent of those risks and to manage them effectively. Managing the risks of fraud and bribery will be seen in the context of the management of this wider range of risks.

The Commission's Accounting Officer has a responsibility to act in the wider interest of the Exchequer as well as specifically for the Commission. The Commission supports the Accounting Officer in this by providing all lawful support to other bodies' anti-fraud and anti-bribery efforts, both pro-actively where irregularity against another body is suspected and reactively when suspected irregularity is raised with the Commission by another body.

Internal Audit's responsibilities Internal Audit is responsible for: Delivering an annual opinion to the Accounting Officer on the adequacy of the system of internal controls, including arrangements for managing the risk of fraud and bribery; Assisting in the deterrence and prevention of irregularity by examining and evaluating the effectiveness of control commensurate with the extent of the potential exposure / risk in the various segments of the Commission's operations; Examining and advising upon the adequacy of arrangements by management to review and identify the possibility of fraud as a business risk; and Assisting those conducting internal fraud investigations.

External Audit responsibilities External Audit is responsible for: Conducting financial audit work in accordance with audit procedures that are designed to consider fraud; Carrying out targeted value for money studies that may identify and assess fraud risk, and raise awareness of control and system weaknesses; Considering regularity of expenditure with specific attention to risk of fraud and mitigation measures; and Taking appropriate action in response to disclosures under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 i.e. whistle blowing.

Identifying, investigating and responding to fraud and bribery Procedures for:

Political Contributions Charitable Donations and Sponsorships Facilitation Payments Gifts, Hospitality and Travel Expenses Possible signs of impropriety Circumstances might lead you to suspect that a fraud may be planned or be taking place. You should then report the matter and put any planned transaction on hold. The sorts of

questions you should be asking yourself include: Who are you dealing with? Where do they reside or work? What is their job (if relevant)? Are you unsure of any of these? You need to check to your satisfaction. Have you met the person with whom you are dealing? Be very cautious about persons acting for unknown third parties; get details of those third parties and make contact with them. Look out for the unusual, e.g. where there is a difference between the identity of the person with whom you are dealing and the details of an account or a difference between the account holder and the signatory or someone agreeing to a lesser sum too easily. Look out for what appears (without explanation) to be a loss-making activity, for example an uneconomic tender for work or an unrealistic price being paid for something. Managers and all other staff should also be alerted to any warning signs that might indicate that fraud is taking place within the Commission. These may include: staff under stress without a high workload; staff always working late without obvious explanation; staff reluctance to take leave; refusal of promotion; unexplained wealth; sudden change of lifestyle; new staff resigning quickly; close relationships with suppliers / contractors; suppliers / contractors who insist on dealing with one particular member of staff. Of course, many of these signs may have other causes and it is therefore important that any suspicions are investigated appropriately. Reporting fraud and bribery If you discover or suspect fraud or bribery you should, in the first instance, report your suspicions to your line manager. If such action would be inappropriate, your concerns should be reported to one of the following persons: General Counsel; or Internal Auditor. Alternatively, you may remain anonymous by telephoning the National Audit Office whistle blowing number (Tel 020 7798 7999). You should be careful not to reveal your suspicions to other people within or outside the Commission (except under whistleblowing arrangements), unless requested to do so by the person investigating. If you ask to have your identify protected and kept confidential, it will not be disclosed without your consent. If the situation arises where we are not able to resolve the concern without revealing your identify (e.g. evidence is needed at court) the Commission will discuss with you whether and how it can proceed. Investigating fraud and bribery Investigations into alleged bribery will as appropriate be taken forward by the police and/or consistent with the Commission's investigation procedure for fraud and bribery. Responding to fraud and bribery Where appropriate the Commission will respond to instances of fraud or bribery involving its staff in accordance with its disciplinary policy. The Commission will take appropriate steps, including legal action if necessary, to recover any losses arising from or related to fraud or bribery. This may include action against third parties involved in the bribery or whose negligent actions contributed to the bribery. Where instances of fraud or bribery affecting the Commission are identified (including 'near miss' instances) the Director, Finance and Corporate Services and General Counsel will undertake proportionate lessons learned exercises (supported by internal audit as appropriate) to ensure controls are appropriate. Administration Links to Risk Management Risks of fraud and bribery must be appropriately assessed by managers for their areas in line with this policy and included in risk registers where material. This should be reviewed in line with the Commission's risk management policies. Related Policies The Commission has a range of policies and procedures that deal with behaviour at work including: Code of Conduct; Whistleblowing Policy; Grievance Policy; Disciplinary Policy. This policy should be read in conjunction with the above policies and the relevant procedure followed where it is appropriate. If you are unsure which procedure may be appropriate HR will be able to advise. Equalities Impact Assessment This policy is based on a statutory requirement to

prevent fraud and or bribery corrupting anyone in public office. It applies to all staff and it is not considered to have any adverse impact on anyone with the protected characteristics or anyone protected under Section 75 in Northern Ireland. As this is a statutory requirement for all public sector staff regardless of grade, area of work location, part time or full time etc, it has to be upheld regardless of protected or other characteristic. However, in all policies and statutory frameworks, managers should be mindful of any vexatious or malicious allegations and equally monitor if this is disproportionately brought against any particular groups of staff.

Consultation Executive Team, Auditors. Dissemination and communication plan Executive Team, Senior Leadership Team, Legal Team, all EC staff, Auditors. This policy should also be published on the staff intranet. Review This policy should be reviewed every 2 years. If there has been an incidence of fraud or bribery, a review should be undertaken to assess the effectiveness of this policy. Key contacts Commission's General Counsel (contact for specific cases) Binnie Goh (BGoh@electoralcommission.org.uk Tel: 020 7271 0508) Commission's Internal Auditors RSM plc. Contact Mike Cheetham (Mike.Cheetham@rsmuk.com Tel: 07800 617204 National Audit Office Whistle-blowing number (020 7798 7999) Director, Finance and Corporate Services (contact for information about this policy) Kieran Rix (krix@electoralcommission.org.uk Tel: 020 7271 0521)

Our report on the UK Government's draft statutory instrument to reform the annual canvass | Electoral Commission Search Our report on the UK Government's draft statutory instrument to reform the annual canvass You are in the Our responses to consultations section Home Our responses to consultations First published: 12 July 2019 Last updated: 25 July 2019 Introduction This response sets out our views on the UK Government's draft statutory instrument to amend the process for conducting the annual canvass of electors. We have assessed: whether the current annual canvass system meets its objective of identifying people who should be added to the register, and identifying deletions from the register the extent to which the objective of the canvass would be met if the order proposed by the UK Government was brought into force the merits of alternative ways of meeting the objective of the canvass Summary We welcome the UK Government's proposals for reform of the annual canvass process and see these as an important first step in modernising electoral registration. We have assessed the canvass reform proposals against the objective of the canvass, which is to identify eligible electors who should be added to the register and necessary deletions from the register. The canvass reform proposals should result in greater efficiency, allowing Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) to focus their increasingly limited resources on areas of greatest need thereby better meeting the objective of the canvass. However, the success of canvass reform is highly dependent on new data-sharing mechanisms and careful planning and implementation activities being completed in good time ahead of the start of the 2020 annual canvass, which will commence from July 2020. Beyond the changes proposed in the draft regulations, additional reforms could further improve the efficiency of the electoral registration process. These include: enhanced digital data sharing between organisations holding public data and EROs; automated and automatic registration; and the integration of electoral registration into other public service transactions. We have conducted feasibility studies on each of these reforms and would welcome the opportunity to discuss the findings with the Government and other interested groups.

The canvass process now In recent decades there have been significant changes to key aspects of the electoral registration system, notably, the introduction of year-round rolling registration in 2001, and individual electoral registration and online registration in 2014. These changes have meant that the annual canvass is no longer the only way for EROs to identify new electors or changes of address. Under the current rigid statutory requirements for the canvass, EROs have to carry out the same steps in order to obtain a response from every address, even if there has been no change in the people living there who are eligible to be registered. This means that EROs are unable to focus their resources in areas of greatest need, and a disproportionate amount of resource is required to be directed at canvass activity which does not identify eligible electors who should be added to the register or necessary deletions from the register. We do not believe that the current system is meeting the objective of the canvass as well as it should, nor do we believe the model is sustainable in the short to medium term. The current process is characterised by inefficiency, with a disproportionate amount of resource required to be directed to activity which is delivering declining results. The canvass process now: accordions How we made our assessment As part of our report we are required to assess whether the current system meets the objective of the canvass, which is to identify eligible electors who should be added to the register and necessary deletions from the register. We have used three types of evidence to do this: Evidence about the accuracy and completeness of the electoral registers. This provides an indication of how effective current electoral registration processes,

including the annual canvass, have been in maintaining the registers. Evidence about the extent to which the annual canvass remains the principal mechanism by which the electoral registers are maintained. Evidence about whether the annual canvass in its current form is fit for purpose, particularly given its inflexibility and resource pressures within local government. The current annual canvass system The annual canvass is essentially an information gathering exercise on potential additions and deletions to the register and is a key tool in helping to maintain the accuracy and completeness of the registers. Historically, the annual canvass was the primary mechanism by which EROs have sought to find out the names and addresses of people who are entitled to be registered but are not registered, or who are registered but are not entitled. In recent decades, there have been major changes to key aspects of the electoral registration system which have had an impact on how the registers are maintained. These changes include rolling registration (introduced in 2001 to allow people to register at any time throughout the year); and individual electoral registration and online registration in 2014. These changes mean that the annual canvass is no longer the only way for EROs to identify new electors or changes of address. During the annual canvass, EROs are required to send a canvass form (Household Enquiry Form (HEF)) to every property in their area. The HEF asks those resident to state whether there have been any changes in the composition of the household. This information is used to identify where people are missing from the register who may need to be invited to apply to register, or where individuals may have moved and their eligibility to remain on the register needs to be considered.

The current legislation also requires EROs to issue two written reminders and carry out at least one visit to any non-responding properties. The annual canvass is not a registration exercise on its own as any potential eligible electors returned in a HEF must apply to register individually before they can be added to the register.

Accuracy and completeness of the registers We undertake research to measure the quality of the electoral registers on a periodic basis. Evidence about the accuracy and completeness of the registers helps provide an indication of how effective current methods of maintaining the register are. Our study of the December 2015 Great Britain registers (those published at the end of the transition to IER) indicated that the local government registers were 91% accurate and 84% complete, with the parliamentary registers being 91% accurate and 85% complete. These figures meant that an estimated 8 million people were missing from the electoral registers. Our research on the electoral registers in Great Britain confirms the correlation between certain demographics and lower or higher levels of completeness, with age and mobility still found to be the variables with the strongest impact: the young and those more likely to move home are less likely to be registered. Our December 2015 study found: A clear connection between home movement and completeness: as the register is a property-based database, greater mobility is associated with lower levels of completeness while the longer an individual has been resident at their property, the more likely they are to appear on the electoral register. The highest level of completeness was for those aged 65+ (96%) with the lowest level recorded for attainers (16 and 17 year olds, 45%). There was also a decline in completeness among those aged under 45. The fall among 18-19 year olds, 25-34 year olds and 35-44 year olds was statistically significant. Although evidence suggests that the accuracy of the electoral registers has improved significantly since the introduction of IER (91% accurate as at 1 December 2015, an improvement of four percentage points during the transition to IER), we estimated that there were still between 4 and 4.5 million inaccurate entries on the local government electoral registers. Evidence about the accuracy and

completeness of the registers suggests that current methods employed to maintain the registers, including the annual canvass, are not necessarily working as effectively as they could, particularly in relation to capturing traditionally under-registered groups. One advantage of canvass reform is that it could help EROs tackle under-registration by enabling better targeting of resources in areas of greatest need, leading to more effective identification and registration of eligible electors.

However, while we believe canvass reform is a positive step, more far-reaching reforms of the electoral registration system will be required to fully address the challenges of achieving accurate and complete registers. This point is expanded on further in section 'other ways for EROs to get the information they need' of this report. Registration outside the canvass period Information about the patterns of electoral registration activity can provide further insight into the effectiveness of the annual canvass, particularly when we compare the latter to other methods of maintaining the register. An increasing number of citizens are registering outside the canvass period. The UK's governments' joint policy statement noted that 'in 2016 there were twice as many additions to the register outside the canvass period than during the canvass, signalling that the canvass itself is becoming less important in registering eligible electors'. Our own analysis published in 2017 showed that the number of applications appears to be related to the proximity of high-profile electoral events. For example, more than 2.9 million applications to register to vote were made between the Prime Minister's announcement on 18 April 2017 of her intent to hold a general election and the deadline for applications on 22 May. More than 96% of these applications were made using the online service. EROs are required to draw on their local annual budgets to deal with the impact of such unplanned national electoral events. The increasing link between electoral registration and electoral events means that the following annual canvass is less likely to identify eligible electors who should be added to the register, which undermines the achievement of an integral part of the objective of the canvass. In addition, EROs have little flexibility to reflect this in their canvassing methods, resulting in inefficiencies.

Some form of contact at a household level is likely, at least in the short to medium term, to remain a key method by which EROs audit their registers, review the accuracy of their records and initiate steps to remove redundant entries, particularly in years where there are no major polls. However, the changing patterns of registration activity mean that a review of the annual canvass is timely. This should also include an examination of the balance of funding and resources for EROs between election-specific activities and the annual canvass of properties. In a digital age, as modernising our elections moves forward there is real opportunity to achieve more fundamental improvements to the system. These should focus on the benefits and costs of more joined-up, data-driven, year-round registration solutions, including an appraisal of the place and format of the annual canvass in such a system.

Inflexibility of the annual canvass The previous section highlights one of the main problems with the current canvass process: its inflexibility. Although the objective of the canvass is to identify potential additions to and deletions from the electoral register, most people (on average 88% of residents across Great Britain) do not move address in any given year. Despite this EROs are legally required, from 1 July each year, to send every household in their area a HEF which says who is registered at that address and asks for changes to be indicated where necessary. When they do not receive a response to that initial form they must send two postal reminders and carry out a household visit in order to encourage a response. This means that, depending on when or if a household responds, they can be contacted up to four times during the

canvass. This is not a particularly efficient use of public money and strengthens the case for developing other ways to establish whether any changes are likely to have occurred in respect of any particular property. Resource challenges Responses to our management information survey issued to EROs in early October 2017 revealed that a number of EROs were facing resource challenges in relation to the canvass, which resulted in problems recruiting and retaining sufficient canvassers. There were also several instances where EROs, in an attempt to seek a more cost effective approach to the canvass, appear to have adopted practices which were not strictly in accordance with the legal requirements of issuing and following up HEFs. The current 'one-size-fits-all' approach is not flexible enough to accommodate the differing requirements of individuals, types of properties or resource pressures within local authorities, nor does it enable process and technological innovations to be explored and utilised. This further undermines the effectiveness of the current approach. The proposed canvass process The new canvass process should allow EROs in Great Britain to focus their resources in areas of greatest need, and better meet the objective of the canvass than the current system. Giving EROs access to robust national-level data about the resident population will help them to identify addresses where there is likely to have been a change in the people who are eligible to be registered to vote. The proposed process will reduce the cost of the activity required for properties where there has been no change of residents; EROs will be able to focus their efforts at addresses where there has been change. These changes are highly dependent on new data sharing mechanisms, which need careful implementation in good time ahead of the start of the 2020 annual canvass, which will commence from July 2020. The proposed canvass process: accordions Developing the reformed canvass model A number of alternative canvassing models were piloted in 2016 and 2017. The pilots were set up by Cabinet Office and individual EROs, and we undertook an evaluation of them. Our evaluation highlighted the potential to make better use of data to improve the efficiency of canvassing, particularly by reducing the follow-up work necessary with data-matched households and delivering cost savings. Based on the evidence from the pilots, the UK, Scottish and Welsh governments concluded that a hybrid model, taking the successful elements of each of the models and refining certain processes, was the best way forward. This model is provided for in the draft regulations and require EROs first to perform a data match step, which will determine whether to follow a new lighter touch canvass process or the modified full canvass process for a specific property. The idea is that the canvass process will be streamlined for those properties which are likely to have not changed household composition, allowing the ERO to target their resources to where responses and updates to the electoral register are required. There is also an exemptions process for certain types of properties less suited to traditional canvassing methods – for example, care homes, Houses in Multiple Occupation and student halls of residence – which allows the ERO to seek information on residents in a different way. We are required to assess whether the reformed canvass process as proposed would meet the objective of the canvass to identify eligible electors who should be added to the register and necessary deletions from the register. In order to answer this question we have focused on the following areas: Annual canvass data matching exercise Modified full canvass process Canvass communications and form design Effective planning and implementation Potential benefits of the data match step The draft regulations require EROs first to undertake a prescribed data match step, the results of which will determine whether EROs follow a 'light touch' process or the modified full canvass process. The data match step should enable EROs to identify households which

are likely not to have changed composition, providing an indication that any additions or deletions are not likely to be required for those properties. This will allow a more efficient way of identifying households where a change in composition is likely to have occurred and where the full canvass process would be necessary. To that extent, data matching should still enable the objective of the canvass to be met, but more efficiently insofar as the processes followed would be more proportionate to the likelihood of change having occurred within a particular household. The new lighter touch canvass process will reduce the cost of the activity required for properties where there has been no change of residents – EROs will be able to focus their efforts at addresses where there has been change. Conditions of successful data matching There are several factors that will be important for the success of data matching. The first concerns whether the datasets to be used for data matching will be of sufficient quality to allow EROs to make robust decisions about which process to follow for each property in their area. The draft regulations require entries on the electoral register to be matched against a national dataset; this will be the Department for Work and Pensions' Customer Information System (DWP CIS). The joint policy statement refers to the DWP CIS dataset being on average 95.4% accurate, making reference to the results of a data matching pilot scheme from 2012. The statement explains that the DWP CIS "is also acknowledged as one of the most comprehensive datasets in the country, covering virtually all those aged 16 years and above. Following discussions with DWP there is no reason to believe this accuracy rate has decreased, indeed it is more likely that the accuracy has probably increased". This suggests that the DWP CIS is a comprehensive and largely accurate dataset, providing some assurance that its use should not lead to poorly targeted canvassing of properties. The evaluation of 'confirmation' (i.e. the data matching of names and addresses on the electoral register against the DWP CIS to support of the transition to IER) found that 79% of electors matched against DWP records. This suggests that the dataset has good overall coverage and should provide a cost-effective basis for canvass reform. Other reliable national data sources may become available in the future, which could potentially improve the effectiveness of the data match step and pave the way for further registration reform. However, the draft regulations are not future proofed in this way and we would therefore recommend that they be amended accordingly. The explanatory memorandum to the draft regulations refers to EROs being able to take into account 'any other information or local data sources they hold as part of the data match step'. This information may be taken into account in an ERO's decision to put a property down the light touch process. We understand that the intention is that EROs will be able to access local data using Regulation 23, 35 or 35A powers, but would recommend that in the interests of clarity these powers are referred to explicitly in the draft regulations. More fundamentally, it is essential that only good quality, accurate, locally-held data should be used when matching electoral registration records ahead of the annual canvass. The draft regulations do not specify the types of factors that EROs should take into account when deciding whether to use specific local datasets. Clear guidance will therefore be required to support EROs with identifying and using data sets appropriately.

Continued importance of full canvassing The draft regulations provide for the full annual canvass process to be conducted in cases where the data match indicates there has been a change in household composition. We agree that the initial contact with properties subject to the full canvass process should be by sending a paper form to the property. Where an ERO believes there may have been some change in occupancy, it would not be logical to send an electronic contact to an individual who is currently

registered at the property. We agree that EROs should continue to be required to make several contacts with these properties, to ensure that they obtain the information they need to either identify changes in residents, or confirm that there has in fact been no change. We also support the introduction of some discretion for EROs to vary the way that follow-up contacts are made, allowing EROs to target their resources based on an assessment of what will work best. Our evaluation of the annual canvass pilots in 2017 showed that using different contact methods could result in higher response rates than when the same approach was made repeatedly. The retention of the full canvass process in cases where data matching has indicated a change in household composition will be essential in enabling EROs to continue to meet the objective of the canvass to identify eligible electors who should be added to the register and necessary deletions from the register. Canvass communications and form design The draft regulations place a duty on the Electoral Commission to design three types of written paper canvass communications: a paper communication for use during the light touch canvass (Canvass Communication A); a canvass form to be used for the modified full canvass process (Canvass Form); and a paper communication alternative to the Canvass Form for use during the full canvass process (Canvass Communication B). We note that Canvass Communication B has no prescribed content. We welcome the flexibility and scope for innovation that this provides and will work closely with EROs and Electoral Management Software (EMS) suppliers to ensure this is an effective alternative communication to the Canvass Form. We will also undertake user testing to ensure that this communication is easy for citizens to understand and complete.

Effective planning and implementation The changes provided for in the draft regulations are highly dependent on new data matching mechanisms. Coordinated and timely development and testing of the digital elements of the reforms will be essential if the changes are to be implemented in good time for the start of the 2020 annual canvass, which will commence from July 2020. It is clear that the window of opportunity for implementing the proposals is small and there is little room for slippage. We understand that digital work is underway in a number of key areas, including with EMS suppliers, DWP, Cabinet Office and the IER digital service, to develop the necessary infrastructure to support canvass reform. This work will require effective communication between partners and close management attention to ensure the key elements of canvass reform are delivered on schedule. Changes to EMS systems and the IER digital service to support both national and local data matching will be crucial, as will a robust training needs assessment to identify the precise requirements of EROs and their teams. EROs will also need access to reliable management information, via their EMS systems, to help them understand the impact of their activities during the reformed annual canvass. The canvass reform legislation should be clear at least six months before the commencement of the 2020 canvass (i.e. regulations should be made by Parliament by the end of December 2019). This will enable EROs to plan effectively for the changes, and provide adequate time for the user testing and translating of forms and materials, as well as the provision of revised guidance for EROs. Any delays to the making of the legislation will increase the risks around timely and effective implementation of the proposals. The UK's governments will also need to consider how these important changes will be delivered alongside other significant electoral registration and franchise reforms that are currently being considered by governments and legislatures. These include allowing all British citizens overseas to register to vote at UK Parliament elections, allowing 16 and 17 year-olds to vote at Welsh elections, and extending the franchise in Scottish elections to citizens of all nationalities legally resident in Scotland.

Other ways for EROs to get the information they need Beyond the changes proposed in the draft regulations, there are further reforms which would help EROs to better meet the objective of the canvass in future. The UK's governments should build on the use of DWP data at the start of the annual canvass, and explore additional ways to improve the accuracy and completeness of electoral registers. They should learn from the ways other countries use data to compile and maintain electoral registers. EROs could use robust data from other public organisations throughout the year to identify people who are not currently registered. Taking steps to encourage registration applications throughout the year would improve the match with DWP data at the start of the canvass. This reform could be taken further by introducing systems of automated or automatic registration. The electoral registration process should also be more widely integrated into other public service transactions. This would enable simultaneous voter registration applications alongside accessing other public services, and offer further potential benefits in relation to improved accuracy and completeness of the registers. We have carried out feasibility studies to show how these changes could be implemented in the UK. We will publish these in summer 2019, and look forward to discussing the findings with governments and other interested groups.

Other ways for EROs to get the information they need: accordions

Continuing reform and modernisation Reform of the annual canvass represents an important step to modernise the electoral registration system, but there is more that should be done to ensure we have an effective, joined-up and year-round registration process. We want the UK's governments to develop longer-term plans for electoral registration reform that build on the canvass reform proposals. Successful implementation and integration of canvass reform into business as usual practices in the electoral registration system is the clear priority over the short to medium term. However, the universal embedding of a more data-driven approach to managing the annual canvass offers considerable scope for reforming the system further. This should aim to reflect people's changing expectations in a digital society by building on the increasing use of data across the public and private sectors to the benefit of citizens and the delivery of efficiencies. The goal is an electoral registration system that is more joined-up with other public services, making registering to vote even simpler for the public and more efficient for EROs. This must include exploring the potential for integrating applications into other public service transactions, and making better use of national data to identify new electors or home movers. In addition, automatic registration methods should be explored further, drawing on other countries' experiences.

Feasibility studies To help inform the debate about continuing reform and modernisation, we recently completed a series of feasibility studies on the following reforms:

- Better use of public data by EROs EROs can currently access data held locally by local authorities and others to help identify potential electors and manage their electoral registers. We wanted to explore the potential benefits for voters and EROs of enabling access to non-local public data. This could be particularly useful in helping to identify people who have changed address and updated their details with other public services, for example when they have applied for a driving licence or passport.
- Direct or automatic enrolment processes Building on the better use of public data study, we examined options for increasing the level of automation within the electoral registration system. We explored the feasibility of introducing systems of:
 - automatic registration – where citizens would be added to the electoral register, or their address updated, without them being required to take any further steps at all;
 - automated registration – where reliable data would serve as the basis of an individual's electoral registration application, but the individual

would still be required to take some further, affirmative steps before being added to the register. Integrating electoral registration into other public service transactions We examined the extent to which the electoral registration process could enable simultaneous voter registration applications alongside accessing other public services. Better identification and management of duplicate registration applications We also considered a number of potential ways in which duplicate applications might be better identified and managed within the system to understand how such reforms could be implemented in the UK and inform the debate. Importantly, we found that these reforms are feasible from a technical perspective and could be implemented without radically altering the structure of the electoral registration system in the UK. In particular, technology already employed by the IER Digital Service could form the building blocks for these reforms. EROs would require access to a wider range of national data sources, including transactional data held by organisations including DVLA, HM Passport Office, HMRC and those within the education sector to help identify, target and potentially register citizens. The potential benefits of these reforms include: Improving the accuracy and completeness of the registers by giving EROs additional tools with which to identify and potentially register new eligible citizens, including under-registered groups; and helping ensure electoral registration entries are kept up-to-date Opening up additional registration channels to improve accessibility of the electoral registration system Improving the ability to detect and prevent fraud, and provide the necessary basis for any move towards different ways of voting in the future Reducing the overall costs of electoral registration further through more efficient processes We intend to publish the findings of the feasibility studies this summer and would welcome the opportunity to discuss them with governments and other interested groups. Context More information on our response We welcome the proposals to reform the annual electoral registration canvass in Great Britain and the opportunity to comment more specifically on the UK Government's draft Representation of the People (Annual Canvass) (Amendment) Regulations 2019. The Cabinet Office launched the formal consultation with the Electoral Commission on 27 March 2019. We were subsequently sent an updated version of the draft regulations on 21 May 2019 and our comments set out in this report reflect our review of that later version. The Scottish Government and Welsh Government are bringing forward their own regulations in order to apply these reforms to the local government registers in Scotland and Wales, with the aim of ensuring that the respective regulations are as consistent as possible, thereby reducing the risk of confusion for Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) and electors. We are currently being consulted on the draft Representation of the People (Annual Canvass) (Scotland) Regulations 2019 and expect to be consulted imminently on the Welsh legislation. Section 8 of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 requires the Commission to prepare a report assessing: Whether the current system meets the objective of the canvass to identify eligible electors who should be added to the register and necessary deletions from the register The extent to which the objective of the canvass would be met if the order made under Section 7 of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 was brought into force The merits of alternative ways of meeting the objective of the canvass We have welcomed early dialogue with Cabinet Office officials on the technical detail of the draft regulations. During the consultation period we received comments on the canvass reform proposals and draft regulations from the Association of s (AEA) and the Scottish Assessors' Association (SAA). We have taken these into account in developing our response. The comments set out in this report also build on our November 2018

response to the UK, Scottish and Welsh governments' joint policy statement on proposals for reform of the annual canvass. Related content Register to vote All you need to register to vote is 5 minutes and your National Insurance number. Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run Our Commissioners Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation

Attitudes to voter registration research report | Electoral Commission Search
Attitudes to voter registration research report You are in the Our research section Home Our research On this page Public attitudes to registering to vote Participants were positive towards the routes to registration Enablers to registration Barriers to registration Motivational mindsets Methodology Objectives Download the full report First published: 24 March 2023 Last updated: 24 March 2023 Public attitudes to registering to vote Public attitudes to registering to vote This qualitative research looks at public attitudes to registering to vote, with a particular focus on barriers to registration faced by people who are eligible to vote in the UK. There were a total of 133 interviews. 93 were 30-minute pre-recruited and 40 were 20-minute hall-test depth interviews, exploring attitudes across a range of different groups. The interviews focused on awareness about the process of registering to vote and enablers and barriers to registration. Participants were positive towards the routes to registration Participants who were registered to vote were more likely to recall receiving information about registering and recall the registration process than their unregistered counterparts. Letters were a primary prompt for participants, reminding them to register to vote and to provide information about the registration process. This was particularly the case among registered participants. Registered participants recalled the process of registering as simple, and unregistered participants assumed the process would be easy. Overall, participants were positive towards the routes to registration and reported that they would go online if they wanted to find more information about registering to vote.

Enablers to registration The primary enabler and motivation for registering was having your say and being able to vote. Participation in the democratic process emerged as important across both registered and unregistered participants. Social norming played a prominent role with participants often echoing behaviours and views of family and friends. Influencers in educational settings were often noted as promoting registration and voting amongst younger people. Individual benefits, such as improvements to credit ratings, were appealing as they were considered practical and tangible. Data collection via voter registration for local councils and the Government was generally understood to be beneficial but held limited motivational impact.

Barriers to registration Three groups of barriers to registration were identified: mindset towards voting knowledge barriers practical barriers Participants with mindset barriers included those who expressed apathy (disinterest in voting) and disillusionment (distrust in the political system and politics). Where a mindset barrier existed, this was a primary barrier to registration. Knowledge barriers included a lack of awareness of eligibility, lack of knowledge and confidence to make an informed vote, lack of understanding of the registration process and incorrect assumptions about registration status. Practical barriers focused on a lack of urgency or priority to register to vote. Other practical barriers included concerns about required documentation, privacy of personal information and the time it would take to register.

Motivational mindsets Application of the COM-B behavioural framework highlights that the primary barrier or enabler to registration is motivational. The research has observed three motivational mindsets which act as the primary building block in registration behaviour. Two of these are barrier mindsets and include disillusionment in the political system or politicians, and apathy towards voting. The third is an enabling mindset focusing on engagement in having your say or voice heard. The research suggests that there are a range of motivational, capability-based and opportunity-based hooks which could encourage registration across these mindsets.

Methodology A total of 133 depth interviews were

carried out across pre-recruited and hall-test depth interviews. This sample size was developed to allow the research to engage and explore attitudes amongst different groups that had been identified as less likely to be registered to vote in previous Electoral Commission research . These groups included: Younger people aged under 34 years. Whilst there was a focus on this age group, the research also included a sample of those aged 35+ years to ensure inclusion from those across age groups Recent movers (those who had moved home within the last two years) People from an ethnic minority background. The research included at least five depth interviews with participants from each of the following backgrounds: Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Black African and Black Caribbean Private renters A sample plan was developed to focus on these groups and include both registered and unregistered participants. This enabled the research to explore both reasons for registration and barriers to registration. Participants for the pre-recruited depth interviews were recruited from across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The hall tests took place in Wolverhampton and Leeds. Both locations include constituencies with a low turn-out in the 2019 General Election and were therefore identified as areas that may have lower levels of registration. Given the scope and timeframe for this study, registration status for each individual was based on self-reported registration status. Screening questions were developed to gather as close to an accurate report of registration status as possible. This included questions about ways in which people had registered, any receipt of a poll card and participation in voting. Objectives This research set out to explore attitudes towards registration amongst the public. Specifically, the research sought to explore: Barriers to registration. Understanding why people are not registered to vote and what could encourage unregistered people to register. Enablers to registration. Understanding why people are registered to vote. Awareness around registration. Understanding current knowledge levels around how to register and any misconceptions about the process of registering. Download the full report Electoral Commission Report Attitudes to voter registration If you would like to receive a copy of the report in Welsh, please send us a request .

Evidence to the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee: Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill | Electoral Commission Search

Evidence to the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee: Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill You are in the Our responses to consultations section Home Our responses to consultations On this page Extension of right to vote in local government elections Voting systems for elections to principal councils Electoral cycles Registration of local government electors Database of electoral registration information Qualification for membership of a local authority Election pilot schemes Expenditure of Returning Officers Additional considerations

First published: 7 January 2020 Last updated: 7 January 2020 Introduction December 2019 This response sets out the Electoral Commission's views on the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill. We have responded to the provisions in this Bill that are directly relevant to our work, and have also highlighted aspects of electoral law reform that we have previously recommended which do not appear in the Bill. We have previously set out our views on many of the issues that have now been included in the Bill in our response to the Welsh Government consultation on Local Government Electoral Reform in October 2017. We continue to recommend that all legislation should be clear at least six months before it is required to be implemented or complied with. This includes both this Bill and any secondary legislation that is subsequently required to specify the detail of how any provisions will work in practice. The timetable for this legislation will therefore need careful consideration given those provisions which are expected to be in place ahead of the local government elections in Wales in May 2022. The introduction of this Bill takes place in the context of a wider electoral reform agenda in Wales with changes about to be enacted for the National Assembly for Wales/Senedd elections. We expect that Welsh Government will continue to work closely with the Assembly Commission to ensure that any reforms to electoral arrangements for local government elections in Wales are not made in isolation but take into account this wider context. The provisions in this Bill address a number of concerns that we have highlighted in recent years about the delivery of elections. This is welcome. Nevertheless, electoral law remains fragmented and outdated. We strongly support the recommendations made by the UK's Law Commissions which aim to consolidate, simplify and modernise the many existing sources of electoral law. Further to this Bill, we urge Welsh Government to take their recommendations forward and to consolidate and wherever possible simplify the rules for National Assembly and local government elections. Key points Key points All primary and secondary legislation needed to change the franchise for the local government elections scheduled for May 2022 should be clear six months before Electoral Registration Officers are due to begin annual canvass activities in summer 2021 to enable all those who are newly eligible to vote to be able to register and participate in the elections. Welsh Government should commit to providing adequate resources to Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and local authorities to ensure that any changes to the electoral process as a result of the provisions in the Bill can be implemented in the best interests of voters. Any divergence in the franchise for different sets of elections, using the Parliamentary register and the Local Government register will introduce the possibility of confusion for voters, candidates and campaigners, as well as administrative challenges. Similarly, a potential divergence in the electoral system across Wales for local government elections could cause significant confusion among voters and any public awareness work to address this will be challenging. The Wales Electoral Coordination Board should be consulted on any proposals relating to electoral matters

included in the Bill and should play a full part in the effective implementation of any new changes. Extension of right to vote in local government elections We provided a detailed response on the proposed extension to the franchise in our responses to consultations in April 2017 and in October 2017 . In these we made clear that the Commission does not take a view on the principle of extending the franchise. This is because the Commission believes it is for the Welsh Government and, ultimately, the National Assembly for Wales to decide on the franchise for local government elections in Wales. However, as we explained, there are a number of practical implications which would need to be considered if a change to the franchise was introduced to include votes for 16 and 17 year olds and qualifying foreign citizens: Welsh Government should ensure that all primary and secondary legislation is clear six months before EROs are due to begin annual canvass activities in July 2021 (i.e. by January 2021). This would enable all those who are newly eligible to vote to register and participate in the 2022 local government elections in Wales. We will then need to update our advice and guidance for EROs in advance of the annual canvass in 2021 and for Returning Officers (ROs) ahead of the election in 2022, to reflect any changes to the franchise. We would also need to allow time for user testing of forms so that they are finalised and available for EROs to use six months before the election. Welsh Government should make sure that any changes are adequately resourced to ensure that they can be implemented effectively and efficiently in the best interests of voters in Wales. The proposed franchise changes would mean that the electoral register for Welsh elections would be very different to the register for Parliamentary elections. This could present challenges for voters who may not understand why they can vote in some elections and not others and to electoral administrators in administering two separate registers. The Commission stands ready to work with the Welsh Government and the wider electoral community to ensure a smooth transition if the franchise is changed. We have experience in supporting franchise changes from Scotland and would be happy to discuss further the approach we took to encourage registration among 14 to 17 year olds and how we could apply this learning to Wales. Duty to promote awareness and provide assistance We welcome the duty in the Bill for principal councils to promote awareness among young people about the new arrangements for registering to vote in local government elections in Wales. However, consideration should be given to apply this duty to EROs instead of, or as well as, the principal council. This is because, the ERO is appointed by the county or county borough council and has an independent statutory role under Section 9A of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (RPA) to take all necessary steps to comply with their duty to maintain the electoral register, and to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that all those eligible are registered in it. We run public awareness campaigns ahead of each set of elections to encourage voter registration. If the franchise is extended we would undertake targeted public awareness activities aimed specifically at these new electors informing them that they are eligible to vote and how they can register. We intend to run two campaigns – one around the annual canvass in 2021 and another in advance of the election in 2022. We are currently working with Welsh Government and other organisations such as the Assembly Commission and Electoral Reform Society, to create potential new educational resources for delivery by schools aimed at young people which would be used as part of our awareness work. Voting systems for elections to principal councils The introduction of two different voting systems As set out in our previous response , decisions about which voting system(s) should be used for local government elections in Wales is a significant constitutional issue and is a matter for Welsh Government.

However, allowing local authorities to decide which electoral system to use in their own area could increase the risk of voter confusion, particularly in relation to voter understanding of how to cast their vote, as well as raising administrative risks and challenges - for example, in terms of introducing new procedures for managing the count and providing adequate training for staff. This type of divergence would also raise significant challenges for candidates, agents, parties and other campaigners. If this type of change were to be implemented, the Commission itself would be required to: publish two sets of guidance for electoral administrators in Wales so that ROs know how to run a local government election under both first past the post (FPTP) and the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system publish two sets of advice and guidance for political parties, candidates and agents and non-party campaigners, one for each voting system potentially run separate public awareness campaigns ahead of scheduled local government elections, one focussing on a FPTP system and another on STV Managing an effective public awareness campaign in Wales ahead of one set of local government elections which implements two different electoral systems is likely to be a major challenge. Ensuring voters only saw or heard or were able to identify the information that is relevant to their voting system would be problematic, even with targeted digital advertising. The risk of voter confusion would therefore be high. If different voting systems were used for local government elections across Wales, this would make national planning and consistency very challenging. There is strong support in Wales for consistency and co-operation in the interest of delivering efficient and trusted electoral processes.

The Wales Electoral Coordination Board was established to encourage consistency in the management of elections and electoral registration across Wales. Welsh Government officials are formal advisors to the Board and Ministers have also attended meetings.

We recommended in 2017 that the Welsh Government should consider how the role of the Board could be developed in the medium to long term to support Welsh Government's overarching electoral modernisation programme. This might include, for example, considering if the Board should become a statutory group, as is the case in Scotland.

Resolutions to exercise the power to change the voting system We welcome Section 9 of the Bill which would ensure sufficient time – at least 17 months – for the Electoral Commission, ROs and campaigners to prepare, and to inform voters, about any change in voting system ahead of future elections. Initial review by the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission Paragraph 4(1) of Schedule 1 to the Bill would give Welsh Ministers the power to direct when the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission should submit their final review report. When considering a date for this report, Welsh Ministers should ensure that it allows sufficient time for any Order setting out any new ward arrangements to be made so that electoral administrators can complete the annual canvass and publish the revised register of electors reflecting the new boundaries in the year before the first elections at which those boundaries would apply. Rules about the conduct of local elections in Wales Welsh Ministers should be required to consult the Electoral Commission on regulations containing rules made under the new Section 36A of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (RPA) in the same way that they would be required to for rules under the current Section 36 of the RPA. This will enable us to provide the Assembly/Senedd with independent, expert advice on the workability of the legislation. **Electoral cycles** Extension of power to change ordinary day of local elections in Wales Section 17 of the Bill would introduce a new power for Welsh Ministers to change the ordinary day of local government elections in Wales by amending Section 37ZA of the RPA. Section 37ZA currently constrains the power for Welsh Ministers to change the day of local

elections in Wales by requiring that the Order to change the date is made no later than 1 February in the year before the year it is due to take effect. There is no similar time constraint in the new power that would be added by Section 17 of this Bill. This could mean that the date of a local election is changed at short notice, which could have a negative impact on voters, campaigners and electoral administrators. The Bill should include a similar time constraint to that in section 37ZA to allow sufficient time for candidates, parties and electoral administrators to plan for the election. Section 37ZA, as amended by the Bill, sets out that Welsh Ministers are required to consult 'such other persons' as they consider appropriate before making an Order to change the day of the local government election. This should be extended to specifically include the Electoral Commission, to ensure that Ministers and the Assembly/Senedd have access to independent expert advice about the potential implications of any change.

Registration of local government electors

Registration of local government electors without an application

We welcome the inclusion in the Bill of provisions that would allow EROs to register a local government elector without an application, if they are satisfied that they are entitled to be registered. Reforms of this nature could help improve levels of completeness among some of the specific under-registered groups (for example, young people) identified in our recently published study of the accuracy and completeness of the electoral registers . Earlier this year we published the findings from a series of feasibility studies we conducted exploring how electoral registration reforms could be delivered, to help inform the debate about registration reform.

These studies looked at the potential for giving EROs access to data from other public service providers; integration of electoral registration into other public service transactions; and automatic or more automated forms of registration.

Importantly, the work we conducted found that most of the reforms were feasible from a technical perspective and could be implemented without radically altering the structure of the electoral registration system in the UK. We expect the practical details of how a system of automatic registration would work in Wales to be set out in secondary legislation and look forward to working with Welsh Government and EROs to ensure that the proposals are workable and will help to improve accuracy and completeness. Important factors to consider in developing any scheme will include: the challenges and issues involved in making these changes for the local government register without equivalent changes to the parliamentary register; knowing when someone is already on the register; whether the chosen dataset would provide sufficient information to register a person automatically, or if a combination of datasets might be necessary; and the technical infrastructure required to support the reforms. We stand ready to further explore these and other relevant issues with Welsh Ministers and Welsh Government officials, building on the work we have already completed on automatic registration.

Database of electoral registration information

Regulations to provide for a database of electoral registration information

Section 18 of the Bill would give Welsh Ministers a power to establish an all-Wales database of electoral registration information. We understand that the purpose of this would be to enable the piloting and development of further reforms to the electoral process, and to improve the efficiency of information sharing between EROs and ROs.

As part of our feasibility studies on electoral registration modernisation we considered whether a centralised register, or system of joined-up electoral registers, would offer any additional benefits for electoral registration or electoral reform more broadly. We concluded that a greater degree of centralisation could offer real benefits, particularly in terms of simplifying the infrastructure

needed to support reform. In addition, the combination of unique identifiers and some form of joined-up registers allowing EROs to compare information about entries across a number of registers could reduce the risk of some electors voting more than once at a relevant election. Reforms along these lines could also enable us to know how many people are actually registered twice (legally) and additionally provide the potential basis for any move towards different ways of voting in the future. However, we also noted that these potential benefits need to be balanced against the implications of further centralisation on the structure of electoral registration in the UK, including the potential loss of local knowledge about under-registered groups; and the security risks around the management of personal data. We welcome further modernisation of electoral registration, and these benefits and potential risks will need to be considered and appropriately addressed as Welsh Government develops detailed proposals. We stand ready to work with Welsh Government should it decide to take this forward and would expect to be consulted before any regulations are made.

Qualification for membership of a local authority

We note that the Bill amends the eligibility criteria for candidates at local government elections to allow a citizen of any country to stand for election, subject to other existing criteria, such as age and residence. We welcome the proposed provision in the Bill that provides that council officers and employees, other than those holding politically restricted posts, will be entitled to stand for election to their own council. This reflects the approach that we recommended in our 2015 report “ Standing for Election ”, that the law in England, Wales and Northern Ireland be changed to make a clear distinction between offices or employment which would prevent someone from standing for election, and those which would prevent someone from holding office if elected. It is important that potential candidates wanting to stand for election can find out easily if they might be disqualified. We continue to recommend that all legislation should be clear at least six months before it is required to be implemented or complied with by campaigners, ROs and EROs. We will amend our guidance for candidates and agents (and the equivalent guidance for EROs and ROs), and make available the nomination forms which are prescribed in legislation, including the consent to nomination declaration.

Election pilot schemes

Welsh Ministers’ discretion to introduce election pilot scheme

We welcome the initiative being taken by the Welsh Government to provide for election pilot schemes that would test options for changing local government electoral processes in Wales. The Bill should include a duty for the Electoral Commission to evaluate any pilot scheme run at a local government election in Wales, in line with the equivalent duty for pilot schemes at local elections in England or Scotland. This will enable an independent and evidence based assessment of the success or otherwise of the scheme in facilitating and encouraging voting. The Welsh Government should ensure that any pilot schemes are rigorously designed to ensure they are capable of providing robust evidence to support any future changes to the current electoral system in Wales. Welsh Ministers should be required to consult the Commission about the design of any pilot scheme and the framework for evaluation. Guidance about election pilot schemes

Section 27 of the Bill would give Welsh Ministers powers to issue guidance to local authorities or EROs in relation to pilot schemes. It is not clear what kind of guidance Ministers might consider issuing, and how it would relate to the Commission’s existing statutory role to provide guidance to EROs and ROs. There are no equivalent powers for UK Government Ministers in relation to pilot schemes at local government elections in England. We would like to discuss this further with Welsh Government to ensure that this proposed government guidance provision would meet a need that it is appropriate for government to lead on. As

matters stand, we have substantive concern if guidance on the running of a poll were to be issued to EROs or ROs by Ministers, rather than by an independent body such as the Commission. Expenditure of Returning Officers Meeting expenditure of Returning Officers (Section 28) Section 28 of the Bill seeks to clarify that ROs cannot claim personal fees in respect of their services during the conduct of a local government elections. We recognise the central role that ROs play in the democratic process. They are critical to delivering well-run elections and referendums which produce results in which voters and campaigners can have confidence. We continue to support the important principle that ROs should be independent from both local and national governments when delivering their statutory electoral administration duties. This is necessary to avoid any perception of bias and to promote public confidence and trust in the process. A payment to ROs of some description denotes the different role. It is therefore important to be clear that ROs are not employed by councils when they deliver official election or referendum duties. They are independent statutory officeholders and they are accountable to the courts for the delivery of their official duties. Any changes to the current management framework for the delivery of local government elections in Wales, including to the current arrangements for funding elections and payments to ROs for their services, must not weaken the independence and accountability of those responsible for delivering polls. Removing personal fees for ROs may in practice risk reducing their independence, and there is also potential for impartiality to be damaged if their only payment for carrying out election duties is through their contract of employment by the local authority which appointed them to their substantive role. It is also important that an appropriate person with the right skill set should carry out the role of Returning Officer and should be remunerated accordingly. Removing any personal fee may discourage experienced and capable senior officers from agreeing to undertake this important but sensitive role. The Explanatory Notes to the Bill indicate that the personal fee is also proposed to be removed for National Assembly for Wales elections when a Returning Officers' Charges Order is next made. We will ask the Assembly Commission to take into consideration our view set out above. Additional considerations There are aspects of electoral law reform that we have previously recommended which do not appear in the Bill. We believe that the Bill should be amended to incorporate the changes, or that they should be addressed in subsequent secondary legislation. We outline these recommendations below. Digital imprints Online campaign material produced by candidates, political parties and non-party campaigners should – like its printed equivalent – be required to include an imprint stating who has published it. This would enable voters to identify who is spending money on trying to influence them at elections. It would also assist the police and prosecutors to more effectively ensure compliance with the spending rules by identifying the source of campaign material. We encourage Welsh Government to amend this Bill to make it a legal requirement for candidates and campaigners at local elections to put imprints on their online campaign material to ensure this gap in transparency is closed. This would also be consistent with emerging new electoral legislation in another part of the UK i.e. Scotland. Exemption for disability expenses Disabled candidates standing in local elections in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland benefit from an exemption which means that expenses relating to their disability do not count towards their spending limits for those elections. Wales is now the only part of the UK where disabled candidates do not benefit from a disability related exemption. Creating an exclusion for expenses related to the needs of disabled candidates will create a more level playing field between candidates, and will make standing for election more

accessible for disabled candidates. We therefore recommend that the Bill be amended to create such an exemption for local elections (and we believe this should also be the case for National Assembly for Wales elections), and would welcome the opportunity to work with Welsh Government on this. Exemption for translation costs We support the view that the costs of translating campaign material between Welsh and English should be exempt from the spending limits for candidates at local government elections (and National Assembly for Wales elections). This exemption would ensure that campaigning at local elections is inclusive of all official languages of Wales. We therefore recommend that the Bill be amended to include a translation exemption. Publication of candidate spending returns online The public can view copies of candidate spending returns by visiting the office of the Returning Officer. There would be greater transparency of election spending if candidate spending returns were published online. The UK's Law Commissions have previously recommended that secondary legislation should prescribe in detail the process for Returning Officers to publicise and make available for inspection of spending returns (including non-receipt of a return), paving the way for publication online. We agree with this recommendation and believe it should be taken forward for Welsh local government elections (and indeed for National Assembly for Wales elections). We encourage the Welsh Government to amend the Bill to make publication online a legal requirement. Prisoner voting We understand that Welsh Government is considering introducing an amendment at Stage 2 in relation to prisoner voting. In January 2019 we provided a response to an inquiry by the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee into voting rights for prisoners. We take no view on whether prisoners should be entitled to vote or not, but have addressed the practical implications should prisoners in Wales be given the right to vote. Related content Register to vote All you need to register to vote is 5 minutes and your National Insurance number. Our Commissioners Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Our Executive Team Meet our Executive Team, and find out more about them

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Last updated: 14 October 2021 Meeting summary Date: Wednesday 22 July 2020 Time:

9:30am to 12:40pm Location: By video conference Date of next scheduled meeting:

Wednesday 23 September 2020 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Holmes, Chair Alasdair Morgan Anna Carragher Elan Closs Stephens Joan Walley Sarah Chambers Stephen Gilbert Sue Bruce Rob Vincent In attendance: Bob Posner, Chief Executive Craig Westwood, Director, Communications, Policy and Research Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services Amanda Kelly, General Counsel David Bailey, Head of Strategic Planning and Performance Niki Nixon, Head of External Communications Phil Thompson, Head of Research Tom Hawthorn, Head of Policy Madeleine Spink, Senior Advisor, Governance Susan Crown, Head of Campaigns and Corporate Identity (for item 5) Ben Hancock, Campaigns and Corporate Communications Manager (for item 5) Jessica Cook, Senior Campaigns Officer, Campaigns and Corporate Communications (for item 5) Peter Wolf, International IDEA (for item 4) Apologies

There were no apologies. Declarations of interest There were no new declarations of interest. Minutes of items of electronic business (EC 64/20) Resolved: That the Commission Board minutes of items of electronic business from 15 June 2020 be approved. Modernising voting (EC 65/20) Peter Wolf from International IDEA introduced a discussion about how the coronavirus pandemic had influenced electoral processes across the world, giving examples of where elections had been held and in some cases postponed, and different methods used to mitigate the consequences of the pandemic.

The Board discussed how public debate on online voting might be affected by the coronavirus situation. Internationally, support for increased use of existing channels including early voting, postal or proxy voting had gained more traction than demand for online voting. Trust in new voting mechanisms was often related to the existing levels of trust in the electoral process. There was international experience of different methods for voting being used for different sections of the population, for example for overseas voters. Commissioners asked how campaigning had changed in elections held elsewhere in the pandemic. The answer appeared to be that online campaigning had increased. The Board discussed how counts had been undertaken in other countries and the relative prevalence of electronic and manual methods. The Board discussed the current context of the coronavirus pandemic in the UK. It was unlikely that large scale changes to electoral processes would be made for the May 2021 elections, given the capacity of local authorities and governments' appetite for new legislation. Nevertheless elections needed to be conducted safely, and to be seen as such. A lot of work was needed on the problems which might arise. The First Minister of Wales had convened an Elections Planning Group with a view to securing the smooth running of the Senedd 2021 election in national or local lockdowns. Any legislation would need to be brought before the Senedd in late September or early October. Commissioners noted for example that difficult issues might arise in ensuring that people quarantined and in local lockdowns were able to vote. Postal voting was likely to have a key role and risks would need to be managed around the anticipated greater volume of postal voters. If there were to be an increase in

postal voting this would also mean that campaigning would be continuing after some people had already voted, to a greater degree than usual. The Board discussed whether postal voting should be encouraged at an early point, and also whether proxy voting could be publicised further. Postal voting was recognised as a delicate political issue. There might be a risk of perception of greater degrees of fraud with postal voting, which would need to be managed. The Board discussed the proposed modernising voting research project. This project would involve gathering qualitative data about opinions on modernising the voting process. It would be an opportunity to develop the Commission's base of knowledge and understanding. The Board discussed the role of new technology. The Commission should be at the forefront of thinking around modernisation. Younger generations needed to believe the electoral process was relevant and credible. At the same time, we needed to be clear about what problem the introduction of new technology was designed to solve. The research should help to identify specific issues or concerns particular groups might have and to update the current evidence base. Commissioners discussed the importance of good qualitative research, bringing in the views of voters and not just experts. The specific approach would be shaped with the research agency chosen, through and following the tender process. Resolved: That the proposed approach to, and outline scope of, a project to explore options for modernising voting be agreed. Public awareness plans for elections in May 2021 (EC 66/20) The Board considered the plan and budget for voter registration campaigns in May 2021. The Director of Communications, Policy and Research introduced the item. May 2021 elections would be a complex set of polls and include newly enfranchised groups in Scotland and Wales. The steer from Commissioners in a previous discussion had been to focus more than in the past on registering known under-registered groups. This strategy set the framework for the project. It was important for the Commission to be driven by evidence of under-registration, and to avoid any risk of being perceived to focus on groups who might be thought to have particular voting preferences. There would need to be clear evidence that an impact had been made and specified ways of measuring success and value for money. The aim was to make progress towards levelling up registration across demographic groups, focussing on the known under registered, but also to drive the maximum number of new registrations. This twin strategy had been signed off by the Speaker's Committee through the corporate plan approval process. However there was room for greater clarity about the respective importance of these objectives and the degree to which they could be addressed simultaneously. Commissioners discussed increasing public information activity owing to the expected high percentage of postal voting. A key aspect of this work would be through local authority partnerships. Commissioners discussed whether partners could in some cases be supported with funding, which was currently not in the plans though within the Commission's statutory powers. The Commission had stepped back from a past practice of funding partnerships. and instead provided communication resources openly for use by any organisation that wanted to encourage people to register to vote. The outcome of further discussions would inform the strategy. Action: The Director of Communications, Policy and Research to provide the Board with a further paper on the policy strategy for voter registration campaigns. Resolved: That the plan and budget for voter registration campaigns in May 2021 be otherwise approved. Chief Executive's update (EC 67/20) The Board noted the update on operations and matters arising. Commissioners discussed the Intelligence and Security Committee's report into Russian activity in the UK. They noted the broad recommendation that the Commission should have more powers to deal with foreign money. The report highlighted a gap in whose role it was to ensure security of

elections, and freedom from foreign interference. One obvious answer was increased cooperation between the various bodies with responsibilities in this area. Some of the report's comments on the role of the Commission were inaccurate. This would be brought up with the Chair of the Committee. Meanwhile there was more work to be done in raising the Commission's profile and being clear about our role. The Chief Executive noted recent meetings with the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee and Chloe Smith MP, Minister for Constitutional Affairs. An electoral integrity bill was expected to be brought forward by the UK Government in 2021. This would be discussed further with the Board as information became available. There should be time and opportunity to influence the Bill's development. Other issues raised included: devolved accountability budget submissions; the complaint to the Welsh Language Commission; and the Section 10 request from the Scottish Government for advice and assistance relating to public opinion research on voters' attitudes to voting channels for the May 2021 elections as a result of coronavirus. The Chief Executive also introduced the risk matrix. Resolved: That the update on operations and matters arising, including the update on devolved accountability, be noted. Business items taken via electronic means since the previous Board meeting The Board discussed the timelines of electronic business items, and which matters should be addressed in this way.

scope and approach Using public data sources to improve electoral registration in the

UK Integrating electoral registration into public service transactions Better

detection and management of duplicate registration applications Electoral

registration reform and degrees of centralisation Appendix tables Modernising

electoral registration The UK's electoral registers are the basis on which people may

vote in elections and referendums – they are the practical expression of the

franchise and therefore fundamental to democratic participation. Their accuracy and

completeness are central to the health of our electoral system as a whole. The use of

data is already beginning to revolutionise the provision of services across the

public and private sectors, to the benefit of citizens and the delivery of

efficiencies. There is great potential to explore how existing public data could be

used to further improve our electoral registration system, and the benefits this

could provide for voters. Plans to reform the annual canvass are a step in the right

direction, but there is more that should be done to ensure we have a joined-up and

year-round registration process, making it easier for people to register to vote and

for Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) to maintain accurate and complete

electoral registers. We want the UK's governments to explore more fundamental changes

to the UK's electoral registration framework, including making it more joined up with

other public services. That means exploring: the potential for giving EROs access to

data from other public service providers; automatic or more automated forms of

registration; and integration of electoral registration into other public service

transactions. Feasibility studies To help inform the debate about registration

reform, we have carried out studies to explore how electoral registration can be

modernised in practice. The feasibility studies covered four key areas of reform:

Feasibility studies Better use of public data EROs can currently access data held

locally by local authorities and other local sources to help identify potential

electors and manage their electoral registers. We wanted to explore the potential

benefits of enabling access to national-level public data, to identify people who

have changed address and updated their details with other public services, for

example when they have applied for a driving licence or passport. Direct or automatic

enrolment processes We examined options for increasing the level of automation within

the electoral registration system: automated registration, where reliable data would

serve as the basis of an individual's electoral registration application, but

citizens would still be required to take some steps to complete the process; and

automatic registration, where citizens would be added to the electoral register, or

their address updated, without them being required to take any active steps.

Integrating electoral registration into other public service transactions We examined

the extent to which electoral registration applications could be made simultaneously

as part of or alongside accessing other public services. This would increase the

number of channels available to citizens and improve the accessibility of the

process. Better identification and management of duplicate registration applications

We also considered a number of ways in which duplicate registration applications

might be better identified and managed within the system. We wanted to understand the

extent to which reforms could reduce the administrative impact of processing

duplicate applications and help voters check whether they were already registered to

vote. Key findings Importantly, we found that all the reforms were feasible from a

technical and operational perspective and could be implemented without radically altering the structure of the electoral registration system in the UK. In particular, technology already employed by the UK Government's Individual Electoral Registration (IER) Digital Service could form the building blocks for the majority of the reforms. This system already links all local authorities with a central service capable of verifying people against the Department for Work and Pensions' customer information system (DWP CIS) as part of the registration application process. The IER digital service also links and coordinates sharing data between the register to vote website (allowing people to apply online), DWP CIS (facilitating verification of applications) and the systems which are used locally to manage the 372 separate electoral registers in the UK. We found that this could be further developed to act as a conduit, receiving recent transactional data from new and reliable data sources. This data would then be passed on to the relevant EROs, who could then use it to target potential electors. The further development of the IER digital service could pave the way for systems of automated or automatic registration to be implemented, or for a more integrated electoral registration process, whereby the citizen would be given the option of registering to vote at the end of another online transaction, e.g. when applying for a passport or driving licence. To improve the identification and management of duplicate registration applications, we have concluded that all solutions would involve the creation of a unique identifier for each elector. This would enable the identification of duplicates either within local registers, or across registers, depending on the particular solution implemented. The feasibility studies also highlighted a number of challenges that would need to be addressed before steps were taken to implement any of the reforms. These include the importance of undertaking detailed testing of potential new data sources (which would require a legal gateway) in order to determine whether the options would deliver beneficial and cost-effective results. The reforms also raise broader public policy questions about data sharing, data protection and the limits of state intervention (particularly in relation to automatic registration) that require wider debate.

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area evaluations You are in the May 2018 voter identification pilot schemes section Home Our research Voter identification pilots May 2018 voter identification pilot schemes First published: 25 July 2019 Last updated: 29 July 2019 Intro This page contains evaluations of the individual schemes in each local authority holding a pilot. Local authorities holding pilot schemes Bromley In the Bromley voter identification pilot, voters were required to show one form of photographic identification or two forms of non-photographic identification (one of which needed to include the full registered address of the elector) in order to be given a ballot paper. We found that: The majority of voters were able to meet the identification requirements upon arriving at the polling station. However, some electors did not have the required ID available when they came to vote on 3 May. The majority later returned and were able to cast a vote. There is no evidence that the ID requirement significantly deterred electors from voting. In our public opinion survey only one respondent told us that they had not voted as a result of the ID requirement. Also, turnout at the 2018 polls was similar to the comparable elections in 2014. We cannot draw firm conclusions about whether the ID requirement had a disproportionate impact on particular groups of people, for example those with a learning or physical disability. While we have seen no evidence that specific groups struggled with the ID requirement it is challenging to gather evidence in this area as relatively small groups of people could have been affected in different ways.. The delivery of this pilot was manageable for the Returning Officer and their staff and there is nothing in their experience of the pilot to suggest that Bromley would face significant issues with the administration of a similar ID requirement in the future. Additional staffing and training were in place for the pilot. However the Returning Officer has indicated that the extra staff would not necessarily be required to deliver this type of ID requirement at future local elections. Public attitudes to electoral fraud improved from before to after the pilot. More people said that electoral fraud is not a problem in Bromley in May 2018 than did so in January 2018. However, we cannot definitively link this change to the pilot. Our findings suggest that the 2018 local elections in Bromley were not significantly affected by the voter ID pilot in either its impact on voters or on the administration of the poll. However, it is important to be cautious when drawing conclusions from this pilot about the impact of any wider application of voter ID. Gosport The voter identification pilot scheme in Gosport required voters to produce one form of photographic identification or two forms of non-photographic identification (one of which must have shown the full registered address of the elector) or an electoral identity letter in order to meet the requirements to vote. Our evaluation of the scheme found that: The majority of voters were able to meet the identification requirements upon arriving at the polling station. However, some electors did not have the required ID available when they came to vote on 3 May. The majority later returned and were able to cast a vote. There is no evidence that the ID requirement significantly deterred electors from voting. In our public opinion surveys two non-voters told us that ID was the reason they had not voted. Also, turnout at the 2018 polls was similar to the comparable elections in 2016. It is possible that some electors were deterred from voting, believing correctly or incorrectly that they did not have ID, but this seems unlikely to apply to significant numbers. We cannot draw firm conclusions about whether the ID requirement had a disproportionate impact on particular groups of people, for example those with a learning or physical disability. While we have seen no evidence that specific groups struggled with the ID requirement, it is challenging to gather

evidence in this area as relatively small groups of people could have been affected in different ways. The delivery of this pilot was manageable for the Returning Officer and their staff and there is nothing in their experience of the pilot to suggest that Gosport would face significant issues with the administration of a similar ID requirement in the future. Additional staffing and training were in place for the pilot. However, the Returning Officer has indicated that the extra staff would not be required to deliver this type of ID requirement at future local elections or those polls with higher turnout. Public attitudes to electoral fraud did not significantly change from before to after the pilot. Slightly more people said they think electoral fraud is a problem in Gosport in May 2018 than did so in January 2018. Our findings suggest that the 2018 local elections in Gosport were not significantly affected by the voter ID pilot in either its impact on voters or on the administration of the poll. However, it is important to be cautious when drawing conclusions from this pilot about the impact of any wider application of voter ID.

Swindon The voter identification pilot scheme in Swindon required voters to produce their poll card in order to meet the requirement to vote. The poll card contained a QR code which was scanned in the polling station. If a voter did not bring their poll card they could show photo ID (from a specified list) or have their identity ‘attested’ by another elector (with ID) registered at the same polling station. Our evaluation of the scheme found that: The majority of voters were able to meet the identification requirements upon arriving at the polling station. However, some electors did not have the required ID available when they came to vote on 3 May. The majority later returned and were able to cast a vote. There is no evidence that the ID requirement deterred electors from voting. In our public opinion surveys no non-voter told us that ID was the reason they had not voted. Also, turnout at the 2018 polls was higher than the comparable elections in 2016. It is possible that some electors were deterred from voting, believing correctly or incorrectly that they did not have ID, but this seems unlikely to apply to significant numbers. We cannot draw firm conclusions about whether the ID requirement had a disproportionate impact on particular groups of people, for example those with a learning or physical disability. While we have seen no evidence that specific groups struggled with the ID requirement it is challenging to gather evidence in this area as relatively small groups of people could have been affected in different ways. The delivery of this pilot was manageable for the Returning Officer and their staff and, aside from the IT element, there is nothing in their experience of the pilot to suggest that Swindon would face significant issues with the administration of a similar ID requirement in the future. While the IT worked well on 3 May the development and set up was a significant demand on time and resource. Public attitudes to electoral fraud did not significantly change from before to after the pilot. The same proportion of people said they think electoral fraud is a problem in Swindon in May 2018 as did so in January 2018. Our findings suggest that the 2018 local elections in Swindon were not significantly affected by the voter ID pilot in either its impact on voters or on the administration of the poll. However, it is important to be cautious when drawing conclusions from this pilot about the impact of any wider application of voter ID.

Watford The voter identification pilot scheme in Watford required voters to produce their poll card in order to meet the requirement to vote. The poll card contained a QR code which was scanned in the polling station. If a voter did not bring their poll card they could show photo ID (from a specified list) or a valid debit/credit card. Our evaluation of the scheme found that: The majority of voters were able to meet the identification requirements upon arriving at the polling station. However, some

electors did not have the required ID available when they came to vote on 3 May. The majority later returned and were able to cast a vote. There is no evidence that the ID requirement deterred electors from voting. In our public opinion survey no non-voter in Watford told us that ID was the reason they had not voted. 2018 turnout was higher than the comparable elections in 2016. It is possible that some electors were deterred from voting, believing correctly or incorrectly that they did not have ID, but this seems unlikely to apply to significant numbers. We cannot draw firm conclusions about whether the ID requirement had a disproportionate impact on particular groups of people, for example those with a learning or physical disability. While we have seen no evidence that specific groups struggled with the ID requirement it is challenging to gather evidence in this area as relatively small groups of people could have been affected in different ways. A disproportionate number of those unable to show ID on 3 May were from electoral wards with higher proportions of people with an Asian background. However, this does not mean that electors from the Asian community were more likely to be affected by the ID requirement. The delivery of this pilot was manageable for the Returning Officer and their staff and, aside from the IT element, there is nothing in their experience of the pilot to suggest that Watford would face significant issues with the administration of a similar ID requirement in the future. While the IT worked well on 3 May the development and set up was a significant demand on time and resource. Some public attitudes to electoral fraud improved from before to after the pilot. Fewer people said they thought electoral fraud was a problem in May 2018 than in January 2018. However, we cannot definitively link this change to the pilot. Our findings suggest that the 2018 local elections in Watford were not significantly affected by the voter ID pilot in either its impact on voters or on the administration of the poll. However, it is important to be cautious when drawing conclusions from this pilot about the impact of any wider application of voter ID.

The voter identification pilot scheme in Woking required voters to produce one form of photographic identification or a Local Elector Card in order to meet the requirements to vote. Our evaluation of the scheme found that: The majority of voters were able to meet the identification requirements upon arriving at the polling station. However, some electors did not have the required ID available when they came to vote on 3 May. The majority later returned and were able to cast a vote. There is no evidence that the ID requirement significantly deterred electors from voting. In our public opinion surveys one non-voter told us that ID was the reason they had not voted. Also, turnout at the 2018 polls was similar to the comparable elections in 2014. It is possible that some electors were deterred from voting, believing correctly or incorrectly that they did not have ID, but this seems unlikely to apply to significant numbers. We cannot draw firm conclusions about whether the ID requirement had a disproportionate impact on particular groups of people, for example those with a learning or physical disability. While we have seen no evidence that specific groups struggled with the ID requirement it is challenging to gather evidence in this area as relatively small groups of people could have been affected in different ways.

The delivery of this pilot was manageable for the Returning Officer and their staff and there is nothing in their experience of the pilot to suggest that Woking would face significant issues with the administration of a similar ID requirement in the future. Some additional staffing and training were in place for the pilot. However the Returning Officer has indicated that the extra staff would not necessarily be required to deliver this type of ID requirement at future local elections. Some public attitudes to electoral fraud improved from before to after the pilot . Fewer

people said they felt electoral fraud is a problem in Woking in May 2018 than did so in January 2018. However, we cannot definitively link this change to the pilot. Our findings suggest that the 2018 local elections in Watford were not significantly affected by the voter ID pilot in either its impact on voters or on the administration of the poll. However, it is important to be cautious when drawing conclusions from this pilot about the impact of any wider application of voter ID.

Postal and proxy voting pilot schemes At the May 2018 elections the Returning Officers (ROs) for Peterborough, Slough and Tower Hamlets ran pilot schemes focused on postal voting. The ROs sent information to postal voters about how to protect their vote. They then contacted a sample of postal voters, who had been sent postal voting packs, to check that they had applied for them. In Peterborough and Tower Hamlets, they also contacted a sample of postal voters, whose postal ballot had been returned, to check that they had completed and returned their own vote. Peterborough also ran a pilot scheme to require proxy voters at polling stations to show identification before issuing them with a ballot paper.

Postal and proxy voting pilot schemes Impact of the pilot schemes The pilots were well delivered by the three ROs but we have not been able to draw firm conclusions on the impact of these pilot schemes. This was partly because in some cases there was no relevant data from before the pilots to compare against, and also because we were not able to tell what would have happened this year without the pilot schemes.

Impact of the leaflet for postal voters There is no clear evidence about the impact of the leaflet for postal voters, although it is reasonable to conclude that well-designed and carefully worded information is likely to help encourage people to report evidence about electoral fraud.

Impact of the follow-up contact with postal voters Postal voters welcomed the follow-up contact from the RO and the telephone activity was largely manageable with some additional staff. However, the household visit approach, as used in Peterborough, required more resources than the RO would normally be able to commit around a poll. There is no clear evidence about the impact on allegations of fraud and public confidence, although it may have provided reassurance to some voters. The follow-up contact provided the ROs with additional information about potential cases of electoral fraud. While they could use this information to raise specific concerns with the police, the activity did not directly lead to any allegations being referred to the police at these elections. Finally, the pilot allowed for the cancellation of postal votes where the elector said they did not want a postal vote or claimed that they had not completed a returned postal vote. The ROs did not need to make significant use of this power (one postal vote was cancelled for this reason in Peterborough) but it is logical that they should have this option available to them as part of any follow up activity with postal voters.

Impact of the identification requirement for proxy voters The identification requirement for proxy voters was administratively manageable, and there is limited evidence of a negative impact on voters. Peterborough believe there may have been some effect in deterring fraudulent proxy activity as the number of proxies was notably lower than in recent polls. However, it is not possible to draw a clear conclusion from the information available.

Impact on allegations of fraud We have looked at data from police forces about allegations of electoral fraud in these three areas. They received a very small number of allegations about postal voting at the May 2018 elections. We cannot draw any firm conclusions from this limited data, particularly because we cannot know what would have happened in these areas without the pilot scheme procedures.

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3. Impact on voters: confidence | Electoral Commission Search

3. Impact on voters: confidence You are in the May 2019 voter identification pilot schemes section Home Our research Voter identification pilots May 2019 voter identification pilot schemes First published: 12 July 2019 Last updated: 12 July 2019 Contents Overview Our findings Impact on voters: experience Impact on voters: confidence Impact on security Impact of administration of the polls Background to our evaluation Key findings Evidence from the pilot scheme indicates that there was a headline increase in voter confidence and in perceptions of the safety of voting in the pilots. We do not see the same change in non-pilot areas with May elections. However, we should be cautious in drawing clear conclusions about what the impact on confidence of a Great Britain-wide scheme (based on any of these models) would be. This is partly because the ten pilots are not representative of Great Britain as a whole and partly because the changes in attitude are not consistent within each pilot model. People who voted in polling stations in the pilot scheme, and therefore experienced the process of showing identification, were more confident in the security of the voting system than non-voters in those areas. Overall perceptions of electoral fraud People in the pilot scheme were significantly less likely to say that fraud took place at the elections than those in other areas with elections in England in May 2019. How much electoral fraud or abuse, if any, do you think took place at the 2 May elections? Perceptions of electoral fraud at 2 May elections. Figures may not equal 100% due to rounding. However, this is only a snapshot of opinion and we have also considered how opinions may have changed before and after 2 May in both pilots and those areas with elections but no pilots. We asked respondents to say how much of a problem they think electoral fraud is on a scale of 1-5 (with 1 being not a problem and 5 being a serious problem). In the pilot scheme there was a notable increase in the proportion of respondents saying that electoral fraud is not a problem between January and May 2019 (30% compared with 39%). This change was not seen in non-pilot areas, where the number of people who thought that electoral fraud is not a problem remained relatively stable at 27% pre-poll and 26% post-poll. The clearest increase was in the photo only pilot model (moving from 13% to 32% saying it was not a problem) and in the mixed model (13% to 27%), while in the poll card model the change was more polarised with increases in both those saying it is not a problem and those saying it is a serious problem. However, we should be cautious in drawing clear conclusions about how the experience of a specific pilot model may have affected levels of confidence. Although this data appears to present a clear pattern, the changes between before and after polling day are not always consistent across the individual pilots. This is particularly the case for the mixed model. For example: In the photo model, in both Pendle and Woking there were increases in the proportion of people after polling day saying fraud is not a problem, and a decrease in those saying that it is. The change was significantly more pronounced in Woking. In the mixed model, we only have data for four of the five pilots (because Craven joined the pilot scheme too late to be included in the January public opinion fieldwork). In two pilots (Braintree and North Kesteven) there was an increase after polling day in the proportion saying 'not a problem' and a decrease in 'a problem'. However, in the other two pilots (Broxtowe and Derby) the results were closer to the poll card pilot (a polarisation to each end of the scale). In the poll card model, one pilot (Mid Sussex) showed no change in attitudes at all after polling day. Data for the two other pilots showed, to varying levels, a polarisation of attitudes towards either end of the 1-5 scale. The data does not help us to explain why we see these variations across pilots. We cannot know if we have seen genuine effects from the

pilot models, or if the shifts are due to particular issues or concerns in each individual pilot. Voting in a polling station We asked respondents how safe from fraud and abuse they thought it was to vote at a polling station. Overall, in the pilot scheme, the proportion of people saying it is safe did not change significantly between January and May 2019. However, the strength of confidence increased slightly between January and May; the proportion of people saying it was very safe increased from 48% to 55%. This change varied in scale across the individual pilots but was seen to some extent in all but two (Derby and Mid Sussex). Respondents living in non-pilot areas were less likely to say that voting in a polling station was very safe (39%). Our research also found that people who voted in the pilots, and therefore experienced showing their identification, were more likely to say voting in a polling station was very safe from fraud and abuse than those who didn't vote (61% compared with 50%). Confidence in the voting system We asked respondents if the requirement to show identification at the polling station made them more or less confident in the security of the voting system. Across all pilot models the majority of respondents said it would make them more confident or make no difference, although the balance between the two varied by model. In the poll card model, a majority (57%) said that an identification requirement would make them more confident in the security of the voting system, in the mixed model, results were evenly split (46% each) and in the photo only model the majority said it would make no difference (51%). However, in each case a substantial proportion felt it would improve their confidence in the security of the system. Did the requirement for voters to show identification at the polling station make you more or less confident in the security of the voting system, or did it make no difference? Levels of confidence in the security of the voting system as a result of the ID requirement. Report navigation links Previous Next 2. Impact on voters: experience 4. Impact on security Related content Register to vote All you need to register to vote is 5 minutes and your National Insurance number. Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Party registration decisions View our decisions on political party names, descriptions and emblems Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run

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2018-19 Action-tracker Chair's and Chief Executive's meetings, and meetings in
devolved legislatures Commissioner wash-up (Commissioners only) First published: 23
July 2019 Last updated: 23 July 2019 Overview Date: 23 May 2018 Time: 9:30am to
12:30pm Location: Boothroyd Room, 3 Bunhill Row, London Date of next scheduled
meeting: Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Sir John Holmes (JEH), Chair
Sue Bruce (SB) Anna Carragher (AC) Elan Closs Stephens (ECS) John Horam (JRH) David
Howarth (DH) Alasdair Morgan (AM) Bridget Prentice (BP) Rob Vincent (RV) Claire
Bassett (CB) Kieran Rix (KR) Ailsa Irvine (AI) Robert Posner (RP) Emma Hartley (EH)
on behalf of Craig Westwood Sarah Chambers (SC) – attending as an observer Nancy
Bruseker (NB) Polly Wicks (PW) Phil Thompson (PT) Tom Hawthorn (TH) Apologies Craig
Westwood (CW) Declaration of Interests All the nominated Commissioners had stood for
election, and been nominated as Commissioners by political parties that had contested
recent elections and also registered as campaigners in the EU Referendum. AC is a
member of the Board of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland (which received money
from the EU Peace 3 Programme, and the Corners programme for individual artists). A
Trustee of the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, a recipient of EU funding, she had now
returned to that role at the conclusion of the Referendum. AC declared her sister is
Head of BBC News in Northern Ireland. DH in 2008 drafted and put forward in
parliament an amendment to the then European Union (Amendment) Bill, proposing an EU
referendum in the terms 'Should the United Kingdom remain in the European Union?' DH
stood for election on a manifesto supporting an in-out referendum on the European
Union. DH is a council member of Justice, an organisation which had in the past
received EU funding. DH reported that the European Parliament subsidised a regular
annual visit by his Public Policy students to Brussels. DH declared that he had been
awarded a research grant of over €40,000 from the European Parliament. DH declared
that he had been at university with Jon Lansman, but had no current contact with him.
JRH is a member of the pro-Europe Conservative Europe Group, the parliamentary group
Conservative European Mainstream, and of the all-party parliamentary group on Reform,
Decentralisation and Devolution Group, chaired by Lord Foulkes. JEH reported that he
is Chair of the Advisory Board, Cargo Logic Air (British Air Cargo Company
established in 2015 by the Russian owner of the Volga Dnepr Group) (remunerated). SB
is Chair of the Expert Panel on Environmental Charges and Other Measures for
Scotland. ECS is Chair of the Public Leaders Forum of Chairs and CEOs of Arm's Length
Bodies in Wales. Minutes of 21 March 2018 Approved. Notes of 18 April 2018 Subject to
correction of a typographical error in section 2, these notes were Approved. Post
elections – Key messages for post-poll report(s) and potential policy implications AI
gave a presentation on post-poll reports and potential policy implications. There
were scheduled local government elections in England only. These encompassed 150
local authorities and 5 local directly-elected mayors. There was an election for a
Combined Authority Mayor in Sheffield and Voter Identification pilot schemes took
place in 5 authorities. There were only a small number of performance issues

identified and polls were well-run in both Plymouth and Newcastle-under-Lyme, further to issues at the June 2017 UKPGE. There was a steady level of electoral administration queries throughout the election period. Key messages from the May 2018 polls were: Overall the elections were well-run, with no significant problems which affected voters or campaigners While ROs and administrators had delivered well-run polls this time, this did not mean that the pressures on the electoral system we had identified previously had gone away. AI reminded the Board that there was no statutory duty to publish a report on local government elections, and invited them to consider how we should respond. EH presented an overview of campaign activity in the run-up to the poll. This had been the first use of our “Got 5?” registration campaign and we had exceeded our ambitious target for applications to register. We had also set high targets for the numbers of additions to the register, and would be able to report more fully on these once we had gathered more data by the summer. For the first time we ran a brand uplift study with Facebook. We saw an 11 percentage point difference in ad recall between the test and control groups. As this was the first time we had run a study like this we didn't know what a good result was, however Facebook have told us this is really good and we exceeded the benchmark for government campaigns. We had had a relatively low level of public enquiries in the six weeks leading up to the poll, with only a smaller number of enquiries (18 in total) about the voter ID pilots. TH and PT gave some initial perspectives on the pilots. We had deployed over 20 EC representatives as observers across the 5 pilot areas on polling day. They had observed processes operating reasonably smoothly, including where new technology had been used. Feedback suggested that the majority of voters had appeared to be aware of the need to bring ID, although EC representatives did observe some voters being turned away. It was noted that these observations ran counter to some of the negative media coverage both before and after polling day. JEH noted that a report from Democracy Volunteers on the local election and Pilots had been issued. AI acknowledged that this had been an interesting report that would be considered in future evaluation, but noted that the methodology they used was not known, which raised risks that their findings were overstated. JH asked for an update on issues raised about the poll at London Borough of Tower Hamlets by Peter Golds, Leader of the Conservative Group. AI noted that the Chief Executive and RO for Tower Hamlets, Will Tuckley, had responded in a detailed letter that overall the administration of the polls and count had gone well and had been much improved from the position in 2014, at the last local elections. This corresponded with our observers' experiences. However there had been one or two unfortunate mistakes, including around Councillor Golds' own result. Next steps on the ID pilots would be to analyse detailed data, in order to fulfil our statutory responsibility to evaluate and report back on them. We aimed to compile a high-level report containing conclusions about what needed to happen next and a statutory assessment of schemes and data and publish this before the summer parliamentary recess. It was noted that there would be a debate in Parliament on 6 June 2018, called by Ellie Reeves MP, whose constituency was in one of the Pilot areas, before the report was ready.

Agreed: That: There would be no separate report on the local elections overall. A more detailed report on the ID pilots would be prepared for the June Board. A high-level report containing conclusions about what needed to happen next and a statutory assessment of schemes and data would be published before the summer parliamentary recess. Corporate Governance Update Each annex of the proposals before the Board was discussed separately. The change to the quoracy of board as proposed in Annex A was AGREED. This will be incorporated into Standing Orders in the Corporate Governance

Framework. Changes proposed to the Complaints procedure as shown in Annexes B and C were introduced in the context of the recent complaints being investigated by Liz Butler, appointed as an independent investigator. CB would share the report with the Board when it had been finalised. JEH asked for clarification on the process following the delivery of future reports to the responsible person. KR indicated that given the variability of the complaints possible, the guidance had been deliberately left open. CB reminded the board that the Speaker's Committee of the House of Commons remained the ultimate authority. AC discussed an issue she had faced in a different board, suggesting that it was important that the procedures were as clear as possible, including for any circumstance where there could be a dispute between Chair and Chief Executive. CB clarified that internal complaints would be treated as grievances, whereas external complaints would follow the complaints procedure. JH questioned whether the use of the chair of the Audit committee would be considered to be sufficiently independent; CB noted that it was good practice to attempt to internally resolve issues, and that if no internal resolution could be found, one next step would be to raise it with the Ombudsman. SC noted that the paper as drafted did not detail the duties of the EC to the complainant re response times. SB noted the need to demonstrate that measures taken were reasonable and proportionate, and suggested that if the Audit committee chair was to have this investigative responsibility, it ought to be included in the job description. AM proposed a redraft which modified the clause on the use of the Nolan principles. SB noted that the issue of grievance against a Scottish Commissioner had to be clarified in terms of ultimate responsibility. JEH asked if annex C would be public; KR explained it was currently for internal use but they were considering publishing a version of it. It was agreed that a redrafted version of the annexes would be submitted to the board. BP explained that with regards to Annex D, the Board would be kept informed on referrals to police. Annex D was AGREED. A general discussion on governance then followed, with ECS noting that regular reviews of 'soundness of the internal decision making' should include checking resourcing within the EC to undertake the work. RV noted that there was a question around which processes the board should scrutinise. It was agreed this should be an item on a future agenda board, with the possibility that in the first instance the scrutiny should be on enforcement. Codes of Practice BP introduced the paper and invited detailed comments from commissioners on drafting in due course. This was the first time codes of practice, rather than guidance, had been drafted by the EC. In the wake of the 2015 election, the decision had been taken in order to be as clear as possible on some issues, including the distinctions between candidate and party spending. BP noted that a case before the Supreme Court on the date of the Board, around which there were reporting restrictions, had the potential to alter substantially the previous interpretation of PPERA in some areas. The EC was participating in the hearing as a kind of expert witness. The hope was that the Supreme Court's decision would be available before the summer recess. ECS asked whether, if the interpretation changed dramatically, the EC would have to repay previously issued fines. BP said previous cases would not be affected. DB noted that the portions of the code most likely to be affected were highlighted in the draft. The codes were written to make explicit that digital spending should always be included. Significant discussion had already taken place with stakeholders, including officials in Scotland and Wales. The current plan was to go to external consultation with e.g. political parties in September 2018. KE outlined the risks and mitigations: given the uncertainty around the Supreme Court case, they proposed to consult first on the parts of the codes unaffected. KE also noted the risk of another snap UKPGE

which would push back the timeline for finishing the codes from 2020, and also push back the date where they could be used first. DH proposed a ‘red team’ reading of the codes to make them more robust, which was agreed. The issue of separate codes of practice for Scotland and Wales was discussed, as Commissioners suggested the drafts as presented were likely to be unfit for those purposes. The issue of current campaign spending levels was also discussed, including the balance between party and candidate spending. KE indicated that spending rules could be changed in secondary legislation if necessary. RV raised the issue of non-party campaigners. CB said that a decision had been taken to prioritise the current draft Codes, but a draft Code for non-party campaigners was likely to follow in due course. Meanwhile work was continuing to reassure eg the voluntary sector that their fears about the socalled chilling effect of current legislation were exaggerated. The board agreed that work on the Codes of Practice should continue. Key messages for the 2017 - 18 Annual Report KR introduced the paper. 3 key messages were being proposed: The Commission had responded quickly and effectively to the announcement of the unscheduled UK Parliamentary General Election which followed on rapidly from local government elections in England, Scotland and Wales, whilst managing to deliver our business as usual work and minimise the impact on our project delivery. We had taken a proactive approach in our regulatory activities, undertaking a wide range of investigatory activity primarily on investigations relating to the UKPGE and EU referendum. This complex work had continued alongside our regular regulatory work. 2017-18 had been the first financial year since we undertook our strategic review of our priorities and activities. Despite the additional pressures faced by the organisation, we had still managed to progress this ambitious programme of work. CB noted that it had been a very full year and that the organisation had largely been able to step up and respond. Next year we would build in more time for discussion and review in advance of the themes for the Annual Report. Commissioners commented briefly on these themes, while suggesting that they needed significantly more work for when the draft came to the Board at the next meeting. It was generally agreed among Commissioners that communications in the annual report should be accessible, in plain language, include infographics and be ‘digital first.’ It was also highlighted that context should be included (threats to democracy, maintenance of voter confidence in the face of this) and that the EC demands for more powers should be included in this messaging. It was agreed that National Democracy Week (first week of July) would a good context in which to speak about the work of the EC. Chief Executive’s Update for April 2018 CB set the context of the preceding few weeks, which had included the local elections, the appearance before the DCMS select committee and the announcement of the Leave.EU investigation. The Board recognised the hard work of the Communications and legal teams in all this work. CB also noted that the Commission had been busy internally with end-year financial work. BP and LE updated the Board on the status of current investigations. AC updated the board as to NI-specific issues, including the recent ‘incinerator ruling’ which determined that civil servants were unable to take decisions, and the ramifications of that on decision-making while the NI Assembly was not meeting. She also highlighted the upcoming Irish Republic referendum on abortion, and the decision taken by the Irish Government to prevent external Facebook ads in that context. AM asked for an update on a recent data breach involving the Scotland in Union party. CB explained that the issue had been an unfortunate and unexpected redaction failure, for technical reasons, and that a solution had been found to prevent this recurring. We had used social media to communicate and minimise the impact of the leak. Stakeholder management had also been part of the response,

contacting the people whose data had been released to apologize. KR noted the ICO had asked clarifying questions but their investigation was still ongoing. We were also in touch with Adobe about the failure of their software in this case. Annual Review of Risk Register Noted. Quarter 4 Finance and Performance Report and achievements against 2017-18 Corporate Plan KR noted in his introduction that the numbers included in this report were still subject to audit and not final. JEH noted that a superficial reading of some of the target numbers could give the impression that some had been badly missed, when in reality we had largely achieved against ambitious targets. It was also hard to measure a lot of what the Commission did, which was qualitative and not subject to numerical targets. KR acknowledged the problems with setting ambitious targets, but stressed the importance of not simply reducing targets to match performance. Rather we should adjust the messaging/ reporting appropriately to reflect the reality. KR would incorporate this thinking into the review he was undertaking into internal and external reporting for the following performance year. AM asked for clarity on the level of inaccuracies in financial returns submitted by parties to the EC, which CB confirmed was quite high. BP indicated that the project to update the PEF IT system would help resolve some of these issues, together with clarifying the guidance. AC noted that the indicators that measured how we ensured an increasingly trusted and transparent system of regulation in political finance, overseeing compliance, promoting understanding amongst those regulated and proactively pursuing breaches, had showed a slight decline since 2016. JH asked for clarification on income, and KR indicated that future reporting would make this clearer. RV wondered whether some of the underspend could be turned towards more research activity, for which the Commission otherwise had limited resources. It was noted that the Board would be returning to the issue of research capacity and priorities in the coming months.

Minutes of Audit Committee Meeting, 20 March 2018

This item was circulated for information. Noted. Forward Plan of Board business 2018-19 The issue of the subject for the next Commissioner Day was noted. RV expressed his support for a session on the future of voting. The question of whether to have a board meeting in July was raised. The decision on whether to go ahead, or substitute a telephone briefing as in 2017, would be considered at the Chair and Chief Executive's next Governance meeting, for report back at the June Board. Action-tracker It was decided to amend the first action to clarify the action as scheduling a further Board effectiveness session, with a likely date in early 2019. Chair's and Chief Executive's meetings, and meetings in devolved legislatures JEH reported that he had paid one of his regular visits to the Speaker of the House of Commons, who had been very supportive in general of the work of the Commission, despite recent criticism from some quarters. Commissioner wash-up (Commissioners only)

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We take the risk of electoral fraud very seriously. Throughout the year, all police
forces across the UK send us data about allegations of electoral fraud that they
receive and investigate. Every year we report on the number, type, and outcome of
these allegations, so that you can understand what's happened and how cases are
resolved. Overview In the past 5 years, there is no evidence of large-scale electoral
fraud. Of the 1,386 cases of alleged electoral fraud reported to police between 2018
and 2022, 9 led to convictions and the police issued 6 cautions. Most cases either
resulted in the police taking no further action or were locally resolved by the
police issuing words of advice. Related content Donations and loans Find out about
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Our response: Consultation on draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy |
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draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy You are in the Our
consultations section Home Our consultations First published: 16 June 2022 Last
updated: 17 June 2022 The consultation process On 5 November 2021 we published a
consultation on our draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy and a
revision of our updated draft Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) documentation. The
consultation covered England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Details of the
consultation were made available on our website. We also alerted over 100
stakeholders to the consultation directly by email. We extended the deadline for
responses from 28 January to 14 February 2022 to allow more time for responses. We
received five responses on the Strategy, four from organisations and one from an
individual. No comments were received on the EqIA documentation. We are discussing
both the Strategy and the EqIA documentation with the Equalities Commission of
Northern Ireland. Points made by respondents and our response Points were made on a
variety of themes. We summarise them here alongside our response. We are able to
adopt suggestions made in the following areas and have updated our strategy
accordingly. We will: include statistical data on the numbers of people within the UK
population who identify as LGBTI specify the target audiences for Learning and
Development and ensure senior management engagement with it consider creating a
mentoring opportunity for underrepresented groups commit to increasing and improving
the collection of data acknowledge that our current workforce data is under-
representative of the UK ethnic minority population celebrate diversity, achievements
and planned improvements through events detail how we will mitigate concerns about
disclosing data for those with protected characteristics consider how we will support
career progression for staff in under-represented groups commit to exploring and
educating ourselves on reasonable adjustments continue to ensure recruitment
practices do not disadvantage disabled applicants. Some further actions were
suggested which we have not accepted for one or more of the following reasons: We do
not have the power or remit to take the suggested actions Our size makes it
impractical to take suggested actions We already take the actions suggested or are
planning to take them We would like to thank all those who responded. We would like
to thank all those who responded. Related content Our consultations View and respond
to our consultations, which we hold to find out what others think about current
processes, or our proposals for change Consultation: Equality, Diversity and
Inclusion Strategy Draft Disability Action Plan: A Consultation Response to
consultation feedback on the Codes of Practice on spending by candidates and
political parties at Senedd elections

Enabling activity: Independence and integrity | Electoral Commission Search
Enabling activity: Independence and integrity You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23 On this page What we are working to achieve Work done to achieve this aim Performance indicators Ongoing and future work First published: 4 July 2023 Last updated: 27 September 2023 What we are working to achieve The electoral system depends on the Electoral Commission being an independent non-partisan body, and we therefore hold ourselves to high standards of integrity. We work hard to ensure we are respected for our expertise, and that our advice and decision making are free from bias. Given our unique role, our integrity needs to be clear and demonstrable. We demonstrate our independence and integrity by: taking decisions on the evidence and being transparent about the reasons for them basing our policy positions and recommendations on analysis of evidence effectively communicating our work and views providing responsive services to those we support seek to maintain effective governance arrangements. Work done to achieve this aim We published information on closed regulatory investigations on a monthly basis, providing transparency on our findings and any potential sanctions. We reviewed our Enforcement Policy, which we refer to when running an investigation. We sought views to ensure the policy is as clear and helpful as possible so that our approach to enforcement is transparent and can be easily understood. We took an evidence-based approach when developing our consultation response to the UK Government's Strategy and Policy Statement. The response highlighted that the introduction of such a mechanism – by which a government can guide the work of an electoral commission – is inconsistent with our role as an independent regulator and the body that oversees free and fair elections. We provided parliamentarians with briefings to support their consideration of the Elections Bill as it passed through Parliament. Our education resources are designed to be an independent source of material and information for educators to help them teach the issue of politics, without having to stray into politics. We responded to queries from members of the public, parliamentarians, administrators, and regulated community, providing information and advice on the electoral system and democratic participation. We received 89 freedom of information (FOI) requests. We aim to respond to 90% of requests within the 20 working days statutory timeframe, and this year we responded to 97.7% within that timeframe. We were asked to conduct internal reviews into five FOI of our responses during the year, and all of these were responded to within agreed timeframes. We received three subject access requests and 10 requests for erasure under the UKGDPR, all of which were responded to within the statutory response time frame of one calendar month. We handled 28 complaints, compared to 96 in 2021/22. Of these, three were still under consideration at the end of the year. Of those completed, 17 were not upheld, two were partially upheld, two were fully upheld, two were closed due to no clarification being received from the complainant, and two were withdrawn. We use our complaints process as a chance to learn, and opportunities for continuous improvement were fed back to the relevant teams. We received one request for review by the Chief Executive. While this review did not change the original outcome of the complaint, it did enable further explanation and assistance. Our dedicated public information service responded to 11,829 public enquiries during the year, received by phone, post and email. Through this service, we answered questions on a range of topics, including voter ID, voter registration and postal voting. We also responded to over 14,800 queries received via social media. We responded to 51 parliamentary questions at Westminster during 2022/23, including questions on voter ID – both on our campaign and the policy itself

– unincorporated associations, donations to political parties and the proposed Strategy and Policy Statement. Chris Matheson MP and Cat Smith MP, members of the Speaker's Committee, were our spokespeople in the UK Parliament and answered questions on our behalf during the year. Performance indicators Indicator Target 2022-23 Timely responses to social media enquiries 100% 100% Timely responses to public enquiries via calls, letters and emails 100% 99.69% Timely responses to valid Subject Access Requests 100% 100% Timely responses to valid Freedom of Information requests 90% 97.7% Ongoing and future work Election reports following the May 2023 elections will outline any recommendations we think are necessary to improve the system for voters, administrators, and campaigners. We will continue to provide accurate and impartial information, guidance and advice to our stakeholders. As we prepare for the UK Government's likely introduction of a Strategy and Policy Statement for the Commission, the Commission's commitment to independent decision-making remains firm. Navigation Previous Next Objective: A modern and sustainable electoral system Enabling activity: Skilled organisation where diversity is valued

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How we make decisions Board minutes: 25 April 2023 Board minutes: 22 March 2023 Board minutes: 17 February 2023 Board minutes: 17 January 2023 Board minutes: 23 November 2022 Board minutes: 21 September 2022 Board minutes: 20 July 2022 Board minutes: 22 June 2022 Board minutes: 18 May 2022 Board minutes: 6 April 2022 Board minutes: 23 February 2022 Board minutes: 19 January 2022 Board minutes: 1 December 2021 Board minutes: 20 October 2021 Board minutes: 22 September 2021 Board minutes: 21 July 2021 Board minutes: 23 June 2021 Board minutes: 19 May 2021 Board minutes: 21 April 2021 Board minutes: 31 March 2021 Board minutes: 24 February 2021 Board minutes: 20 January 2021 Board minutes: 2 December 2020 Board minutes: 21 October 2020 Board minutes: 23 September 2020 Board minutes: 22 July 2020 Commission Board minutes of items of electronic business: 15 June 2020 Board minutes: 24 June 2020 Commission Board minutes of items of electronic business: 1 June 2020 Board minutes: 20 May 2020 Board minutes: 22 April 2020 Board minutes: 18 March 2020 Board minutes: 26 February 2020 Board notes: 22 January 2020 informal briefing for Commissioners on our approach to public awareness campaigns Board minutes: 22 January 2020 Board minutes: 4 December 2019 Commissioner Day notes: 30 October 2019 Board notes: 25 September 2019 informal presentation/discussion for Commissioners on accuracy and completeness survey Board minutes: 25 September 2019 Board notes: 5 September 2019 Commissioner Day notes: 17 July 2019 Board minutes: 26 June 2019 Board minutes: 5 June 2019 Board minutes: 24 April 2019 (extraordinary meeting) Board notes: 24 April 2019 Board minutes: 9 April Board minutes: 13 March 2019 Board minutes: 13 February 2019 Board minutes: 5 December 2018 Board notes: 5 December 2018 session on simplifying and modernising electoral law across the UK Board notes: 24 October 2018 Board minutes: 19 September 2018 Board notes: 18 July 2018 Board minutes: 27 June 2018 Board minutes: 23 May 2018 Board notes: 18 April 2018 session on modernising electoral registration Board minutes: 21 March 2018 Board minutes: 24 January 2018 On this page Latest meeting minutes 2023 meeting minutes 2022 meeting minutes 2021 meeting minutes 2020 meeting minutes 2019 meeting minutes 2018 meeting minutes First published: 30 May 2019 Last updated: 23 June 2023 About our Commission Board Our Commission Board, made up of our Commissioners and Executive Team, meets regularly to talk about our plans and how we're making them happen. We publish the minutes of these meetings so you can understand more about what we do. Publishing meeting minutes We publish minutes once our commissioners have reviewed and approved them at the meeting after the minutes were taken. Redactions We sometimes have to make redactions to the minutes, where we remove certain information. We make redactions if the information: will be published in the future relates to a policy that we are still developing is sensitive, because we have received it in our role as a regulator relates to enforcement actions could be sensitive for another reason We make any redactions we've made clear, by including a summary. This summary will include either an overview of our redactions, or our reasons for redacting the information. Latest meeting minutes 25 April 2023 Welcomes and apologies, followed by an introduction to the Research Team providing an overview of its work Minutes Commission Board action tracker Chief Executive's update (quarterly) Update on the plan for the review of Commission's Strategic Objectives Digital campaigning Forward Plan of Board business 2023/24 Update on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion activities Registers of Interests, gifts, donations and hospitality Read the full minutes of the 25 April meeting 2023 meeting minutes 22 March 2023 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Welcomes and apologies, followed by an introduction to the Human Resources Team

providing an overview of their work Minutes Commission Board action tracker Chief Executive's update Commission Strategic Direction Priority policy recommendations Annual review of governance Update from Audit and Risk Committee Chair Update from the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo) Chair Read the full minutes of the 22 March meeting 17 February 2023 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Welcomes and introduction to the Speaker of the House of Commons, Rt Hon Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP Minutes Commission Board action tracker Chief Executive's update Forward Plan of Board business 2022/23 and 2023/24 Strategy and Policy Statement (SPS) Key messages for the annual report Annual review of risk Read the full minutes of the 17 February meeting 17 January 2023 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Minutes Commission Board action tracker Chief Executive's update Forward Plan of Board business 2022/23 and 2023/24 Board effectiveness review 2022/23 Main Estimate 2023/24 budgets Board skills matrix and succession planning Improvements to registration and voting: increasing resilience and participation Embedding and advancing equality, diversity and inclusion in the Electoral Commission Read the full minutes of the 17 January meeting 2022 meeting minutes 23 November 2022 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Minutes Commission Board action tracker Chief Executive's update including, the performance report quarter two 2022/23 Forward Plan of Board business 2022/23 Supplementary Estimate for 2022/23 Returning Officer (RO) and Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) performance standards Draft Enforcement Policy review Revised Commission Board and Committee meeting dates for 2023/24 Update from the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) Chair Update from the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo) Chair Annual review of schedule of internal policies and codes Annual declarations of interests Risk appetite workshop Read the full minutes of the 23 November meeting 22 September 2022 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Minutes Commission Board action tracker Forward Plan of Board business 2022/23 Chief Executive's update (quarterly) Performance report quarter one 2022/23 Strategy and Policy Statement – responding to the statutory consultation Business planning for 2023/24 Dates of proposed Commission Board and Committee meetings in 2023/24 Update on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) activities Update on Bullying and Harassment Annual review of complaints Read the full minutes of the 22 September meeting 20 July 2022 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Minutes Commission Board action tracker Forward Plan of Board business 2022/23 May 2022 elections Public awareness plans for scheduled elections in May 2023 Modernising voting Business planning for 2023/24 Elections Act update Chief Executive's update Update from the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee Appointment of the Independent Adviser to the Commission Board on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Deep dive strategic session: Horizon scanning Read the full minutes of the 20 July meeting 22 June 2022 22 June 2022 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Minutes Commission Board action tracker Forward Plan of Board business 2022/23 National Audit Office (NAO) RSM's annual internal audit report Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) 2021/22 to the Commission Board Annual Report of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee 2021/22 to the Commission Board Pay remit 2022/23 Board effectiveness matters Chief Executive's update Update from the Audit and Risk Committee Chair Read the full minutes of the 22 June meeting 18 May 2022 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Minutes Commission Board action tracker Forward Plan of Board business 2022/23 May 2022 elections reporting Chief Executive's update Key messages for the Annual Report public awareness campaign approach Risk appetite statement Returning Officer (RO) and Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) performance standards Update from the Audit and Risk Committee Chair

Read the full minutes of the 18 May meeting 6 April 2022 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Minutes Commission Board action tracker Forward Plan of Board business 2022/23 Chief Executive updates Annual review of governance Commission Board effectiveness review 2020/21 Update on Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) performance standards Update on elections Annual declaration of interests Read the full minutes of the 6 April meeting 23 February 2022 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Update from the Extraordinary Board meeting Minutes Commission Board action tracker Forward Plans of Board business 2021/22 and 2022/23 Performance report quarter three 2020/21 Performance indicators and targets 2022/23 Updates on two stages of the Commission policy making and influencing process Update from the Audit and Risk Committee Chair Chief Executive update Registers of interests, gifts, donations and hospitality Deep dive strategic discussion: Risk appetite Incoming Chief Executive terms and conditions Read the full minutes of the 23 February meeting 19 January 2022 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Commission Board action tracker Forward Plans of Board business 2021/22 and 2022/23 Main estimate 2022/23 and corporate plan budgets Policy priorities of the Commission Chief Executive's update Deep dive strategic discussion: approach to political finance Read the full minutes of the 19 January 2022 meeting 2021 meeting minutes 1 December 2021 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Commission Board action tracker Forward Plan of Board business 2021/22 and 2022/23 Elections Bill Performance report quarter two 2021/22 Supplementary Estimate Update from the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo) Chair Update from the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) Chair Data on investigation timescales Annual review of risk Chief Executive's update Read the full minutes of the 1 December 2021 meeting 20 October 2021 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Commission Board action tracker Forward Plan of Board business Board effectiveness review and follow up on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) discussion on improving Board diversity Read the full minutes of the 20 October 2021 meeting 22 September 2021 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Corporate Plan 2022/23 – 2026/27 Performance report quarter one 2021/22 Discussion on Board diversity and update on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) activities Policy Development Grants scheme Dates of proposed Commission Board and Committee meetings 2022/23 Update from the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo) Chair Update from the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) Chair Annual review of complaints Chief Executive's update Read the full minutes of the 22 September 2021 meeting 21 July 2021 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Reporting on the May 2021 polls Corporate Plan 2022/23 – 2026/27 Elections Bill update Modernising voting research Public awareness plans for scheduled elections in May 2022 Governance matter – Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) membership Read the full minutes of the 21 July 2021 meeting 23 June 2021 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Corporate Plan 2022/23-2026/27 Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21 Governance matter Update from the Audit and Risk Committee Chair Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee to the Commission Board Annual Report of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee to the Commission Board Chief Executive's update Read the full minutes of the 23 June 2021 meeting 19 May 2021 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: May 2021 elections reporting Corporate Plan 2022/23 – 2026/27: strategic direction Performance report quarter four 2020/21 Review of the Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21 Update from Committee Chairs Read the full minutes of the 19 May 2021 meeting 21 April 2021 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Update on elections Corporate Plan 2022/23 – 2026/27: plan structure Corporate Plan 2022/23 – 2026/27: financial strategy Key messages for the Annual Report Chief Executive's update Meet the new Chair designate Read the full

minutes of the 21 April 2021 meeting 31 March 2021 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Update on elections Annual review of governance Risk framework Update on Board Effectiveness Review action plan Governance matter Annual review of schedule of policies Annual declaration of interests Registers of interests, gifts, donations and hospitality Read the full minutes of the 31 March 2021 meeting 24 February 2021 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Update on elections Business Plan and Main Estimate 2021/22 Regulatory support strategy Performance report quarter three 2020/21 UK Government Electoral Integrity Bill Update from the Chair of Audit and Risk Committee Chief Executive's update Read the full minutes of the 24 February 2021 meeting 20 January 2021 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Update on elections Business planning 2021/22 Update on Board Effectiveness Review: proposed action plan Developing the effectiveness of the Commission Board Casework and the Committee on Standards in Public Life Horizon scanning Update from the Chair of Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo) Update from the Chair of Audit Committee Chief Executive's update Read the full minutes of the 20 January 2021 meeting 2020 meeting minutes 2 December 2020 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Supplementary Estimate 2020/21 Performance report quarter two, 2020/21 Governance matter Update on 2021 elections Update on voter education resources Update from Committee Chairs Chief Executive's update Read the full minutes of the 2 December 2020 meeting 21 October 2020 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Commission Board action tracker Forward Plan of Board business The challenges, risks, and issues around frontline delivery Corporate planning 2021/2026 Chief Executive's update Read the full minutes of the 21 October 2020 meeting 23 September 2020 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: An update – the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) review on aspects of electoral regulation Review of Commission Board Effectiveness Performance report – Quarter one 2020/21 Chief Executive's update Update from the Chair of Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo) Individual Staffing Issue Read the full minutes of the 23 September 2020 meeting 22 July 2020 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Modernising voting Public awareness plans for elections in May 2021 Chief Executive's update Read the full minutes of the 22 July 2020 meeting 24 June 2020 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: The Annual Report of the Audit Committee to the Commission Board The Annual Report of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee to the Commission Board Annual Report Read the full minutes of the 24 June 2020 meeting A portion of this meeting was conducted by electronic business Read the full minutes of electronic business 20 May 2020 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Findings from the Winter Tracker Using research to support our work Policy priorities of the Commission Read the full minutes of the 20 May 2020 meeting A portion of this meeting was conducted by electronic business Read the full minutes of electronic business 22 April 2020 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: The impact of Coronavirus on the Commission and progress on key work areas Updated timeline on the corporate planning process 2021/26 Annual review of risk Commission Board Effectiveness Review Read the full minutes of the 22 April 2020 meeting 18 March 2020 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Section 10 request by Scottish Government for the Commission to provide advice and assistance by considering the wording and intelligibility of a potential referendum question Governance update An update on legal proceedings Key messages for the Annual Report A review of Electoral Registration Officers performance standards Read the full minutes of the 18 March 2020 meeting 26 February 2020 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Section 10 assessment Performance report quarter three 2019/20 Corporate planning 2021/26 Read the full minutes of the 26 February 2020 meeting 22 January 2020 The topics on this

meeting's agenda were: Reflections on 2019 United Kingdom Parliamentary General Election Government policy priorities following the UK Parliamentary General Election Corporate Plan and budget 2020/25 Corporate Plan 2021/26 Read the full minutes of the 22 January 2020 meeting After the meeting, there was an informal session on our approach to public awareness campaigns. Read the notes of this session 2019 meeting minutes 4 December 2019 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: An update on electoral events, including supporting the delivery of the UK Parliamentary General Election (UKPGE) on 12 December 2019 A supplementary estimate Corporate and business planning Read the full minutes of the 4 December 2019 meeting 30 October 2019 (Commissioner day) The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Consideration of likelihood of unscheduled electoral events, Queen's Speech, and related matters Discussion on the findings from the winter-tracker research Scoping for procurement of external facilitator for 2020 Board Effectiveness Review Read the full minutes of the 30 October 2019 meeting 25 September 2019 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Minutes of the Commission Board meeting of 26 June 2019, note from the Commissioner Day on 17 July 2019, and note from meeting of Commissioners on 5 September 2019 Discussion on imminent political events affecting the Commission (oral update) Policy development grants scheme for 2020/21 Public awareness plans for the May 2020 elections Business planning 2020/21 – planning strategy and themes Performance report Quarter one 2019/20 Schedule of Commission Board and Committee meetings 2020/21 Chief Executive's update Forward plan of Board business 2019/20 Action tracker Chair and Chief Executive's meetings and meetings of note in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland Read the full minutes of the 25 September 2019 meeting After the meeting, there was an informal session on our accuracy and completeness survey. Read the notes of this session 5 September 2019 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: 2019 UKPGE preparedness and funding Read the full minutes of the 5 September 2019 meeting 17 July 2019 (day notes) The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Managing regulatory risk Read the full minutes of the 17 July 2019 meeting 26 June 2019 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Annual review of complaints Audit Committee Annual Report Remuneration and Human Resources Committee Annual Report 2018/19 Adoption of 2018/19 Annual Report and resources accounts Voter identification pilots (2019) evaluation Chief Executive's update Forward plan of Board business 2019/20 Action tracker Chair and Chief Executive's meeting and meetings of note in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland Read the full minutes of the 26 June 2019 meeting 5 June 2019 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Update on May polls Modernising electoral registration project Confirmation of actions arising from the 24 April 2019 Board Effectiveness Review Performance Report Quarter four 2018/19 Update on Ways of working Forward plan of Board business 2019/20 Chair and Chief Executive's meeting and meetings of note in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland Read the full minutes of the 5 June 2019 meeting 24 April 2019 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Update on May polls Board Effectiveness Review Read the notes of the 24 April 2019 session 24 April 2019 (extraordinary meeting) The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Proposed changes to Committee membership Any other business Read the full minutes of the 24 April 2019 extraordinary meeting 9 April 2019 (extraordinary meeting) The topics on this meeting's agenda were: European Parliamentary Elections decision-making discussion Update on recruitment of new Chief Executive Read the full minutes of the 9 April 2019 meeting extraordinary 13 March 2019 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Speaker's Committee update Key messages for the Annual Report 2018/19 Annual risk review Recommendations from innovation and development project four: Improving youth democratic engagement Update

on progress on new website Chief Executive's update Forward plan of Board business 2018/2020 Action tracker Chair and Chief Executive's meeting and meetings in devolved legislatures Read the full minutes of the 13 March 2019 meeting 13 February 2019 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: The Business Plan and Main Estimate 2019/20 Governance update Appointment of a Commissioner to a vacancy on the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee Chief Executive's update Performance and finance report quarter three 2018/19 Forward plan of Board business 2018/2020 Action tracker Chair and Chief Executive's meeting and meetings in devolved legislatures Read the full minutes of the 13 February 2019 meeting 2018 meeting minutes 5 December 2018 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Project overview 2019/20 Draft Budget and Business Plan Chief Executive's update Quarter two performance and finance report Forward plan of Board business 2018/19 Action tracker Chair and Chief Executive's meeting and meetings in devolved legislatures Meeting wash-up (Commissioners only) Read the full minutes of the 5 December 2018 meeting After the meeting, there was an informal session on simplifying and modernising electoral law across the UK. Read the notes of this session 25 October 2018 This was an informal day discussion. The topics on this meeting's agenda were: The future of voting – what we know of elections Providing services that meet the needs of all users The future of voting Read the notes of the 25 October 2018 session 19 September 2018 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Delivering the Commission's policy agenda Prosecutions policy Public awareness campaign for May 2019 – approach and budget Quarter one performance and finance report Chief Executive's update Forward plan of Board business 2018/19 Action tracker Chair and Chief Executive's meetings and meetings in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales Read the full minutes of the 19 September 2018 meeting 18 July 2018 This was an informal day discussion. The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Headlines/issues since last board meeting Read the notes of the 18 July 2018 session 27 June 2018 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: ID Pilot Evaluation Findings (presentation) Audit Committee Annual Report Remuneration and Human Resources Committee Annual Report Annual review of complaints Adoption of 2017/18 Resource Accounts and Annual Report Draft Business Plan 2018/19 and review of Performance Measures Chief Executive's update for May 2018 Forward plan of Board business 2018/19 Action tracker for May Chair's and Chief Executive's meetings, and meetings in devolved legislatures Read the full minutes of the 27 June 2018 meeting . 23 May 2018 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Post elections – Key messages for post-poll report(s) and potential policy implications Corporate Governance update Codes of Practice Key messages for the 2017/18 Annual Report Chief Executive's update for April 2018 Annual Review of Risk Register Quarter four Finance and Performance Report and achievements against 2017/18 Corporate Plan Minutes of Audit Committee meeting, 20 March 2018 Forward plan of Board business 2018/19 Action tracker Chair's and Chief Executive's meetings, and meetings in devolved legislatures Commissioner wash-up (Commissioners only) Read the full minutes of the 23 May 2018 meeting . 18 April 2018 (day notes) The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Presentation from the Australian Electoral Commission Presentation from Peter Wildman – Scottish Assessors Organisation Informal Board discussion Read the notes of the 18 April 2018 session . 21 March 2018 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Regulatory matter for decision Proposal to provide indicative funding information to the Scottish Parliament and National Assembly for Wales May elections update Accuracy and Completeness Study Business Plan 2018/19: Principles for Performance Measures Chief Executive's update for March Quarter three Finance and Performance Report Annual Review of Corporate Governance Forward plan of Board business 2018-19 Decision

tracker for February Chair's and Chief Executive's meetings, and meetings in devolved legislatures Commissioner wash-up (Commissioners only) Read the full minutes of the 21 March 2018 meeting . 24 January 2018 The topics on this meeting's agenda were: Draft Corporate Plan 2018/19 to 2022/23 Main Estimate for 2018/19 Chief Executive's update for January Appointment to Committees Forward plan of Board business 2018/19 Decision/action tracker for January Read the full minutes of the 24 January 2018 meeting . Related content Our Commissioners Selecting our Commissioners Find out about the selection process for our Commissioners Our Executive Team Meet our Executive Team, and find out more about them Interim corporate plan 2020/21 - 2024/25 Our interim corporate plan was published following the 2019 UK Parliament general election. It has now been replaced by our 2022/23 to 2026/27 plan.

Recall petitions by numbers: Peterborough | Electoral Commission Search
Recall petitions by numbers: Peterborough You are in the The process to
challenge a sitting MP: review of the 2019 recall petitions section Home Recall
petitions The process to challenge a sitting MP: review of the 2019 recall petitions
On this page Running the petition Signing the petition Campaigning First published:
10 October 2019 Last updated: 10 October 2019 Running the petition Notification of
petition Tuesday 5 March Petition open Tuesday 19 March-Wednesday 1 May Number of
signing places (maximum of 10) 10 Extended hours (outside 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday)
Open from 7am on Tuesdays; closed 10pm on Thursdays Count Took place immediately
after signing places closed at 5pm Signing the petition For a recall petition to
result in an MP being recalled, over 10% of people eligible to sign must do so within
the six-week signing period. We can see from petition data that the majority of those
who signed did so within the first two weeks of the petition opening. How many people
were eligible to sign 69,673 How many signatures needed to recall MP 6,967 Number who
signed 19,261 - this was 28% of people eligible to sign Spoilt signing papers 62 We
can also see from this data how people chose to sign the petition. How people chose
to sign the petition Campaigning People or organisations wishing to campaign for or
against the recall petition and intending to spend over £500 were required to notify
the PO that they wished to be a registered campaigner. There were five registered
campaigners in Peterborough. Only three of these have submitted donation and spending
returns. Spending and donation returns

Letter to Mr Clive Betts MP regarding collection of data on numbers turned away outside polling station due to lack of voter ID | Electoral Commission Search Letter to Mr Clive Betts MP regarding collection of data on numbers turned away outside polling station due to lack of voter ID You are in the Key correspondence section Home Key correspondence First published: 27 April 2023 Last updated: 27 April 2023 Summary of letter Date: 27 April 2023 To: Mr Clive Betts MP - Chair of the Levelling up, Housing and Communities Committee From: John Pullinger, Chair Format: Sent by email Full letter Dear Mr Betts Thank you for your letter of 26 April in relation to the data the Commission will be collecting following the local elections on 4 May. I fully understand the Committee's concern that an accurate assessment will be able to be made of the impact on voters of this first deployment of the photographic ID requirement. The Elections Act and the Voter Identification Regulations 2022 require polling station staff to collect data on the people that cannot be issued with a ballot paper because they were unable to provide an accepted form of ID. This includes data on people who are turned away and later return to the polling station with accepted ID. Legally, this information can only be recorded by a poll clerk or presiding officer when a voter requests a ballot paper at the issuing desk, and cannot be gathered by a greeter at the entrance. However, it is clear that the presence of a greeter at a polling station – while helpful in supporting the smooth administration of polling station voting – is likely to affect the data recorded at the desk. For this reason, the legislation also requires the Electoral Registration Officer for each local authority to separate data for polling stations with and without greeters when submitting data after the polls. The Elections Act 2022 and resulting statutory instrument specify what data should be collected, and require Electoral Registration Officers to provide this data to the Government and the Commission. The Commission will be collecting this data – for those stations with and without greeters – and will share it with the Government as we receive it. We are not asking Electoral Registration Officers to also collect data via greeters, in addition to their legal requirements. This is because the process of collecting the data, for example using tally charts, risks providing inaccurate data in an inconsistent way. Practically, it also does not allow for the accurate recording of voters who might return to polling stations with the correct ID having been previously turned away. This can only be accurately recorded at the desk where the elector numbers of individual voters are held. While we know that some potential voters will be turned away by greeters, others will be deterred earlier in their journey or earlier on polling day, and despite the very best efforts would remain beyond the reach of any practical data collection exercise. It has therefore never been the case that an accurate, specific number of people impacted could be defined. However, the Commission is experienced at using wider survey work to supplement quantitative data to assess the overall impact of changes to elections. In our reporting on the elections, the Commission will make an assessment of the wider impact of the ID requirements using other types of research; importantly this will include public opinion surveying across England, asking about people's experiences of voting or trying to vote on 4 May. We will also, as we do each year, survey electoral administrators, campaigners and electoral observers. We will publish our initial findings in June before our more detailed survey results are published in our post-poll report in September. Yours sincerely, John Pullinger Chair

Analysis of electoral registration data | Electoral Commission Search

Analysis of electoral registration data You are in the Our research section Home

Our research On this page The electoral registers Comparisons to March 2020 registers

Other register statistics The 2020 annual canvass Background Link to related

statistics and data First published: 25 June 2019 Last updated: 25 June 2019 Overview

At the publication of the 2020 annual registers, there were 46,906,270 entries on the parliamentary registers in the UK. This was a decrease of 168,578 (0.4%) from the annual registers of 2019, which themselves had showed an increase of 2.8% from the previous year. This decrease from the 2019 to 2020 registers is likely to be as a result of the 2019 UK general election driving up applications ahead of the publication of the 2019 registers, coupled with lower levels of registration activity in 2020 likely linked to the fact that no elections were held due to the coronavirus pandemic. While COVID-19 presented particular challenges for EROs and their teams, the first reformed canvass in Great Britain was largely successful and the use of national and local data matching allowed EROs to target their resources towards those households where changes were needed.

The electoral registers At the publication of the 2020 annual registers, there were 46,906,270 entries on the parliamentary registers and 49,063,707 entries on the local government registers in the United Kingdom. The total number of parliamentary entries decreased by 168,578 (0.4%) from the annual registers of 2019, which themselves had shown an increase of 2.8% from the previous year. The table below shows the change in each part of the UK between the annual registers of 2019 and 2020:

Area	2019	2020	% change
England	39,476,140	39,298,264	-0.5%
Scotland	3,988,550	4,012,429	+0.6%
Wales	2,313,851	2,304,640	-0.4%
Northern Ireland	1,296,307	1,290,937	-0.4%
United Kingdom	47,074,848	46,906,270	-0.4%

The total number of entries on the local government registers decreased by 90,059 (0.2%) from 2019. The change in number of local government register entries varied across the UK. The largest decrease was observed in the East Midlands (1.4%), while Scotland recorded an increase (of 1.0%) compared to the annual registers of 2019. However, it should be noted that the majority of EROs in Scotland published their 2019 annual registers in November. This meant that the registers did not include those who registered in the lead up to the 26 November 2019 registration deadline for the UK general election. The table below presents the local government register size from 2019 to 2020 and shows the percentage change for different parts of the UK:

Area	2019	2020	% change
England	41,306,474	41,186,293	-0.3%
North East	1,941,751	1,956,275	+0.7%
North West	5,524,983	5,461,941	-1.1%
Yorkshire and the Humber	3,989,849	4,025,884	+0.9%
East Midlands	3,634,684	3,583,548	-1.4%
West Midlands	4,308,174	4,276,920	-0.7%
East of England	4,673,209	4,653,094	-0.4%
London	6,097,439	6,116,260	+0.3%
South East	6,829,241	6,813,201	-0.2%
South West	4,307,144	4,299,170	-0.2%
Scotland	4,167,361	4,208,923	+1.0%
Wales	2,349,434	2,342,478	-0.3%
Great Britain	47,823,269	47,737,694	-0.2%
Northern Ireland	1,330,497	1,326,013	-0.3%
United Kingdom	49,153,766	49,063,707	-0.2%

Generally, changes in the number of registered electors in an area can be explained by the following:

- A change in the size of the population who are entitled to vote. This can happen due to international migration, internal migration, young people becoming old enough to vote and deaths of people currently on the register.
- A change in the proportion of the eligible population who actually register to vote. This could happen as a result of changed approaches to canvassing by EROs, national and local voter registration campaigns, a recent election or increased public interest in the political landscape.
- A change in the definition of eligibility. For example, in 2020 the right to vote was extended to

all foreign nationals with leave to remain in Scotland and Wales for local government and Scottish Parliament/Senedd elections. The right to vote was also extended to 16 and 17 year olds for the same elections in Wales in 2020. Comparisons to March 2020 registers The ONS published statistics in relation to the electoral registers as of 2 March 2020. These were produced to support the parliamentary constituency boundary review due to conclude in July 2023. As noted above, Scotland stands out as the only nation to record an increase in registrations from December 2019 to December 2020. However, when compared to the registers for March 2020 (which include registrations in the lead up to the 2019 UKPGE), the figures for Scotland are in line with the other nations.

	Area	March 2020 PAR	2020 % change
England	39,860,421	39,298,264	-1.4%
Scotland	4,079,612	4,012,429	-1.6%
Wales	2,322,677	2,304,640	-0.8%
Northern Ireland	1,295,688	1,290,937	-0.4%
United Kingdom	47,558,398	46,906,270	-1.4%

Number of local government register entries March 2020 and on publication of annual register for 2020 (PAR2020), by nation Area March 2020 PAR 2020 % change

	Area	March 2020 PAR	2020 % change
England	41,684,472	41,186,293	-1.2%
Scotland	4,227,659	4,208,923	-0.4%
Wales	2,358,070	2,342,478	-0.7%
Northern Ireland	1,329,947	1,326,013	-0.4%
United Kingdom	49,600,148	49,063,707	-1.1%

Other register statistics Attainers Electoral registers include people who will reach the age of 18 in England and 16 in Scotland and Wales, and will therefore become able to vote (dependent on the franchise for each election), during the lifetime of the register. This group is referred to as attainers. Overall, the number of attainers on both parliamentary and local government registers continues to fall. Attainers on the parliamentary registers in Great Britain saw a fall of 21.0%. There was a fall of 18.0% on the local government registers. The overall decrease in attainers is driven by the change in England, with a significant decrease in the numbers registered on both the parliamentary and local government registers (25.9% and 26.1% respectively). This is likely, at least in part, to be the result of previous attainers now being of voting age and there being less registration activity during 2020 due to the postponement of the May 2020 local elections in England. However, we cannot rule out that at least some of this change relates to the reformed canvass and we will continue to keep this under review in order to further understand and mitigate the decline. The number of registered attainers increased in both Scotland and Wales. Scotland saw a small increase on the parliamentary registers (0.9%) and the number more than doubled on the local government registers (103.1%). This is likely linked to registration activity among voters aged younger than 16 who would then be eligible to vote by the time of the May 2021 Scottish Parliament election. In Wales, there were also significant increases on both the parliamentary (11.6%) and local government registers (11.2%) in Wales. Again, these increases are likely to be linked to registration activity among younger voters in preparation for being able to vote at the May 2021 Senedd election, where 16 and 17 year olds were eligible to vote for the first time.

Number of attainers on the parliamentary and local government registers in Great Britain, 2019 to 2020

Registers /	2019	2020	% change
Parliamentary	254,384	188,472	-25.9%
Local government	265,624	196,346	-26.1%
Scotland	38,171	38,518	+0.9%
Wales	12,942	14,437	+11.6%
Great Britain	305,497	241,427	-21.0%

16 and 17 year olds (Scotland and Wales) The voting age is lower for some elections in Scotland and Wales (Scottish Parliament, Senedd and local council elections) than for elections in England. The change in Scotland was introduced in 2015 and in Wales the change was made in 2020. Figures in this section

relate to the annual registers published on conclusion of the 2020 canvass (i.e. between December 2020 and February 2021). The data does not therefore include anyone who registered in the run up to the May 2021 elections in Scotland and Wales. In Scotland, at the publication of the annual register in 2020, there were a total of 73,272 16 and 17 year olds on the local government register. The table below shows the trend in the numbers registered since this change was introduced. Number of electors aged 16/17 on the local government register for Scotland, 2015 to 2020

Electors	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	16/17 year olds on local government registers
	48,962	79,621	83,536	78,383	73,777	73,272	In

registers in 2020, there were a total of 15,457 16 and 17 year olds on the local

government register. Data on the numbers of 16 and 17 year olds registered for the May 2021 elections will be published alongside the Commission's reports on the polls.

Overseas electors A UK citizen living abroad who has been registered to vote in the UK in the past 15 years can apply to be an overseas voter. They are required to renew their registration every 12 months. The total number of overseas electors on the 2020 registers in Great Britain was 184,982. Number of overseas electors on the UK

parliamentary register Area	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	England	97,572	241,097		
	205,687	113,833	185,513	170,196	Scotland	7,729	15,230	12,790	6,679	11,587	9,617

Wales

2,940	7,567	6,995	3,678	6,969	5,169	Great	Britain	108,241	263,894	225,472	124,190
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204,069	184,982	This	is	a	decrease	of	9%	since	the	publication	of	the	annual	register
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in 2019 and, due to the need to renew registration every 12 months, is likely to be largely driven by the absence of electoral events at which these electors could vote.

Anonymous electors The number of anonymous electoral register entries on the parliamentary registers in Great Britain decreased from 3,546 to 3,374 from 2019 to 2020. Anonymous registration is available for people meeting certain requirements,

whose safety, or the safety of someone in the same household, is at risk. People registered anonymously appear on the electoral register without their name and address. Number of anonymous electors on UK parliamentary registers

Area	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	England	2,151	2,194	2,440	2,550	3,214	3,064	Scotland	111	117	116
	130	194	196	Wales	74	74	85	108	138	114	Great	Britain	2,336	2,385	2,641	2,788	3,546

3,374	The	2020	annual	canvass	In	addition	to	reviewing	the	headline	electorate
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figures, we also analyse information relating to activities undertaken by Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) in Great Britain during the annual canvass period. There

is no equivalent annual canvass in Northern Ireland. The canvass must commence

between 1 July and 30 November, but EROs do not necessarily need to complete all

canvass activity within this period. The 2020 canvass was the first to take place

under a new model which incorporates data matching between the electoral registers

and a combination of national and local data at the outset of the process. This data

matching informs the ERO which properties are likely to have an unchanged household

composition, to enable them to target their canvass activity accordingly. The ERO

will then follow one of three routes for each property: Route 1: This route is for

properties where the registered electors match with other data and are assumed to

have no change in household composition. The ERO will contact Route 1 households to

invite them to provide information on any changes which have occurred, but where

there are no changes, the household is not required to respond. Route 2: This route

is for properties where the current registered electors did not all match with other

data and are assumed to have had a change in household composition which would

require an update to be made to the electoral register. These households are required

to respond to requests for information whether they do in fact need to report a

change or not. Route 3: This route is available for those properties where the ERO

thinks they can most effectively and efficiently obtain information on residents through a single ‘responsible person’ acting on behalf of all residents. Examples of these property types are care homes and student halls of residence. Should the ERO be unable to successfully obtain information about the property from a ‘responsible person’ they will need to canvass these property types using the Route 2 process. The sections below broadly follow a logical course through the canvass – starting with the allocation of households to the different routes, moving on to look at the responses received from households, and then the applications received from individuals. Finally we consider data on the effect of the electoral registration activity – changes to the registers (i.e. additions to and deletions from). Data collection Following the publication of the annual registers the Commission requests data from EROs for each local authority area, along with information on their canvass process. The analysis and results in this section are based on the responses we received from EROs. In total, we received responses for 366 local authority areas across Great Britain. Households allocated to each route Overall At the beginning of the canvass, all registers are matched against Department for Work and Pensions data and EROs then use the results to help them allocate properties to routes (as explained above). Following this national data matching exercise, our data shows that 19.5 million properties were allocated to Route 1 and 9.3 million to Route 2. In addition, EROs have the discretion to carry out data matching using local datasets such as Council Tax in order to aid with the process of allocating properties to routes. The majority of EROs carried out local data matching, with Council Tax being the most popular dataset used and respondents citing that this data was the most easily usable and accurate. The next most popular piece of data was housing benefit data. The local data matching step had a significant impact on the total figures for route allocations as shown in the table below.

	Route Number	allocated by national data matching	Number allocated after local data matching	Change (%)	Route 1	19.5 million	21.4 million	+10%	Route 2	9.3 million	7.5 million	-19%	Route 3	N/A	277,000
N/1	The proportion of properties allocated to Route 2 (26% after the local data matching stage) is broadly in line with that predicted in the UK, Scottish and Welsh governments’ statement of policy for canvass reform, which anticipated that around a quarter of properties would have to go down the Route 2 process nationally. Whilst we are aware of some EROs successfully using a range of local data for data matching, we also received feedback during, and following, the 2020 annual canvass, indicating that other datasets were more difficult to access. In response to this, we have undertaken work to expand our guidance on local data matching ahead of the 2021 canvass. We have included additional guidance on the ERO’s power to obtain data, and have also highlighted some practical considerations for how to work with other teams in local authorities to access data. Additionally, over the course of this year’s canvass, we plan to work with EROs to identify examples of good practice that we can share to support other EROs with effectively accessing and using a variety of local data sources.	& Variation in route allocation	Generally speaking, the allocation of properties down each route suggests a relatively stable picture across the nations of Great Britain. Within England the allocations were similar across regions although, perhaps unsurprisingly, London recorded the lowest proportion of Route 1 allocations (66.4%). This reflects the greater degree of population movement in London, with more properties failing to match with existing data and being allocated to Route 2 in order to pick up changes in household composition. The table below shows the proportion of properties allocated across each route for each region:	Proportion of properties in each route, by nation and region	Area	Route 1	Route 2	Route 3	England						

73.4% 25.7% 0.9% North East 78.9% 20.8% 0.3% North West 73.4% 25.9% 0.8% Yorkshire and the Humber 73.2% 25.4% 1.4% East Midlands 74.9% 23.8% 1.3% West Midlands 73.4% 25.3% 1.4% East of England 76.9% 22.5% 0.6% London 66.4% 32.6% 1.0% South East 73.4% 25.9% 0.7% South West 75.8% 23.7% 0.5% Scotland 72.1% 26.6% 1.3% Wales 75.1% 23.7% 1.2% Great Britain 73.3% 25.7% 1.0% Household response rates The reforms to the canvass were designed to allow EROs to ensure their resources could be directed at households where changes needed to be made to the registers. In previous years, because all households were required to be chased for a response, even where there were no changes to report, significant effort and resource was being expended on households where the composition had not changed, with no benefit to the quality of the registers. In the 2020 canvass, around 8.8 million responses were received from households across all canvass routes. This compares to 23.8 million responses to Household Enquiry Forms at the 2019 canvass. This lower overall response suggests that the increasing targeting of activity in the reformed canvass was successful in reducing unnecessary response. Also, as anticipated in the UK's governments' canvass reform policy, there was a significantly higher response rate from those households in Route 2, where data matching had indicated a greater likelihood of a change in residents, compared to Route 1 (66% compared to 18%). Route 2 is also the route where EROs are required to chase for a response, by sending reminders and by trying different contact methods. While this balance of responses between Routes 1 and 2 is positive, it is important to note that although all households in Route 2 are required to respond, more than one third did not, meaning details for these households have not been updated when the data matching suggests updates were required. This will be an area to continue to monitor in future canvasses, and EROs and the Commission will be able to use the new ERO performance standards framework to support an analysis of the data to help understand and, where appropriate, address the reasons for this. The level of response for Route 2 varied significantly, as shown in the table below, with Scotland reporting the lowest response for Route 2 at 50% and England the highest at 67%. Within England, the North East was the region with the lowest response rate to both Route 1 and Route 2. Response rate for each route, by region and nation, 2020 Area Route 1 Route 2 England 18.5% 67.4% North East 7.4% 59.3% North West 13.5% 61.8% Yorkshire and the Humber 14.6% 70.5% East Midlands 16.4% 72.5% West Midlands 19.5% 69.3% East of England 17.6% 72.3% London 19.6% 59.7% South East 25.7% 71.5% South West 23.1% 72.4% Scotland 14.9% 50.0% Wales 14.9% 63.6% Great Britain 18.0% 65.5% Types of household response Households that respond to the canvass can record a major change (e.g. showing a potential new elector is resident), a minor change (e.g. amending the name of an existing elector) or no change (i.e. confirming existing details). A total of 2.6 million households who responded during the 2020 canvass reported a major change in their registration details. This represented 30% of all 8.8 million responses received across each route. These major changes were distributed by route as follows: Route 1 major changes: 791,720 (30%) Route 2 major changes: 1,801,283 (69%) Route 3 major changes: 26,835 (1%) This again shows that overall those properties in Route 2 that were identified by data matching as most likely to need changes to residents' registration details, reported the largest proportion of changes during the canvass. However, nearly a third of the major changes reported came from properties allocated to Route 1 and where the data had indicated no change was needed. It is important to bear in mind that, of all the households allocated to Route 1 (21.4 million), the proportion reporting a major change (791,000) is small (around 4%). However, these figures do highlight that the matching process does not accurately identify all properties where changes will be

needed. We will use the new ERO performance standards to support our work with EROs throughout the 2021 canvass to understand further the scale and impact of this. A further 6.1 million households reported no or minor changes to their registration details, representing 70% of households who responded. In order for this data to be more useful in future, we will work with electoral management software (EMS) providers to split this category up into no change and minor changes. Individual applications Canvassing activity with properties does not directly result in registrations. For example, where a household reports that a potential new elector is resident that individual still needs to submit an application to become registered.

In the year to the publication of the annual register in 2020, a total of 5.3 million applications to register to vote were received. Of these applications, 2.8 million (53%) were received during the canvass period. The annual volume of applications tells us about whether the registers are picking up expected levels of change in the population. While the number of applications in 2020 (5.3 million) was much lower than in 2019 (7.5 million) it was in line with 2018 (5.3 million). The lower level of registration activity in 2020 is likely linked to the fact that no elections were held after being postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic. In 2018 there were no high profile national polls, with elections held in only some local authority areas in England. The proportion of applications in the canvass, compared to the rest of the year, tells us something about the relative effectiveness of the canvass itself in driving new registrations. In 2020, the proportion of applications during the canvass (53%) was lower than in 2019 (66%) and 2018 (62%), but much higher than in 2017 (37%). The position of 2020 relative to 2019 is likely explained by the 2019 UKPGE registration period taking place during the canvass in 2019, driving up applications. In 2017, the UK general election took place in June, which had the effect of driving applications outside the canvass period. The lower proportion of applications in 2020 compared to 2018 could be, at least in part, the result of a reduction in personal canvassing in 2020. At this stage it is not possible to disentangle the extent to which that reduction can be attributed to pandemic restrictions compared to the reformed canvass process. We will therefore continue to monitor this data in future years.

Applications During Canvass Period Outside of Canvass Period Applications (year around)

Year	Applications
2017	2,663,859
2018	3,355,908
2019	2,024,883
2020	5,380,791

Change on the registers: additions and deletions Data on additions to, and deletions from, the registers provides a good understanding of whether registration activity is keeping pace with population change. Data relating to additions and deletions form a core part of the new performance standards to support EROs with measuring and monitoring the impact of their registration activities. Changes to the registers are generated from several sources. For example, once applications have been received and processed, EROs are required to add new eligible electors; EROs can also use data gathered from households and other existing data sources to identify records relating to home movers and those who have died, which they will need to take steps to remove. As population mobility varies across the country, so does the scale of the challenge of maintaining the accuracy and completeness of electoral registers faced by EROs. There were a total of 4.7 million additions to the registers and 4.9 million deletions from the registers in the year from publication of the 2019 annual registers to the publication of the annual registers for 2020. This represents 10% of the registers being added and 10% removed over the year. The number of additions in 2020 (4.7 million) was lower than that recorded in 2019 (6.3 million). The number of additions recorded in the canvass

period (2.7 million) was also lower than in 2019 (3.9 million). However, this is again likely to be linked to elections - 2019 saw three sets of electoral events, including a UKPGE where much of the registration activity was during the canvass period, while 2020 had no polls due to COVID-19. The number of deletions in 2020 (4.9 million) was very similar to that recorded in 2019 (4.9 million). The number of deletions during the canvass period in 2020 (3.1 million) was also very similar to 2019 (3.0 million). The proportion of additions and deletions across routes is largely in line with expectations, with more changes being picked up within the Route 2 households. Although as with the level of household major changes, which are directly related to additions and deletions, the data highlights that just over one third of the changes made to the registers were within households where the data matching did not suggest any change was needed. It is not possible from a single year of data to judge if this will continue to be a feature of the reformed canvass and, if so, what the longer term impact of it would be. This is an area we will continue to monitor.

Proportion of additions and deletions by route

Route	Route 1	Route 2
Additions	36%	61%
Deletions	37%	59%

The number of additions and deletions as a proportion that took place during the canvass over 2020 varied across Great Britain. Additions and deletions by nation, 2020

Nation	Additions	Deletions
England	4,140,112	2,334,069
Scotland	399,272	199,357
Wales	183,207	127,860
Great Britain	4,737,720	2,669,420

Area Additions (full year)

Area	Additions	Deletions
England	56.4%	56.4%
Scotland	49.9%	49.9%
Wales	58.2%	58.2%
Great Britain	56.3%	56.3%

Deletions (canvass period) % during canvass

Period	England	Scotland	Wales	Great Britain
Deletions (canvass period) % during canvass	4,313,424	2,794,723	135,994	3,134,947

Deletions (full year) % during canvass

Year	England	Scotland	Wales	Great Britain
Deletions (full year) % during canvass	64.8%	68.6%	68.6%	64.5%

The table below shows that the proportion of additions (56%) during the canvass in 2020 is down on 2019 (62%) and proportion of deletions during the canvass during the annual canvass in 2020 (64%) up on 2019 (61%).

Year	Additions	Deletions
2015	40%	58%
2016	60%	54%
2017	39%	56%
2018	39%	61%
2019	39%	61%
2020	44%	64%

Annual Additions/Deletions

Year	Additions	Deletions
2015	2015	2015
2016	2016	2016
2017	2017	2017
2018	2018	2018
2019	2019	2019
2020	2020	2020

Annual Canvass Outside Annual Canvass

Year	Additions	Deletions
2015	2015	2015
2016	2016	2016
2017	2017	2017
2018	2018	2018
2019	2019	2019
2020	2020	2020

Background

There is no national electoral register for the United Kingdom. A total of 368 separate electoral registers are compiled and maintained by Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) in Great Britain, and one register for Northern Ireland is compiled and maintained by the Chief Electoral Officer. Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) are required to maintain two electoral registers: Parliamentary register – used for UK Parliamentary elections Local government register – used for Scottish Parliamentary, Senedd, Northern Ireland Assembly, local government and Police and Crime Commissioner elections

The electoral register is a property based database, with register entries linked to a property. This means that the quality of its information is affected by ongoing population change and EROs need to add and delete records for home-movers, electors who have died and newly eligible electors. New registers are published annually and reviewed most months. In Great Britain, there is a process of auditing the register annually before a revised version is published, which is known as the

annual canvass. Each ERO is required by law to conduct an annual canvass of all properties in their area to confirm their electoral register entries and to identify electors who have moved or were not previously registered. The annual canvass of 2020 was the first conducted since reforms to the process were introduced. This new model means that responses are not required from households that have been identified, through matching with national and local databases, as having had no recent change in composition. The new canvass model aims to allow EROs in Great Britain to better target their resources to households where updates to the electoral register are likely to be required. The data and analysis presented in this report is from data that the Electoral Commission collects from EROs following the end of the annual canvass. Typically, annual registers are published by the 1 December each year. In order to take account of the impact of the pandemic, this year EROs could publish their annual register up to the 1 February 2021. However, for simplicity, the registers are referred to as the 2020 annual registers throughout. Link to related statistics and data Office for National Statistics- Electoral Statistics for the UK National Records Scotland- Electoral Statistics for Scotland Electoral Commission- Accuracy and completeness of electoral registers Related content 2019 electoral fraud data about electoral fraud in 2019 and view the data Public attitudes Read our reports about public attitudes towards voting Modernising elections research This qualitative research looks at public attitudes to voting and the information available around elections. Feasibility studies: scope and approach This is part of our modernising electoral registration studies. Read about the scope and approach of the studies

Update CSPL Review of Electoral Regulation Mairaid highlighted that in June, the Committee on Standards in Public Life launched a review of the regulatory framework on electoral finance, enforced by the Commission, the police and the courts. The Electoral Commission circulated a link to the consultation to a range of NI stakeholders, including the parties, at the time, inviting them to submit a response if they wished to do so. In the Electoral Commission's consultation response, it is made clear the current regulatory framework broadly works well to support public confidence in the integrity of elections and referendums in the UK. We noted there are generally high levels of compliance with the law, and the framework has been updated over time. However, the response sets The Electoral Commission's suggested priorities for reform that are designed to deliver greater transparency, reflect new ways of campaigning, and provide sufficient deterrents to those tempted to breach electoral law. Mairaid advised that The Electoral Commission has recommended greater alignment between the party and candidate regulatory framework, to ensure the system is fairer and more proportionate for candidates and frees up police and court time.

PACAC Inquiry Mairaid advised that there is an ongoing inquiry from Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC) into the role of The Electoral Commission. This will examine public and political confidence in the Electoral Commission and will be looking at its powers, remit, and functions. There is currently a call for evidence out which closes on 16 November 2020, and a link to the Call for Evidence would be circulated after the meeting. UK Government digital imprints consultation The Commission has welcomed the UK Government's consultation on digital imprints. We have previously recommended extending imprint requirements to digital election and referendum material. The consultation provides an opportunity to deliver real change for voters and give them a better understanding of who is trying to reach them online. The consultation seeks views on the technical scope of the new digital imprints regime and closes on 4 November 2020. We will be submitting a response, and would encourage parties to respond to the consultation too. Online party conferences and events guidance We understand that some political parties will be holding digital conferences and other meetings which would otherwise have been held in person as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. In response to this we have prepared some FAQs on our website to address how these events interact with the PPERA party funding rules. The rules on payments made in connection with digital conferences and events are treated in the same way as physical conferences and events under PPERA. We have also considered how the rules apply to advertisements at these online events and digital conference stands which parties may wish to sell. Upcoming reporting dates for political parties 30 October 2020 - Deadline for submitting Quarter 3 2020 (1 July 2020– 30 September 2020) donations and loans report 28 October 2020 -Statements of Accounts for parties and accounting units with income and expenditure over £250,000 will be published. AoB Thanks and best wishes were passed onto Anna Carragher as this was her last meeting as Chair as she steps down from the Northern Ireland Commissioner role. Cahir advised that recruitment is ongoing for a new Northern Ireland Commissioner. The closing date for these applications is 14 October 2020. The House of Commons Speaker's Committee is planning on interviewing for this in early November. Recruitment is also about to commence for a new Chair of the Electoral Commission. The Speaker's Committee is also carrying out recruitment for a new Smaller Parties Commissioner. Proposed meeting dates 2021 Tuesday 19 January Tuesday 9 March Tuesday 8 June Tuesday 12 October

Recall petitions by numbers: Brecon and Radnorshire | Electoral Commission Search
Recall petitions by numbers: Brecon and Radnorshire You are in the The process
to challenge a sitting MP: review of the 2019 recall petitions section Home Recall
petitions The process to challenge a sitting MP: review of the 2019 recall petitions
On this page Running the petition Signing the petition Campaigning First published:
10 October 2019 Last updated: 10 October 2019 Running the petition Notification of
petition Thursday 24 April Petition open Thursday 9 May-Thursday 20 June Number of
signing places (maximum of 10) 6 Extended hours (outside 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday
Open from 8am on Tuesdays; closed 8pm on Wednesdays Count Took place at 9am on Friday
21 June Signing the petition For a recall petition to result in an MP being recalled
over 10% of people eligible to sign must do so within the six-week signing period. We
can see from petition data that the majority of those who signed did so within the
first two weeks of the petition opening. How many people were eligible to sign 53,032
How many signatures needed to recall MP 5,303 Number who signed 10,005 - this was 19%
of people eligible to sign Spoilt signing papers 41 We can also see from this data
how people chose to sign the petition. How people chose to sign the petition
Campaigning People or organisations wishing to campaign for or against the recall
petition and intending to spend over £500 were required to notify the PO that they
wished to be a registered campaigner. There were three registered campaigners in
Brecon and Radnorshire who have submitted donation and spending returns. Spending and
donation returns

Appendix 1 of the Code of Conduct for Electoral Commissioners | Electoral Commission Search Appendix 1 of the Code of Conduct for Electoral Commissioners You are in the Code of Conduct for Electoral Commissioners section Home Commissioners Code of Conduct for Electoral Commissioners On this page Electoral Commissioner ceasing to hold office: Political exclusions Electoral Commissioner ceasing to hold office: - Other exclusions Duty not to disclose contents of Northern Ireland reports Elections: Requirement of secrecy Restrictions on use of full electoral register First published: 19 December 2022 Last updated: 17 June 2023

1. Electoral Commissioner ceasing to hold office: Political exclusions Sch. 1, para. 3, Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (3) Subject to sub-paragraph (3A), an Electoral Commissioner shall cease to hold office on the occurrence of any of the following events — (a) he consents to being nominated as a candidate at a relevant election (within the meaning of Part II) or to being included in a registered party's list of candidates at such an election; (b) he takes up any office or employment in or with — (i) a registered party or any accounting unit of such a party, (ii) a recognised third party (within the meaning of Part VI), (iii) a permitted participant (within the meaning of Part VII), or (iv) an accredited campaigner within the meaning of Schedule 3 to the Recall of MPs Act 2015 (see Part 5 of that Schedule); (c) he is named as a donor in — (i) the register of donations reported under Chapter 3 or 5 of Part 4 1 , (ii) any quarterly or weekly report delivered to the Commission under section 95A or 95B 2 , or (iii) any statement of donations included in a return delivered to the Commission under section 98 3 or 122 4 or in a recall petition return delivered to a petition officer under paragraph 6 of Schedule 5 to the Recall of MPs Act 2015; (c) (a) he is named as a participant in the register of recordable transactions reported under Part 4A; (d) he becomes a member of a registered party. (3A) Paragraph (d) of sub-paragraph (3) does not apply to a nominated Commissioner (within the meaning of section 3A).

2. Electoral Commissioner ceasing to hold office: - Other exclusions Sch. 1, paras. 4-6, Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (4) An Electoral Commissioner may be removed from office by Her Majesty in pursuance of an Address from the House of Commons (5) No motion shall be made for such an Address unless the Speaker's Committee have presented a report to the House of Commons stating that the Committee are satisfied that one or more of the following grounds is made out in the case of the Electoral Commissioner in question — (a) he has failed to discharge the functions of his office for a continuous period of at least 3 months; (b) he has failed to comply with the terms of his appointment; (c) he has been convicted of a criminal offence; (d) he is an undischarged bankrupt or his estate has been sequestrated in Scotland and he has not been discharged; (d)(a) a moratorium period under a debt relief order applies in relation to him (under Part 7A of the Insolvency Act 1986); (e) he has made an arrangement or composition contract with, or has granted a trust deed for, his creditors; (f) he is otherwise unfit to hold his office or unable to carry out its functions. (6) A motion for such an Address shall not be made on the ground mentioned in sub-paragraph (5)(a) if more than 3 months have elapsed since the end of the period in question.

3. Duty not to disclose contents of Northern Ireland reports s.71E Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 - Duty not to disclose contents of donation reports (A1) Subject to subsection (A2), this section applies only to a donation received by a Northern Ireland recipient before 1 July 2017. (A2) This section does not apply to a donation received before 1 July 2017 which is required to be recorded in a report (a) under section 62 in respect of a period beginning on or after 1 July 2017 because the donation is required by that section to be

aggregated with a donation received or transaction entered into on or after that date, or (b) under paragraph 10 of Schedule 7 delivered on or after 1 July 2017 because the donation is required by that paragraph to be aggregated with a donation received or a transaction entered into on or after that date. (1) A person who is or has been a member or employee of the Commission must not disclose any information which — (a) relates to a donation to which this section applies, and (b) has been obtained by the Commission in the exercise of their functions under this Part, except in the following cases. (2) Such information may be disclosed, for the purpose of verifying information given in a Northern Ireland report: (a) to a member or employee of the Commission, or (b) to such bodies as may be prescribed. (3) Such information may be disclosed for the purposes of any criminal or civil proceedings.

(4) Such information may be disclosed in accordance with any prescribed requirements if it relates to a donation which the Commission believe, on reasonable grounds, was a donation required to be dealt with in accordance with section 56(2) (donations from impermissible and unidentifiable donors). (5) A person who contravenes subsection (1) is guilty of an offence. (6) A person does not contravene subsection (1) if that person discloses information relating to a donation to which this section applies where — (a) the donation was received on or after 1 January 2014 but before 1 July 2017, (b) the Northern Ireland report recording the donation does not state that the donation was received before 1 July 2017, and (c) when the disclosure is made, the person believes that the donation was received on or after 1 July 2017 and is reasonably entitled to hold that belief. (7) A person does not contravene subsection (1) merely because — (a) the person discloses information relating to a transaction within section 71Z4(A3) (duty not to disclose contents of transaction reports: change to a transaction), and (b) that disclosure suggests that a donation was received before 1 July 2017 with which the transaction has been aggregated in accordance with — (i) sections 62 (quarterly donation reports: aggregation) and 71M (quarterly reports of regulated transactions: aggregation), or (ii) paragraph 10 of Schedule 7 (donation reports: aggregation) and paragraph 9 of Schedule 7A (transactions reports: aggregation). (8) A person does not contravene subsection (1) merely because— (a) the person discloses information relating to a donation or a transaction in accordance with this section or section 71Z4, and (b) the disclosure suggests that a donation was received before 1 July 2017 as a result of which section 62(6) or 71M(6) applies in relation to the donation or transaction mentioned in paragraph (a).

s.71Z4 Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 - Duty not to disclose contents of transaction reports (A1)

Subject to subsections (A2) and (A3), this section applies only to a transaction entered into by a Northern Ireland participant before 1 July 2017. (A2) This section does not apply to a transaction entered into before 1 July 2017 which is required to be recorded in a report — (a) under section 71M in respect of a period beginning on or after 1 July 2017 because the transaction is required by that section to be aggregated with a transaction entered into or a donation received on or after that date, or (b) under paragraph 9 of Schedule 7A delivered on or after 1 July 2017 because the transaction is required by that paragraph to be aggregated with a transaction entered into or a donation received on or after that date. (A3) This section does not apply to a transaction entered into on or after 1 January 2014 and before 1 July 2017 — (a) if a change to that transaction is required to be recorded in a report under section 71M in respect of a period beginning on or after 1 July 2017 because the change falls within section 71N(1) or (3), or (b) if a change to that transaction which takes effect on or after 1 July 2017 is required to be

recorded in a report under paragraph 11 of Schedule 7A because the change falls within sub-paragraph (3) or (5) of that paragraph. (A4) In subsection (A3), a reference to a change within section 71N(1) or paragraph 11(3) of Schedule 7A does not include a reference to a repayment of the whole of a debt (or all of the remaining debt) under a loan. (1) A person who is or has been a member or employee of the Commission must not disclose any information which — (a) relates to a transaction to which this section applies, and (b) has been obtained by the Commission in the exercise of their functions under this Part, except in the following cases. (2) Such information may be disclosed — (a)to a member or employee of the Commission, or (b) to such bodies as may be prescribed, for the purpose of verifying information given in a Northern Ireland report. (3) Such information may be disclosed for the purposes of any criminal or civil proceedings. (4) Such information may be disclosed in accordance with any prescribed requirements if it relates to a transaction which the Commission believe, on reasonable grounds, was a transaction which was required to be dealt with under section 71I or 71J or paragraph 5 or 6 of Schedule 7A (transactions involving unauthorised participants). (5) A person who contravenes subsection (1) is guilty of an offence. (6) A person does not contravene subsection (1) if that person discloses information relating to a transaction to which this section applies where — (a)the transaction was entered into on or after 1 January 2014 but before 1 July 2017, (b)the Northern Ireland report recording the transaction does not state that the transaction was entered into before 1 July 2017, and (c) when the disclosure is made, the person believes that the transaction was entered into on or after 1 July 2017 and is reasonably entitled to hold that belief. (7) A person does not contravene subsection (1) if that person discloses information relating to a transaction to which this section applies where — (a) the transaction was entered into on or after 1 January 2014 but before 1 July 2017, (b) a change to the transaction which took effect before 1 July 2017 is required to be recorded in a report under section 71M or paragraph 11 of Schedule 7A, (c)the Northern Ireland report recording the change does not state that it took effect before 1 July 2017, and (d) when the disclosure is made, the person believes that the change took effect on or after 1 July 2017 and is reasonably entitled to hold that belief. (8) A person does not contravene subsection (1) merely because — (a)the person discloses information relating to a transaction within subsection (A3), and (b)that disclosure suggests that a transaction was entered into before 1 July 2017 with which the transaction has been aggregated in accordance with section 71M (quarterly reports of regulated transactions: aggregation) or paragraph 9 of Schedule 7A (transactions reports: aggregation). (9) A person does not contravene subsection (1) merely because — (a) the person discloses information relating to a donation or a transaction in accordance with this section or section 71E, and (b) the disclosure suggests that a transaction was entered into before 1 July 2017 as a result of which section 71M(6) or 62(6) applies in relation to the transaction or donation mentioned in paragraph (a). 4 Elections: Requirement of secrecy s.66 Representation of the People Act 1983 (1) The following persons — (a)every returning officer and every presiding officer or clerk attending at a polling station, (b)every candidate or election agent or polling agent so attending, (c)every person so attending by virtue of any of sections 6A to 6D of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, (d) shall maintain and aid in maintaining the secrecy of voting and shall not, except for some purpose authorised by law, communicate to any person before the poll is closed any information as to — (i) the name of any elector or proxy for an elector who has or has not applied for a ballot paper or voted at a polling station; (ii) the number on the register of

electors of any elector who, or whose proxy, has or has not applied for a ballot paper or voted at a polling station; or (iii) the official mark. (2) Every person attending at the counting of the votes shall maintain and aid in maintaining the secrecy of voting and shall not — (a) ascertain or attempt to ascertain at the counting of the votes the number or other unique identifying mark on the back of any ballot paper; (b) communicate any information obtained at the counting of the votes as to the candidate for whom any vote is given on any particular ballot paper. (3) No person shall — (a) interfere with or attempt to interfere with a voter when recording his vote; (b) otherwise obtain or attempt to obtain in a polling station information as to the candidate for whom a voter in that station is about to vote or has voted; (c) communicate at any time to any person any information obtained in a polling station as to the candidate for whom a voter in that station is about to vote or has voted, or as to the number or other unique identifying mark on the back of the ballot paper given to a voter at that station; (d) directly or indirectly induce a voter to display his ballot paper after he has marked it so as to make known to any person the name of the candidate for whom he has or has not voted. (4) Every person attending the proceedings in connection with the issue or the receipt of ballot papers for persons voting by post shall maintain and aid in maintaining the secrecy of the voting and shall not — (a) except for some purpose authorised by law, communicate, before the poll is closed, to any person any information obtained at those proceedings as to the official mark; or (b) except for some purpose authorised by law, communicate to any person at any time any information obtained at those proceedings as to the number or other unique identifying mark on the back of the ballot paper sent to any person; or (c) except for some purpose authorised by law, attempt to ascertain at the proceedings in connection with the receipt of ballot papers the number or other unique identifying mark on the back of any ballot paper; or (d) attempt to ascertain at the proceedings in connection with the receipt of the ballot papers the candidate for whom any vote is given in any particular ballot paper or communicate any information with respect thereto obtained at those proceedings. (6) If a person acts in contravention of this section he shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months.

5 Restrictions on use of full electoral register

Reg. 100, para. 3, Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001

- See also - Reg. 99, para 3, Representation of the People (Scotland) Regulations 2001 - Reg. 99, para 3, Representation of the People (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2008

(3) Neither the Electoral Commissioners nor any person employed by the Commission may — (a) supply a copy of the full register other than to an Electoral Commissioner or another such person; (b) disclose any information contained in it that is not contained in the edited register otherwise than in accordance with paragraph (5) below; or (c) make use of any such information otherwise than in connection with their functions under, or by virtue of, the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.

(4) In paragraph (3) “Electoral Commissioner” includes a Deputy Electoral Commissioner and an Assistant Electoral Commissioner.

(5) The full register or any information contained in it and not in the edited register may not be disclosed otherwise than — (a) where necessary to carry out the Commission's duties in relation to the rules on permissible donors in the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000; or (b) by publishing information about electors which does not include the name or address of any elector.

Reviewed: March 2023

1. In relation to political parties, individuals and members' associations ■

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2. In relation to third parties ■

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footnote 2 3. In relation to third parties ■ Back to content at footnote 3 4. In relation to permitted participants ■ Back to content at footnote 4

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Remuneration and HR Committee You are in the How we make decisions section Home

How we make decisions On this page Upcoming meetings First published: 17 June 2019

Last updated: 25 August 2022 Overview The Remuneration and Human Resources Committee has been established to act as an advisory group on the extent to which organisational development and strategic HR matters support the Board's strategic direction for the Commission The Committee shall consist of three Electoral Commissioners and shall meet at least three times a year and at such other times as necessary. The minutes of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee will be circulated to all members of the Board at its next available meeting, for information. Upcoming meetings The meetings in 2022 and 2023 will be taking place on: 22 November 2022 21 March 2023 Related content Our Executive Team Meet our Executive Team, and find out more about them Our Senior Leadership Team Meet our Senior Leadership Group, and find out what they're responsible for Our salaries Find out about salaries over £60,000 and salary bands below £60,000 Audit and Risk Committee Find out about our Audit Committee, and read the minutes of past meetings

Report: 2018 recall petition in North Antrim | Electoral Commission Search Report: 2018 recall petition in North Antrim You are in the Recall petitions section Home Recall petitions On this page Summary How the recall petition was run Transparency and secrecy Further recommendations for change First published: 5 November 2018 Last updated: 29 July 2019 Overview From 8 August to 19 September 2018, electors in the constituency of North Antrim were able to take part in the first ever recall petition in the UK. This report covers how the petition was run and makes some recommendations for future recall petitions. Summary The North Antrim recall petition was the first to take place across the UK since the Recall of MPs Act was introduced in 2015. It was the first time the legislation was tested and has provided an opportunity to look at lessons to be learnt and improvements that could be made for any future recall petition in the UK. Our report is based on feedback from those who administered the petition and those who campaigned during the petition period, as well as our own observations. This highlighted a number of issues which would merit further consideration by the UK Government. However, it should be acknowledged that these are based on the experience of running only one recall petition, and different issues could arise if a recall petition were to take place in any other constituency in the UK. Findings and recommendations Overall we found that the Petition Officer successfully delivered all of her duties as required under the Act. There were no significant problems in the delivery of the recall petition which affected voters or any individuals or organisations wishing to campaign. We recognise that the decision to use only three signing places was the subject of much debate and criticism. However, we have found no evidence that an increased number of signing places would have contributed to a different result at the end of the recall petition. Feedback from those who worked and campaigned at the recall petition was that the six week signing period was too long. Concerns were also raised as to whether there was enough awareness amongst electors on how they could participate. In light of this we have recommended that the UK Government should: Consider whether a signing period of six weeks is appropriate and whether this should be changed for future recall petitions. Consider how electors can get information about the recall petition and how they can take part in it if they so wish. We have also asked the Government to explore what more can be done to improve transparency in the delivery of recall petitions whilst also ensuring that electors can have confidence in the integrity and secrecy of a petition How the recall petition was run Background On 26 July MPs voted to suspend Ian Paisley MP for North Antrim for 30 sitting days. This was in response to a report by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, which found that Mr Paisley had committed multiple breaches of the Code of Conduct for MPs in relation to two family holidays paid for by the Sri Lankan government. The Recall of MPs Act 2015 introduced a process where a sitting MP can lose their seat in the House of Commons if there is a successful petition to recall them. One of the conditions to trigger a recall petition is if an MP is barred from sitting in the House for 10 or more sitting days. As required under the Act, the Speaker of the House of Commons wrote to the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland, in her role as Petition Officer, to notify her that a recall petition should be opened in the constituency of North Antrim for a period of six weeks. The report We are required to publish a report on any recall petition after the end of the recall petition period. For this report we have gathered information from the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland; Electoral Commission representatives who observed at the signing places, verification and count; staff who worked at the signing places; and political parties and campaigners. Although we did not carry out research with the public we have taken into account any

comments made by electors to the Electoral Office, staff at the signing places and ourselves about their experience of signing the petition. The North Antrim recall petition was the first to take place across the UK and the first time the legislation was tested. It has provided an opportunity to look at lessons to be learnt and improvements that could be made for any future recall petition in the UK. However, it is important to bear in mind the unique political circumstances that can exist in any one constituency when considering what a recall petition might look like elsewhere in the UK. How the recall petition was run Roles and responsibilities The Petition Officer is the same person as the Returning Officer in a constituency. As the constituency where the petition took place was in Northern Ireland the Petition Officer was the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland. Her role was to: open a recall petition oversee the administration of the petition, including publishing a register of electors who can sign the petition and notifying those electors of the petition declare the result, including notifying the Speaker of the House of Commons receive donation and spending returns and make them available for public inspection We also has a number of roles in the recall petition process. This includes providing advice and guidance to help people running and taking part in the petition understand the rules. We can also seek forfeiture of impermissible donations, if necessary by court order. The police also have a role in recall petitions to investigate breaches of the rules set out in the Recall Act and to enforce compliance with the law.

Setting up the recall petition Notification of the recall petition Under the Recall Act the Petition Officer is required to designate a day for the petition to open no later than 10 days, or as soon as reasonably practical, after notification from the Speaker of the House of Commons. Within this time the Petition Officer was required to publish a register of electors who could sign the petition and notify them that the petition was taking place. The notification letter gave the elector information about: why the petition was taking place what would happen if the petition was successful and unsuccessful - either that a by-election would be held, or Ian Paisley MP would continue in his role how someone could sign the petition the address and a map of their designated signing place (including opening times) how to apply to sign by post or proxy the need to bring electoral ID (as required in Northern Ireland). A total of 75,428 electors were eligible to sign the petition at their allocated signing venue, or by applying to sign by post or proxy. There was little opportunity to allow for any new applications to register to be made given the requirement for a petition to be opened within 10 days of the notification being received from the Speaker. All of these requirements placed a considerable administrative burden on the Petition Officer and the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland, particularly as many senior staff were absent in the normally quieter summer months. Despite this, the Petition Officer successfully met all her statutory requirements within the required timeframes. The register was published on 3 August, notifications were sent to all electors on 6 and 7 August and the petition opened on 8 August. Signing places Under the Recall Act, the Petition Officer can designate up to 10 signing places where people can sign the petition. Signing places must be open for the six weeks of the recall petition on Monday to Friday between the hours of 9am and 5pm. However, the Petition Officer has discretion to extend these hours. The Petition Officer decided to use three places located in the main towns of the constituency – Ballymena, Ballymoney and Ballycastle. This meant that no elector would have to travel more than 15 minutes to get to their designated signing venue. Unlike elections in Northern Ireland, applications to vote by post or proxy could be made without having to provide a valid reason. This offered greater flexibility in how someone could sign

the petition. The decision to only use three signing places was met with opposition by a number of political parties. They highlighted that there were 53 polling places used in the constituency during the last election and that the decision to use only three places greatly reduced accessibility for electors, particularly for those living outside of the main towns. The Petition Officer did receive some complaints from electors about the choice of places, but we received no complaints from electors about their allocated signing place. It is difficult to judge what impact using more than three places for the recall petition would have had on electors in the constituency. We have seen no evidence that an increased number of signing places would have contributed to a different result at the end of the recall petition. The use of more places would have required additional staff and put extra pressure on the Petition Officer and her staff throughout the duration of the recall petition. We have no evidence that an increased number of signing places would have contributed to a different result at the end of the recall petition, but this needs to be considered in the context of an individual constituency, and balanced against the length of the signing period and the hours in which the signing places are open. Electors had six weeks in which to sign the petition at their designated venue and could also sign by post or appoint a proxy on demand. This is a significant factor to consider when compared to all other electoral events in Northern Ireland where electors are required to give a valid reason as to why they cannot attend their polling station in person. Opening hours of the recall petition Signing places were open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, for a period of six weeks. There was criticism from some political parties that the signing hours were a barrier for people working traditional full time working hours and therefore unable to sign the petition at their designated signing place. Comparisons were made with polling stations which are open from 7am to 10pm at elections and therefore recognise and facilitate the work and life commitments of many voters. To address this concern, the Petition Officer extended the opening hours of the signing places to 9pm on two evenings. However, this decision was only confirmed after electors were notified of their signing venue and opening hours of 9am to 5pm. The Petition Officer used media and social media in the constituency to highlight the extended hours and the deadline for postal and proxy applications but it is hard to assess what impact, if any, this may have had. However, the feedback from the Petition Officer suggests there was a small increase in the number of electors who signed on these days compared to other days. The six week signing period Commission representatives observed proceedings on 11 days during the six week period, including the two evenings when signing hours were extended. Our representatives spoke to petition staff at each of the signing places and watched as electors signed the petition. Overall, the feedback was that the signing places were quiet during most days of the recall petition. Overall feedback received from petition staff and those who campaigned at the recall petition was that the six week period was too long. The Petition Officer told us that at the start and the end of the six week period turnout was considerably higher than on some other days in the middle weeks, and on some days it was very low. On the first day of the recall petition there was significant media interest and queues at some of the signing places but it became quieter after that at each of the signing places. A number of alternative suggestions were proposed by petition staff and campaigners on how long a recall petition should last. These ranged from two to four weeks with longer opening hours and the availability of weekend signings. It was also suggested that the petition could be signed on one day as is the case with elections and referendums. It was suggested that reducing the length of the recall petition period would increase

accessibility to the overall process for electors. While there may be merit in some of these suggestions, further consideration would be needed on the wider implications of any such change. For example, longer opening hours could make the petition more accessible to people wanting to sign in person, but would have an impact for those running the petition, particularly in terms of staffing and resourcing. The UK Government should consider whether a signing period of six weeks is appropriate and whether this should be changed for future recall petitions.

Absent votes In total 3,233 postal signing papers were issued at the recall petition. Approximately 1,000 postal signing papers were not returned. A total of 10 electors chose to appoint a proxy. At the 2017 UK parliamentary general election, where electors were not allowed to have a postal vote on demand, 1,163 postal votes were issued in North Antrim, and 1,048 were returned. Overall the postal and proxy application process worked well and no significant issues emerged. The Petition Officer also asked Royal Mail to do a sweep of their sorting offices as the deadline approached to ensure that any postal signing papers could be included in the final count. A total of 12 signing papers were found during this sweep. As previously outlined, the fact that electors could apply for a postal signing paper 'on demand' during the six week period increased the accessibility of the recall petition as it offered electors choice via an alternative way to sign the petition if they were working, away from home, or were unable or who did not want to go to their designated signing place.

Verification of signing papers There is a requirement, under the Recall Act, for daily verification of signing papers to take place during a recall petition. This required the breaking of the seal of each ballot box and verifying the number of each signing paper within it. This process could be carried out by the Petition Officer or the Petition Clerk in each of the signing places. To maintain the security and integrity of the recall petition, the Petition Officer decided to complete the daily verification of the ballot boxes at the Belfast headquarters of the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland. This meant that the boxes were collected, delivered and returned each day between Belfast and the three signing places. The boxes were stored securely in Belfast each night.

Although this process worked well in practice, we think it lacked transparency. This is because the Recall Act makes no provision for observers and/or campaigners to observe this part of proceedings. The Petition Officer shared our concerns about the lack of transparency and therefore requested that Commission representatives attend every daily verification of the signing papers. We take a risk based approach to observing electoral events and did not believe attending every verification was necessary as we were satisfied with how the process was being conducted by the Petition Officer. However, Commission representatives were able to observe and attended verification on 15 evenings and were content with the processes put in place to manage the daily verification and how it was completed. Although we were satisfied with the processes put in place to manage the verification of signing papers at this recall petition, it is clear that more access to independent observation of this process would be beneficial to ensure confidence in its integrity. The UK Government should give careful consideration to how access to the recall petition proceedings can be enhanced so as to improve transparency.

The count The counting of signing papers commenced at 00:01 on Thursday 20 September. Although signing places closed at 5pm the previous day there was no provision within the Recall Act for when the count should start. The law was also unclear about the deadline for the receipt of postal signing papers. For this reason, the Petition Officer decided to commence the count after midnight to allow for any additional postal signing papers to be received. Commission staff attended the count and saw that, overall, the count process worked

well. Sufficient count staff were put in place and the overall management of the count was professional. The count was completed in approximately one hour and the Petition Officer notified the Speaker of the House of Commons of the result immediately. It was unclear from the provisions of the Act as to how the Speaker should be notified, but the Petition Officer had agreed in advance to email his office and await a reply. Once this was received the Petition Officer published the result and notified the media. In total, 9.4% of eligible electors signed the petition. This meant that the petition was unsuccessful and no by-election was triggered. Ian Paisley MP therefore kept his seat. Overall awareness of the recall petition In the absence of public opinion research or direct contact with electors it is difficult to gauge public opinion on the administration of the recall petition. Given the time constraints, and that this was a local issue within one constituency, we did not conduct any public opinion research as we would at major electoral events. However, the evidence available to us from our observations and feedback from campaigners and petition staff suggests that there may not have been a strong awareness amongst electors of the recall petition throughout the whole six week period. As expected, there was significant and intense interest in the run-up to and start of the petition by the media. However, this quickly diminished within a few days. Campaigning by the two registered campaigners was relatively low key and the sitting MP, Ian Paisley, did not actively campaign in the petition. A number of political parties told us that they felt there was an overall lack of public awareness of the recall petition. They argued that, as this was different from an election, many of those who could sign the petition were unaware of how the process was run or how they could participate. It was suggested to us by one political party that some electors only realised the petition was over when the result was announced in the media. One political party also highlighted to us that, although much was made of the increased availability of postal and proxy signing, many electors did not know what 'on demand' applications meant or how they could apply for one. It is not possible to know if this had any impact at the North Antrim recall petition, and there is no evidence available to suggest it would have changed the result. However, it is important to emphasise that a recall petition is different from an election. At an election promoting awareness and encouraging participation are possible without appearing to favour any particular candidate or party. This is not the case with a recall petition where there is a significant risk that actively encouraging participation could be seen as taking a side and could therefore potentially undermine the integrity of the recall petition. It may be the case that when the Recall Act was introduced there was an expectation that campaigners themselves would raise awareness of the recall petition and how electors could take part. However the general lack of campaigning in North Antrim may have contributed to a lack of awareness of a new process being run for the first time. Government and Petition Officers at future recall petitions should consider further ways of how electors can get information about the recall petition and how they can take part in it if they so wish. Any changes to how a recall petition is promoted should be clearly set out in legislation with clearly defined instructions on the actions a Petition Officer should take. Transparency and secrecy Concerns were raised at an early stage of the recall petition by some campaigners about a 'lack of secrecy' which may have stopped some electors from signing the petition. This was because when an elector entered a room at a signing place it was clear that their intention was to sign the petition to unseat their MP and trigger a by-election. The feedback we received from petition staff was that this seemed odd when compared to an electoral event where the

elector's decision remains secret throughout. The Petition Officer was aware of this issue and made efforts to ensure there was a balance between privacy and ease of access for electors at the signing places. During the recall petition period the rooms used within some of the signing places did change to address this, but this was often met with further criticism around accessibility and privacy. In our view, the rooms used were suitable for the recall petition but we recognise that some concerns were raised about the room used in the Ballymena signing place as it was clearly visible from the reception area and close to the front door of the leisure centre. We received no complaints from electors around secrecy or intimidation at any of the signing places. Anyone who had concerns about signing at a signing place had the option to sign by post or appointing a proxy, which would offer greater secrecy.

Petition Officers at future recall petitions should take into account the need for privacy when allocating signing places within their constituency. Transparency and Secrecy Access to the marked register The wording on the official petition notice sent to electors stated that the marked register would be available for public inspection after the petition if there was suspected fraud. However, there is no actual provision in the legislation that would have allowed the marked register in North Antrim to be made available for public inspection, or for it to be supplied to the police, the Electoral Commission or anyone who requested it. The Petition Officer made clear that her intention was that the marked register would not be available at all for public inspection. This is different from Great Britain, where there is provision in the legislation for the marked register to be made available for inspection after a recall petition in the event of potential fraud. It is not clear whether this was a deliberate policy difference or an accidental omission in the legislation, but it does raise questions about the secrecy of the recall petition. At elections the marked register is made available to political parties to assist in campaigning at future elections. Although it indicates that an elector did vote, it in no way shows how the elector voted. This is not the case with the marked register at a recall petition which would show that someone had signed the petition with the intention of unseating their MP. We recommend that the UK Government review the purpose and workings of the provision to access the marked register ahead of any future recall petition in order to ensure the appropriate balance is struck between maintaining secrecy and challenging fraud. Observing the recall petition Independent observation is an important part of any democratic process. For over a decade we have accredited hundreds of electoral observers who have attended and observed the electoral process in action. However, under the current legislation, the opportunity to observe proceedings at a recall petition is limited only to Commission representatives: Electoral Commissioners and staff of the Electoral Commission. Individuals and organisations accredited as electoral observers are not entitled to observe any proceedings within a signing place, the issue and receipt of postal signing papers, or verification of the signing papers. Accredited individual electoral observers can attend the counting of signatures, but those nominated by an accredited organisation cannot. It may be the case that this was a deliberate policy decision to ensure the secrecy of the recall petition and to prevent individuals or organisations from working out if the 10% threshold had been reached before the end of the petition period. We received no queries from accredited observers who wished to attend proceedings at the recall petition and only one accredited individual observer attended the count. It would be helpful for future recall petitions for the UK Government to clarify its rationale for limiting observation of the process and to consider if anything further can be done to enhance transparency and confidence in

the recall petition process. Integrity of the recall petition Despite concerns around transparency, we are satisfied that the integrity of this recall petition was maintained throughout. We received no complaints regarding allegations of fraud and saw no evidence of fraud during the six week signing period. Further recommendations for change Throughout the duration of the recall petition, the Commission and the Petition Officer identified a number of inconsistencies and omissions in the legislation. This may be expected given that this is the first time that the legislation has been tested. While many of these are minor, they can create an additional administrative burden and a lack of clarity that could impact on the successful delivery of a recall petition. The UK Government should consider opportunities that are available to make amendments ahead of any future recall petition. We have addressed some of these changes in our report, including access to the marked register and observation of proceedings, but draw particular attention to the following: Further recommendations for change Close of the recall petition Although the legislation states that signing places must be open at least from 9am to 5pm, there is no clear provision for what time the recall petition should close on the final day. This needs to be addressed as currently postal signing papers can still be returned on the final day up until 11.59 as there is no deadline for the receipt of postal signing papers. The lack of certainty around timing meant that the count did not commence until 00:01 on Thursday 20 September when the Petition Officer was satisfied the petition was closed. Notifying the speaker The Petition Officer must notify the Speaker of the House of Commons of the result before an announcement is made. However, there is no provision in law as to how this should happen and in what form the notification should be made. There is an expectation for instant news amongst the public, and clarity on this process would assist the Petition Officer in their planning process. There is also no provision to notify the MP who is subject to the recall petition of the result. Consideration should be given to addressing this issue ahead of any future recall petition. Appointing a Deputy Petition Officer There is currently no provision to allow for the Petition Officer to appoint a Deputy to act on their behalf. During daily verification of ballot boxes only the Petition Officer or Petition Clerk at a signing venue can break the seal. At the North Antrim recall petition this meant that the Petition Officer was required to be present every evening for the daily verification for the entire six week period. This created an unnecessary burden on the Petition Officer and the UK Government should consider enabling the Petition Officer to appoint a Deputy to assist them in delivering their duties. Prohibition on the publication of exit polls Under the current rules for a recall petition, it is forbidden to publish a statement that could indicate if an individual has signed the petition or not. It also prohibits publication of any forecasts on the result of the petition. This provision caused concern and confusion among campaigners, the media and the public. As currently drafted it appears that anyone who makes any statement on turnout or about individuals who sign the petition would be guilty of an offence. This could be punishable by a fine or imprisonment of up to six months. For example, two elected representatives were spoken to by the Police for making remarks online that gave some suggestion as to what turnout may have been at points during the recall petition process. Although the original intention may have been to maintain secrecy of the recall petition it is not clearly defined as to how this should be done in practice. As such it would be beneficial if more clarity and guidance on this provision was put in place ahead of any future recall petitions. Related content The process to challenge a sitting MP: review of the 2019 recall petitions Read our review of the 2019 recall petitions Past elections

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You are in the Corporate plan 2022/23 to 2026/27 section Home Our plans and priorities Corporate plan 2022/23 to 2026/27 First published: 25 April 2022 Last updated: 25 April 2022 Overview We are led by a Board of Commissioners, who set the strategic direction and are responsible for our work. The Board is made up of ten Commissioners, one of whom is the Chair. Three of the Commissioners are appointed to represent Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales respectively. These Commissioners provide advice and support in relation to these nations of the UK. They also advise on the impact of our work and are consulted by the Commission Board on matters in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Four of the Commissioners are nominated by the leaders of political parties: one by the party with the largest number of MPs in the UK Parliament, two more by the second and third largest parties respectively, and one by the other political parties with two or more MPs elected to and having taken their seats in the UK Parliament. The remaining two Commissioners have no specific brief, which enables them to bring their expertise and experience to work areas for the Commission as the need arises. All Commissioners are appointed by Her Majesty the Queen, on a motion of Parliament. As part of the Corporate Framework the Board has two sub-committees: the Audit and Risk Committee and the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee. Both are chaired by Commissioners. Alongside the Board of Commissioners, we also consult regularly with the UK Parliamentary Parties' Panel, and equivalent Panels for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. These were set up to allow political parties to give us feedback about matters affecting them. We also consult with other advisory groups. The Chief Executive is the Accounting Officer. We are accountable to the UK Parliament, the Scottish Parliament and the Senedd.

Navigation 11. Managing risk and opportunities Section 11 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan Corporate plan 2022/23 to 2026/27 There are five objectives in our corporate plan, which all contribute to our vision that people trust, value and take part in elections.

Investigations On this page Overview Summary Background on Momentum Non-party campaigners Members association Our investigation Further information Offences committed as a non-party campaigner Offences committed as a members association Further information on legislation First published: 6 March 2019 Last updated: 6 March 2019 Overview We have investigated Momentum for failing to comply with political finance laws, both as a members association and when campaigning in the 2017 general election. We concluded that Momentum committed offences, and we have fined them £16,700. Non-party campaigners are essential for a healthy democracy. But just as crucial is that after a poll, voters can see complete and accurate spending returns. This is the biggest fine that we have to date levied on a non-party campaigner for the submission of an inaccurate spending return. It reflects Momentum's repeated revisions to their spending return, poor record keeping and failure to follow our advice prior to the election. It is incumbent on non-party campaigners and members associations to invest properly in having the right processes and staff to meet their obligations. Summary Momentum was a non-party campaigner in the 2017 general election. Afterwards, as required, it submitted a report of its election spending by the required deadline. However, the report was not accurate and Momentum subsequently delivered four further versions after the deadline, each of which reported different amounts of donations and spending. We opened an investigation on 16 November 2017 to determine whether Momentum broke political finance laws – set out in the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act (PPERA) 2000 – when it delivered the inaccurate report. While investigating, we found evidence that Momentum may have committed further offences, this time in its capacity as a members association, in 2016 and 2017. We expanded the investigation accordingly. We have concluded that Momentum committed a number of offences, and we have imposed fines totalling £16,700. The offences spanned 2016 and 2017. This is the biggest fine that we have imposed on a non-party campaigner for the submission of an inaccurate spending return to date. Offences as a non-party campaigner We have determined that Puru Miah, the then responsible person for Momentum as a recognised non-party campaigner at the 2017 general election, committed: one offence under section 98(4)(b) PPERA of failing, without reasonable excuse, to submit a post poll donation report that was complete and accurate. The return omitted £22,958.46 of reportable donations. We have fined Momentum £2,700 for this offence one offence under section 98(4)(b) PPERA of failing, without reasonable excuse, to provide all required invoices with the spending return. We have fined Momentum £250 for this offence one offence under section 98(4)(b) PPERA of failing, without reasonable excuse, to submit a spending report that was complete and accurate. We have fined Momentum £12,150 for this offence one offence under section 99(1) PPERA of failing to provide the required declaration to accompany the post poll donations report. We have fined Momentum £250 for this offence Offences as a members association We have determined that: Michael Chessum, the then responsible person for Momentum as a members association, and Momentum itself, committed an offence each under paragraph 12(1)(b) of Schedule 7 of PPERA. Mr Chessum failed to report a donation of £10,000 within 30 days of accepting it. The donation was received on 21 July 2016 but not reported to us until 19 January 2019. We have fined Momentum £900 for this offence Mohammed Afridi, the then responsible person for Momentum as a members association, and Momentum itself, committed an offence each under paragraph 12(1)(b) of Schedule 7 PPERA. Mr Afridi failed to report a donation of £8,000 within 30 days of accepting

it. The donation was received on 3 May 2017 but not reported to us until 17 July 2018. We have fined Momentum £450 for this offence Momentum Momentum was founded in 2015. In February 2016, the National Steering Committee met and agreed a membership structure, and in January 2017, Momentum introduced a constitution which states that Momentum activists must also be or become members of the Labour Party. Momentum campaigned in support of the Labour Party in the UK Parliamentary General Election (UKPGE) held on 8 June 2017. The Labour Party did not authorise Momentum to spend in excess of the limits for targeted spending. Non-party campaigners Non-party campaigners are individuals and organisations that campaign in the run up to elections but do not stand as political parties or candidates. Under PPERA, there are rules on what non-party campaigners can spend on regulated campaign activity in the run-up to elections. Non-party campaigners which intended to spend in excess of £20,000 in England or £10,000 in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland at the UKPGE held on 8 June 2017 were required to register with us. PPERA sets out the limits on controlled expenditure for non-party campaigners. These limits are lower for non-party campaigners that wish to undertake 'targeted spending', if they do not have the authorisation of the political party that they are promoting. This is spending intended to influence people to vote for one particular registered political party or any of its candidates. The limits are: £31,980 in England £3,540 in Scotland £2,400 in Wales £1,080 in Northern Ireland If the political party that is being promoted provides its authorisation, the non-party campaigner is entitled to spend up to the limit authorised by the political party. Any spending by that non-party campaigner up to that limit would count towards the party's national spending limit. Following the 2017 general election, registered non-party campaigners which spent less than £250,000 were required to submit their post poll returns detailing expenditure and donations no later than 8 September 2017. PPERA requires that the post poll return must include certain information, including: a statement of all payments made in respect of controlled expenditure incurred by or on behalf of the non-party campaigner during the relevant period in the relevant part or parts of the UK a statement of relevant donations received by the non-party campaigner in respect of the relevant election which complies with the reporting requirements the return must be accompanied by all invoices or receipts relating to payments in excess of £200 It is an offence in each instance for the responsible person to, without reasonable excuse, deliver a return which does not comply with these requirements. For a non-party campaigner, a relevant donation is one made to them for the purpose of meeting controlled expenditure incurred by or on behalf of that third party. When the return is delivered to us, it must be accompanied by declarations signed by the person responsible for expenditure and donations. The declaration for donations confirms that: all relevant donations recorded in the return are from permissible donors no other relevant donations have been accepted in respect of the relevant election during the regulated period The responsible person commits an offence if they fail to provide the declaration. Members association A members association is not a political party. It is an organisation made up wholly or mainly of members of a single registered political party. The responsible person for a members association is either the treasurer, if there is one, or the person who is notified to us as the responsible person. Members associations which accept donations in excess of £7,500 that are provided to support their political activities must report these within 30 days of acceptance. Failure to report such donations to us within the time required, without reasonable excuse, is an offence by the members association and by the responsible person. Our investigation We investigated whether Momentum had broken

campaign finance laws after we received a non-compliant spending and donation report following the general election. While investigating, we found evidence that Momentum may have committed further offences, this time in its capacity as a members association in 2016 and 2017. We expanded the investigation accordingly. Background to the investigation On 8 September 2017, Momentum delivered its spending return for the 2017 general election. We identified a number of issues with the return. We corresponded with Momentum, during the course of which Momentum delivered two updated spending reports, on 10 November 2017 and 13 November 2017, and an updated donations report also on 13 November 2017. As a result, we reasonably suspected that the original return was wrong. We opened an investigation on 16 November 2017, examining: issues with Momentum's reporting of donations and spending missing invoices a missing declaration whether Momentum's spending may have exceeded the legal limits We obtained evidence suggesting that Momentum may have failed to report donations received as a members association, and expanded the scope of the investigation to review this as well. We also sought to obtain a full and correct record of its election spending. Further information Evidence During the investigation we obtained evidence from: Momentum Mr Miah the registered trade union, Transport Salaried Staffs Association (TSSA) Mr Afidi and Mr Chessum The evidence we looked at included: a third version of the spending report provided by Momentum on 22 January 2018 advice we provided to Momentum before the general election explanations from Momentum Momentum's financial records including: bank and PayPal statements payroll information credit card statements invoices transaction reports internal Momentum documents including: internal reports meeting minutes and agendas internal correspondence and guidance internal financial reporting documentation correspondence between Momentum and TSSA internal TSSA emails provided by TSSA Working with Momentum Momentum did not cooperate fully during the investigation. Momentum provided some but not all requested information and explanation, but also repeatedly queried the basis for our investigation and the information we requested. Some explanations were contradicted by later explanations and the evidence. Our need to make repeated requests for clarification, as well as a significant number of extensions requested and granted to Momentum to respond, significantly added to the length and complexity of the investigation. Mr Miah offered to provide a further version of the return and the outstanding information we had requested. We invited him, on the basis that information would be provided, and he agreed, to attend a voluntary interview to provide explanation. The interview was to take place in October 2018, but Mr Miah did not provide the information and further version of the return he had previously agreed to give us. We did not therefore proceed with the interview. We were satisfied at that time that we had given Momentum and Mr Miah sufficient opportunity to explain the regulated expenditure at the general election and to provide any explanation they wished us to consider. We decided to conclude the investigation in November 2018 as we did not consider it proportionate or in the public interest to pursue the investigation further, based on: the number of offences that we were satisfied were proven beyond reasonable doubt Mr Miah and Momentum's failure to provide the outstanding information and explanations the time and resource spent on the investigation to date Our determinations In November 2018, we were satisfied there was sufficient evidence to make initial determinations on the offences under investigation. We issued a statutory notice to Momentum under Schedule 19C of PPERA setting out our initial determinations and proposing penalties. The notice invited Momentum to make representations within the statutory 28 day period. On 17 January 2019, Momentum delivered its representations in respect of the proposed penalties. An

outstanding donation report from 2016 and a partial post poll report detailing an outstanding donation were also provided at this time. We considered these carefully before making a final determination on offences and penalties. We issued our final determinations and penalties to Momentum on 4 March 2019. Offences committed as a non-party campaigner Mr Miah committed four offences in respect of the post poll reporting of expenditure and donations following the general election. Momentum and the relevant responsible persons committed offences for failing to report donations received by Momentum in its capacity as a members association during 2016 and 2017. Incomplete spending return Mr Miah gave us a general election spending return on behalf of Momentum that was incomplete, as it: failed to provide an accurate statement of payments made failed to provide all required invoices or receipts omitted donations failed to provide a required declaration to accompany the donations report We did not find an offence in respect of incurring expenditure in excess of country limits. Statement of payments made Statement of payments made The spending return did not comply with the requirement to provide an accurate statement of all payments incurred by or on behalf of Momentum in respect of controlled expenditure. The statement of payments submitted to us was incorrect because: UK-wide spending was attributed to Northern Ireland despite the Labour Party standing no candidates there a number of payments were missed from all versions of the return that Momentum submitted a number of reported items did not match the contemporaneous financial records of Momentum a large number of items, including salaries, were split between regulated and unregulated expenditure, using a different formula to split them in each version of the return we received. In all cases, a number of the formulae were incorrect and in direct contradiction to our advice and guidance The overall amendments made to the statement of payments in each version of the report were: 8 September 2017: Momentum listed spending of £40,186.92 in their statement of payments made. But the form stated the total was £32,316.57 as a large number of figures were given as negative amounts or miscalculated totals 10 November 2017: Momentum amended 29 lines of spending and declared £36,033.37 in their statement of payments made 10 November 2017: a further 13 lines of expenditure were amended bringing the amount declared on their statement of payments to £34,917.06 22 January 2018: Momentum submitted a further statement of payments which amended 43 lines of expenditure, in some cases reinstating previously removed amounts which declared a total of £32,591.14 These refer only to the statement of payments made and do not include notional expenditure which is reported elsewhere in the return but which does count towards the spending limits. Other inaccuracies in the statement of payments made Northern Ireland Each return Momentum provided to us had apportioned UK wide expenditure to Northern Ireland. The Labour Party did not stand candidates in Northern Ireland, and so no controlled expenditure can be attributed to it. This expenditure should have been apportioned across England, Scotland and Wales where the Labour Party did stand candidates. Items that didn't match the financial records The reported salaries of two press officers who worked on the Stoke and Copeland by-elections did not match any salaries paid during that period according to Momentum's internal records. Momentum failed to provide the names of those press officers so that we could reconcile the figures. Items not included in the return Our analysis of Momentum's financial records indicated that spending totalling at least £1,075.06 was missing from the return. The figure may in fact be higher, because we are not satisfied that salary costs included in this amount are correct. Spending split between regulated and non-regulated expenditure Momentum amended various formulae used to calculate reportable elements of larger payments, for example, in relation to

a text messaging service. Momentum was unable to provide records from the time of the campaign period to explain the way it split salaries for staff between regulated spending (which forms a significant proportion of their reported expenditure) and non-regulated spending. In the case of the apportionment of staff time to campaigning emails sent to both members (not reportable) and non-members (reportable), Momentum used a formula contrary to the one we advised, which gave a significantly lower attribution to regulated spending than would have been the case had it followed our advice. There are other issues regarding the apportionment of spending, including staff salaries and smaller items, in which an incorrect apportionment formula was applied contrary to our guidance. Momentum was unable to provide any documentation from the time of the campaign which would have allowed us to correctly apportion the spending, due to a failure to keep and maintain records from that time.

Conclusions

We are satisfied that the report of regulated payments made for the 2017 general election submitted to us by Momentum was inaccurate in numerous ways. The failure to keep and maintain proper records of the split of expenditure between regulated and unregulated expenditure mean that we are still not satisfied that either we or Momentum have an accurate record of regulated expenditure by Momentum at the 2017 general election.

Omitted invoice

Mr Miah failed to comply with the requirement to provide all required invoices or receipts with Momentum's spending return. An invoice for a payment to Facebook of £492.41, incurred on 30 May 2017 and paid on 3 June 2017, was not included. Mr Miah said that the omission was due to human error and inadequate systems.

Omitted donations

Momentum was required to include a donations report as part of the post poll return. On 8 September 2017 Mr Miah stated that Momentum had received no donations in excess of £7,500 and had received £7,300 of donation in excess of £500 (but less than £7,500). The amount received was amended to £7,500 by Mr Miah on 13 November. However the donations report did not include a further five cash donations with a combined value of £12,620, and one non-cash donation of £10,338.46.

Omitted cash and non cash donations

Omitted cash donations

During the investigation, Momentum confirmed that the cash donations were not reported to us in the post poll report as required. All cash donations were reported in an amended post poll return on 17 July 2018.

Omitted non-cash donation

Momentum received a non-cash donation in the form of office space from the registered union the Transport Salaried Staff Association (TSSA) with a value of £10,338.46 on 27 April 2017. Mr Afidi, Momentum's secretary as a non-party campaigner at the time, appears to have attempted to report it to us on 16 May 2017 in a pre-poll report, but did not complete the submission. The pre-poll reporting period did not begin until 3 May 2017 and this donation was received on 27 April 2017, so it did not need to be reported during the pre-poll reporting period.

However, Momentum then failed to report this donation in the post poll report. Momentum told us that this donation was not made for the purposes of the general election. However, we saw evidence to the contrary, including internal Momentum documentation citing the donation as provided following the announcement of the general election. We also saw correspondence between Momentum and TSSA in which a senior representative of Momentum requested the use of the ground floor of Walkden House "for the duration of the general election campaign". Momentum reported this donation on 19 January 2019.

Declaration accompanying donations report (spending return)

When Mr Miah delivered the report of donations that formed part of Momentum's general election spending return he was required to sign a declaration that confirmed that the donations reported in the return were from permissible donors and that no other

relevant donations had been accepted. He did not do this. On 13 November 2017 Mr Miah provided an amended report, this time using our correct form, with a signed declaration. Spending limits Spending limits The spending limits in each nation for Momentum at the 2017 general election (excluding Northern Ireland where there were no Labour candidates) were: £31,980 in England £3,540 in Scotland £2,400 in Wales £37,920 in total Momentum's original return disclosed spending that exceeded country limits. However, Momentum's subsequent amendments had the effect of reducing the reported spending but still reported an excess above the limit of expenditure in Wales. We have not found evidence that Mr Miah committed an offence of incurring controlled expenditure in excess of the limit set out in Schedule 10 PPERA where he knew or ought reasonably to have known that the spending would exceed that limit, which is an offence under section 94E(2) PPERA. We found some evidence indicating spending in excess of the limits. However, we were unable to make a finding of an offence as the information Momentum provided, and which we believe they hold, was not adequate to provide a reliable record of their controlled spending. Offences committed as a members association Momentum was, and is, a members association as defined by PPERA. Mr Michael Chessum volunteered to be treasurer of Momentum, and appointed as treasurer shortly after February 2016. He was thus its responsible person under electoral law. On 17 February 2017 Mohammed Afzadi became the responsible person. Sanction decision Sanction decision We took our findings and Momentum's representations on these offences into account, and issued a penalty of: £2,700 for the failure, without reasonable excuse, to report all donations in the spending return £250 for the failure, without reasonable excuse, to provide an invoice with the spending return £12,150 for the failure, without reasonable excuse, to provide a complete spending return £250 for the failure to provide the required declaration to accompany the post-poll donations report £900 for the failure, without reasonable excuse, to report a £10,000 donation from TSSA £450 for the failure, without reasonable excuse, to report a £8,000 donation from TSSA £10,000 cash donation from Transport Salaried Staffs Association £10,000 cash donation from Transport Salaried Staffs Association Momentum received and accepted a cash donation from the Transport Salaried Staffs Association (TSSA) on 21 July 2016. Mr Chessum and Momentum were therefore required to deliver a report of this donation to us by 21 August 2016. This donation from TSSA was reported to us on 17 January 2019, almost two and a half years after it was received and accepted, and following an investigation and the issuing of the notice of proposed sanctions to Momentum. Momentum stated that there was confusion amongst its staff as to whether this donation was reportable. The donation was accepted by Momentum, and Mr Chessum was, as a matter of fact, the responsible person at the time, even signing a report relating to another donation on 15 July 2016. Had the evidence supported the statement that half the donation was intended for a separate organisation, Momentum and Mr Chessum would still have been required to report the £5,000 as it would have aggregated with other amounts received from TSSA. Mr Chessum and Momentum both committed an offence in failing, without reasonable excuse, to deliver a report of that donation of £10,000 to us within 30 days of it being accepted. £8,000 cash donation from Transport Salaried Staffs Association £8,000 cash donation from Transport Salaried Staffs Association Mohammed Afzadi became the responsible person for Momentum, as a members association, on 17 February 2017. Momentum received a cash donation of £8,000, also from the TSSA, on 3 May 2017. On 16 May 2017, Mr Afzadi tried to report this donation under the pre-poll reporting requirements for the 2017 general election, using our online reporting system. But not all of the required

information was provided, and he failed to complete the submission. In any event, the donation was not reportable under those requirements and needed to be reported as made to a members association. Mr Afidi and Momentum gave us conflicting accounts about this donation including that the organisation and Mr Afidi were unaware of receiving this donation. However, we are satisfied on the evidence that Mr Afidi was made aware of the donation prior to 16 May 2017. This was clear in a number of internal Momentum documents from the time, as well as his own unsuccessful attempt at reporting the donation in a pre-poll return. The donation was reported on 17 July 2018. Mr Afidi and Momentum both committed an offence in failing, without reasonable excuse, to deliver a report of that donation to us within 30 days of it being accepted. Further information on legislation You can find PPERA on the government's legislation website. The relevant sections and schedules are: Section 86 (valuing notional expenditure) Section 88(1) (definition of a recognised third party) Section 94D (limits on controlled expenditure). We also provided guidance on this Section 94E (exceeding targeted expenditure limits) Section 96 (controlled expenditure return, requirements) Section 98 (controlled expenditure return, offence) Section 99 (donations declaration, requirement) Schedule 7 (definition of a members association and rules associated with reporting) Schedule 10 Paragraph 2 (attribution of expenditure to different parts of the UK) Schedule 11 Paragraph 1(4) (donations declaration, relevant donation) Schedule 11, paragraph 5 (valuing in kind donation) Related content about our enforcement work Electoral law is out of date. Find out where we want to see improvements Political parties, campaigners and other groups have to report their finances to us. Find out about campaign spending, donations and loans and annual accounts.

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Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Who was at the meeting Welcomes and apologies Declarations of interests Minutes Commission Board action tracker Chief Executive's update Forward Plan of Board business 2022/23 and 2023/24 Board effectiveness review 2022/23 Main Estimate 2023/24 budgets Board skills matrix and succession planning Improvements to registration and voting: increasing resilience and participation Embedding and advancing equality, diversity and inclusion in the Electoral Commission First published: 24 February 2023 Last updated: 25 February 2023 None Date: Tuesday 17 January 2023 Location: Bunhill Row, London, and by Video conference Date of next scheduled Board meeting: Friday 17 February 2023 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Pullinger Chair Rob Vincent Sue Bruce Alex Attwood Sarah Chambers Stephen Gilbert Roseanna Cunningham Chris Ruane Katy Radford Elan Closs Stephens In attendance: Shaun McNally Chief Executive Kieran Rix Director, Finance and Corporate Services Craig Westwood Director, Communications, Policy and Research Ailsa Irvine Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Louise Edwards Director, Regulation Binnie Goh General Counsel Sal Naseem Independent Adviser to the Commission Board on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Matt Pledger Senior Adviser, Governance Zena Khan Senior Adviser, Governance Adrian Green Regional Manager London and South West [item 1] Alexander Marks Regional Liaison Officer Eastern [item 1] Amy Symons Improvement Manager [item 1] Elizabeth Gorst Regional Liaison Officer South West and London [item 1] Gulderen Harwood Regional Liaison Officer Midlands [item 1] Heather Bush Regional Manager Eastern [item 1] Jenny Mitchelmore Business Support Officer [item 1] Kathryn Dunn Regional Liaison Officer [North] [item 1] Margaret Lavery Regional Liaison Officer ([item 1] Melanie Davidson Head of Support and Improvement [item 1] Peter Forrester Regional Manager North [item 1] Mark Williams Policy Manager [item 10] Tom Hawthorn Head of Policy [item 10] Suzanne Miller Senior Adviser, Policy [item 10] Carol Sweetenham Head of Projects [item 11] Welcomes and apologies The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and noted that there were no apologies for absence. The Board noted with sadness that over the New Year our colleague Mark Nicholls, a Senior Advisor in the Regulatory Support Team, passed away following a short illness. Mark first joined the Commission in 2007 as Senior Political Parties Liaison Officer in the Scotland team. He was already well known to his colleagues through his work with the Scottish Executive on e-counting for the 2007 Scottish elections and developed good relationships with political parties across Scotland. Mark was an integral part of the Scotland team until the end of 2010, when he went off to work in electoral registration, showing his continued interest in and commitment to all things 'democracy'. The relationships Mark built across the electoral community, including but not limited to the Commission, over his career were strong, and for many he was a friend as well as a colleague. As well as being highly expert and professional, he was always warm and friendly and had a fantastic sense of humour. Everyone he worked with across the Commission have good memories and stories of their time working with him. Mark will be very much missed. The Board welcomed the Regional Teams who outlined their work, explaining that they were one of two parts of the Support and Improvement team, with their focus being on supporting and challenging 311 local authorities across the 9 regions of England. The Board noted that the Regional Managers were the first point of contact with a range of stakeholders including Returning Officers across England. Members of the team explained how they were proactive in their engagement and how they use the performance standards frameworks to inform and frame their interactions

with local authorities. The Board thanked the team for their time and updates.

Declarations of interests The Board noted an updated declarations of interests from: Commissioner Alex Attwood: Declaration of financial interest: undertaking research on general policing issues which come before the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) and its committees in connection with the role of a member of the NIPB. Member of the Electoral Commission for Ireland ("An Coimisiún") The Board noted that Commissioners, the Executive Team and Independent Advisers declarations of interests were recently updated, and that these registers would be published on the external website shortly.

Minutes (EC 167/23) Resolved: That the Board agreed the minutes of the Board meeting 23 November 2022, subject to minor amendments. Matters arising: That the Board noted that the Director, Regulation would circulate information to the Independent Adviser to the Audit and Risk Committee, regarding the closed project to redevelop Political Finance Online. Commission Board action tracker (EC 168/23) The Board requested that the open actions include detail as to progress on each item. The Board noted that the note covering actions with progress, taken at the Belfast Board Away Day, was still to be circulated to commissioners and attendees for information. The Board requested that the 'Write Off' report be periodically circulated for information to commissioners. Resolved: That the Board noted the progress against actions. Chief Executive's update (EC 169/23) The Chief Executive reported that the team was undertaking engagement work with a range of Parliamentary Committees, including in relation to the Strategy and Policy Statement (SPS). Engagement has also been undertaken with non-party campaigners. The Director, Regulation reported to the Board that consultations arising from Elections Act provisions have proceeded well, with strong engagement from stakeholders. A consultation on statutory guidance for digital imprints closed before Christmas, and a consultation on a Code of Practice for third party campaigners closes on 20 January 2023. Reports will be drafted following the consultations. The Director, Regulation reported that both projects are on track for delivery to the Department of Levelling Up and Housing officials in the agreed timeframes. The Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance updated the Board on progress with the implementation of voter ID and the new accessibility provisions which come into effect from the May 2023 elections, and in preparations for the subsequent tranches of changes arising from the Elections Act 2022. On devolved electoral reform and the Welsh and Scottish Government consultations, the first has been responded to and work is being undertaken on developing a response to the second for a mid-March deadline. The Director of Communications, Policy and Research provided the Board an update on the voter ID campaign, which was launched the previous Monday, including on the advertising channels being used and the civil society partnership activity to reach key at risk demographic groups. The Board welcomed the quality of the materials published and the initial response to the campaign. The Board noted that the Commission was cautious in engaging with influencers due to risks around past and future political activity of the individual.

The Board noted that there were a range of online post forums used which provided opportunities to engage. The Board welcomed the extension to include Commissioners' engagement in the meetings of note section in the Chief Executive's update and requested that further detail be provided. The Board noted the continued concern regarding the SPS and that the Executive Team was in regular contact with officials in the relevant Government Department. The Board further noted that the Chair has stated the position of the Commission in writing. Resolved: That the Board agreed that Chris Ruane be the linked Commissioner for electoral registration. Resolved: That the Board noted the Chief Executive's report. Forward Plan of Board business

2022/23 and 2023/24 (EC 170/23) Resolved: That the Board noted the Forward Plan of Board business 2022/23 and 2023/24. Board effectiveness review 2022/23(EC 171/23) The Board noted responses from members of the Board to the questionnaire to internally assess the effectiveness of the Board. The responses indicated that there were strengths in oversight and strategic functions. It also identified opportunities to up skill in the areas of risk as well as opportunities for Commissioners to use their current skills to assist the work of the Commission. Members of the Board welcomed opportunities to discuss issues in a semi formal forum, such as the pre meeting Commissioners' dinner which could be developed. As part of the process to articulate the 'one team' theme, the Board explored opportunities for Commissioners to work more closely with staff. The Board noted that the effectiveness review was an internal Board exercise and that the views of the Executive Team and staff were not sought regarding the effectiveness of the Board on this occasion. The Board noted that there would be a full external review in the next financial year which would undertake a 360 degree analysis of the effectiveness of the Board. Resolved: That the Board noted the report and agreed to the proposed recommendations and actions arising from the Board effectiveness review 2022/23. Main Estimate 2023/24 budgets(EC172/23) The Director, Finance and Corporate Services introduced this item reporting to the Board that although the Board and the Executive Team agreed the Main Estimate 2023/24 in September 2022 to enable submission to the Senedd and Scottish Parliament, for audit purposes there was a requirement for the Board to formally agree the Main Estimate 2023/24 for submission to the Speaker's Committee. Resolved: That the Board formally agreed the Main Estimate 2023/24. Board skills matrix and succession planning (EC 173/23) The General Counsel introduced this item reporting to the Board that there had been a shift in the skills matrix demonstrating a greater knowledge and interest in a range of areas from the previous survey undertaken. However, the skills matrix survey also identified a knowledge and interest gap in the areas of audit and risk. The Board discussed whether the skills matrix had identified and measured the right skills. The Board noted that as the induction process was developed, Commissioners should obtain a more in depth understanding of the Commission. Resolved: That the Board noted the results of the skills matrix audit. Improvements to registration and voting: increasing resilience and participation (EC 174/23) The Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance and the Policy Manager reported to the Board on the work being undertaken to develop feasibility studies of advance voting, mobile voting, voting anywhere and voting hubs. The Board noted that the team were thinking creatively to identify potential options for modernising the voting experience. The Board discussed that there were certain groups who were underrepresented on the electoral register, such as young people and recent movers. The team reported that there were discussions being undertaken with agencies such as the Driver and Vehicle Licencing Agency, to refresh our understanding of how data sharing could work to support improvements to electoral registration. The Board further explored the potential benefits of automatic registration and noted that this was an area that the Welsh Government was already actively considering. The Board noted that in addition to the resilience of voting processes, the transparency of how these work, including in relation to the counting of votes, is another important consideration. Resolved: That the Board should be recirculated the 2019 paper on modernising the electoral process and provided with a copy of the Welsh Government White Paper on electoral reform. Resolved: That the Board noted the update on progress with the project. Embedding and advancing equality, diversity and inclusion in the Electoral Commission (EC 175/23) The General Counsel introduced the paper with the Independent Adviser to

the Commission Board on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). The Chair thanked the Independent Adviser to the Commission Board on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion for his work on the paper. The Board noted that the objective of the paper was to provide added value to the EDI discussions within the Commission. The Board agreed that the report was insightful and welcomed that it was recommendation focused.

Resolved: That the Board supported the recommendations in the report. Resolved: That the Board considered and agreed to appoint a group led by the Chief Executive and the Independent Adviser to the Commission Board on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion plus three other Commissioners to develop the recommendations and ensure delivery.

You are in the Party panels section Home How we make decisions Party panels First published: 14 July 2020 Last updated: 14 July 2020 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Labour Party: Andrew Whyte (AW), chair of meeting Scottish National Party: Scott Martin (SM) Conservative Party: Andrew Stedman (AS) Liberal Democrats: Natalia Villazan (NV) Monique Shockness (MS) Plaid Cymru: Geraint Day (GD) The Independent Group for Change: Sian Green (SG) Electoral Commission: Craig Westwood, Director of Communications, Policy & Research (CW) Louise Edwards, Director of Regulation (LE) Laura McLeod, Public Affairs Manager (LM) Minutes of the last meeting and actions arising (PPP 4/06/2019) The minutes were agreed. CW confirmed the PPP minutes for the past five years were now available on the Commission's website. SM asked about the status of the proposed PPP meeting with commissioner representatives in December. CW explained the Commission remained content to proceed with the proposed meeting in December, but that it remained the case that PPP members were expected to confirm that they would be able to send senior representatives, noting that only the Conservative Party Treasurer had confirmed. SG and NV agreed their party treasurers would attend. CW agreed to work on the basis that all parties would be represented at chair and/or treasurers level, alongside PPP members, and that the Commission would put together a proposed agenda for the meeting and circulate for approval. NV asked if the Liberal Democrats Campaigns Director could attend the PPP meetings as it had been possible to do so in the past. CW agreed to pick up the request outside the meeting so it could be considered. AS suggested it would be helpful if an Association of s representative attended the PPP meetings once a year. Other attendees agreed that the June meeting, after May local elections, would be most suitable. CW agreed to explore this proposal. Consultation on the Commission's Enforcement policy LE explained the Commission planned to consult on a new Enforcement Policy, including introducing a new section on decisions to prosecute.

She stated the Commission is confident this could deter offences from being committed, such as by parties that persistently ignore the regulatory regime, or campaigners who do not intend to be part of the regulatory regime for long and do not have a long term incentive to comply. LE explained that in the few cases where such parties and campaigners break the law, they disrupt the level playing field for voters and for other parties and campaigners. GD asked if the new Enforcement policy would apply at referendums; LE confirmed that it would. LE offered PPP members the opportunity to meet once the consultation opens. SM asked if the consultation on prosecutions covered England, Wales and Northern Ireland only; LE confirmed the Commission did not have the power to prosecute in Scotland but the consultation was open to all to respond. AW asked if the parties could raise other issues within the consultation; LE confirmed the Commission is happy to receive wider comments as part of parties' feedback. Accuracy and Completeness 2018: report CW explained the Commission's next accuracy and completeness study will be published in the coming month. He explained the meanings of both accuracy, 'there are no false entries on the electoral registers'. And completeness, 'every person who is entitled to have an entry on an electoral register is registered'. Commission Update Report CW highlighted the publication of feasibility studies, conducted to explore options to modernise electoral registration in the UK, noting the interest in the studies from parties and campaigning groups. AS asked if GDPR issues had been considered; CW confirmed this had come up. AW asked if the voter registration site could include an upfront statement that outlined to voters that parties had access to their data; CW

stated this might be possible but would need to be explored with the Cabinet Office. AS suggested a common data format be established, between registers. Regarding policy development grants, CW explained the Commission is currently reviewing the scheme to make recommendations to the Secretary of State ahead of the 2020-21 allocation in March. He outlined the two current issues which needed to be addressed: the eligibility of the Independent Group for Change, and the impact of the UK's exit from the EU. AS asked if members had to be elected in the party name to qualify for the grants; LE confirmed this was not the case, noting the example of UKIP eligibility as a result of a defection prior to the 2015 general election. SM suggested the formula should be reviewed more fully if the Independent Group for Change would qualify for the same money as the other major parties. He also recommended that the legislation be changed so as not to have to include the names of eligible parties; CW confirmed this had been proposed to the Cabinet Office but not taken forward at the current time. AW asked for an update on the PFR Online project. LE outlined the project team is currently in major development phase and the project is well advanced on the registration side. AW reiterated the PPP's preference for this to be launched at the start of their financial (i.e. calendar) year and asked if 2020 was going to be viable. LE offered to send a more granular timetable to PPP. AS asked if technical issues are going to be accounted for when considering imposing penalties. LE confirmed if it was a technical issue that was be a reasonable excuse, the Commission would not penalise. CW raised the background paper and asked if the PPP were content with new format of not including updates in the paper on substantive agenda items. SM highlighted he would prefer to have agenda items included in the paper as this is helpful when paperwork is shared with the SNP's Chief Executive. AS asked if publication dates could be added into the paper. LE agreed to include indicative dates, noting that dates can be subject to change. Any other business GD asked about the status of the Commission's guidance for parties and campaigners at a UK parliamentary general election. LE confirmed that, should an election be called, the Commission's guidance be published quickly. SM asked if the Commission is thinking of adding anything new; LE confirmed that nothing substantive would be added. She noted that the Commission would reopen its phone lines advice service for parties, candidates and campaigners. GD highlighted he already had contact from many candidates and agents. AS, AW and GD asked to be notified when any new guidance is published. LE agreed and suggested parties send over any questions they had in the interim. AS suggested it would be helpful for a summary page to be inserted at the front of the Commission's guidance that includes key dates, formulas for calculating spend and deadlines for reporting, noting that he would send a sample of an internally prepared document. LE agreed to explore the possibility of this. LE explained the Commission will shortly begin its review of the registered descriptions on the registers of political parties in Great Britain. She explained affected parties would receive a letter. Parties are given 10 working days to submit representations before a final decision is taken. AW raised the PPP felt a gap due to the officials no longer attending the electoral integrity roundtables. He highlighted it was a useful forum for SPOC engagement. SM noted in the past the PPP received a case update before meetings. LE and CW offered to take this away and report back.

Commission action Status To circulate proposed agenda for 3 December meeting, with party chairs/and or treasurers, alongside commissioner representatives. Ongoing: proposed new meeting date to be identified To invite a representative from the Association of s to attend the PPP meeting once a year, preferably the June meeting. Ongoing: Update to be provided at meeting Provide a timetable on PFR online project.

Completed: Email with timetable received from Majella La Praik. Provide an update on the modern guidance project Completed: Circulated with minutes To include publication dates in the background paper. Completed: included in February meeting's background paper To notify the PPP when any new guidance is published, should an election be called. Completed To consider the Commission's role in PPP engagement with police SPOCs on electoral integrity Ongoing: update to be provided at meeting

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Remuneration and HR Committee annual report Annual review of complaints Adoption of 2017-18 resource accounts and annual report Draft Business Plan 2018/19 and review of Performance Measures Chief Executive's Update for May 2018 Forward Plan of Board business 2018-19 Action tracker for May Chair's and Chief Executive's meetings, and meetings in devolved legislatures First published: 18 July 2019 Last updated: 23 July

2019 Overview Date: 27 June 2018 Time: 9:30am Location: Boothroyd Room, 3 Bunhill Row, London Date of next scheduled meeting: Wednesday 13 March Who was at the meeting

Who was at the meeting John Holmes (JEH) Chair Sue Bruce (SB) Anna Carragher (AC) Sarah Chambers (SC) Elan Closs Stephens (ECS) John Horam (JRH) David Howarth (DH)

Alasdair Morgan (AM) Bridget Prentice (BP) Rob Vincent (RV) Claire Bassett (CB)

Kieran Rix (KR) Ailsa Irvine (AI) Robert Posner (RP) Craig Westwood (CW) Nancy

Bruseker (NB) Polly Wicks (PW) Phil Thompson (PT) Tom Hawthorn (TH) Tracey Blackman (TB) Apologies None. Declarations of Interest AC is a member of the Board of the Arts

Council of Northern Ireland (which received money from the EU Peace 3 Programme, and the Corners Programme for individual artists), and a Trustee of the Wildfowl and

Wetlands Trust, which received EU funding, and, having stepped back from her WWT role during the Referendum, has now reengaged with it (pro bono). AC is also a Trustee of

the National Heritage Memorial Fund (The Heritage Lottery Fund) (remunerated). AC was a Commissioner for the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland until 23 September

2015 (remunerated). DH in 2008 drafted and put forward in parliament an amendment to the then European Union (Amendment) Bill, proposing an EU referendum in the terms

'Should the United Kingdom remain in the European Union?' DH had stood for election on a manifesto supporting an in-out referendum on the European Union. DH was a

council member of Justice, an organisation which had in the past received EU funding. DH reported that the European Parliament subsidised a regular annual visit by his

Public Policy students to Brussels. DH declared that in 2015 he had been awarded a research grant of over €40,000 from the European Parliament. DH is a Fellow of Clare

College, Cambridge (remunerated). DH is Professor of Law and Public Policy at the University of Cambridge (remunerated). DH is a Non-executive director of RAND

(Europe) as well as a member of its Council of Advisers (pro bono). DH is a member of the Council of Advisers, Constitution Society, and Editorial Advisory Board of

Parliamentary Affairs (pro bono). DH was a Liberal Democrat MP for Cambridge until 2010 (remunerated). DH was a member of Cambridge City Council until 2004

(remunerated). DH declared that his spouse is Bursar and Fellow of St Edmund's

College, Cambridge. JRH was a member of the pro-Europe Conservative Europe Group. JRH is an Honorary Non-Executive Director, CRU Holdings Ltd (pro bono). JRH was made a Life Peer on 4 September 2013 and sits as a Member, House of Lords (remunerated). JEH

reported that he is Chair of the Advisory Board, Cargo Logic Air (British Air Cargo Company established in 2015 by the Russian owner of the Volga Dnepr Group) (remunerated). JEH is Chair of the Board of International Rescue Committee,

humanitarian NGO (pro bono). JEH is an advisor for MasterCard International

(remunerated). JEH is a Council Member for the Governing Council, Radley College (boys' school) (pro bono). JEH is Chair of the Humanitarian Aid Memorial Steering

Group (pro bono). JEH is a member of the Advisory Council, Wilton Park (Government-linked conference centre) (pro bono). SB is a Non-Executive Director for SSE plc. She

is Chair of RemCo; a NomCo member for SHEAC (remunerated). SB is Convenor of Court at the University of Strathclyde (pro bono). SB is Chair of RSNO (pro bono). SB is the Independent Chair of the Nominations Committee for the National Trust for Scotland (pro bono). SB is Governor of Erskine Stewart's Melville Schools (pro bono). SB is a member/Court member of the Merchant Company of Edinburgh (pro bono). SB is a trustee of The Prince's Foundation (pro bono). SB is Chair of the Expert Panel on measures for the environment: Represents Scottish Government (remunerated). SB was previously Chief Executive (and Returning Officer) of Edinburgh City Council from 01/11/2011 to 31/08/2015 (though she usually gave RO fees to charity/other staff) ECS was appointed in July 2017 for three years as a non-executive Director of the BBC Unitary Board (remunerated). ECS is Chair Wales Nations Committee, BBC, including their Fair Trading Committee, the NI Nations Committee and S4C (Welsh 4th channel) (remunerated). ECS is Deputy Lord Lieutenant (Dyfed) and Vice Lord Lieutenant (Dyfed) (pro bono). ECS is Chair of the Public Bodies Forum (Arm's Length bodies of Welsh Government (remunerated). ECS is a member of Strata Florida Trust (Charitable organisation) (pro bono). ECS is a member of Aberystwyth Arts Centre Advisory Committee (pro bono). ECS is Emeritus Professor and member of Court at Aberystwyth University (pro bono). ECS declared that up to April 2018 she was a Board Non-Executive Director of the Permanent Secretary's Board of Welsh Court and Chair of Audit & Risk. (remunerated). BP is a trustee of Age Exchange (reminiscence and inter-generational work for people with dementia) (pro bono). BP is a trustee for Foundation for Jimmy (working with young people to be good citizens) (pro bono). BP is Chair of Governors, Trinity Lewisham (all-through school) (pro bono). RV is Chair, Kirklees Cultural Education Trust (pro bono). RV is Non-executive Director, Bradford Community Health trust (remunerated). RV is Director, New Ing Consulting (mentoring and technical assessment work with Local Government Chief Executives) (remunerated). RV was Chief Executive of Kirklees MBC between 2004 and 2010 (remunerated). RV was Implementation Director for the West Yorkshire Combined Authority from September 2013 to March 2014 (remunerated). RV was Chair of the Rotherham Improvement Board from September 2014 to March 2015 (remunerated). RV was advisor to Tower Hamlets Council on governance and decision-making issues from May to October 2015 (remunerated). SC is a panel member of the Competition & Markets Authority until 30 June 2018 (remunerated). SC is a panel member of the Judicial Appointments Commission (remunerated). SC is Chair of Legal Services Consumer panel (remunerated). SC sits on the Civil Aviation Authority Consumer Panel until 31 October 2018 (remunerated). SC is Chair of the renewable energy consumer Code Applications Panel (remunerated). Minutes of the Commission Board meeting of 23 May Sue Bruce's attendance added to minutes. Add: Annex D was agreed at paragraph 5.15. Otherwise the minutes were agreed as a true record of proceedings and approved. ID Pilot Evaluation Findings (presentation) CW introduced the presentation, setting out the history of the Commission's previous work in this area and recommendations to the UK Government. Given the Commission's statutory role in evaluating the pilots, the Commission had not been involved in the pilots or engaged in public debate about them. The evaluation included discussions with the Cabinet Office, interested MPs and organisations such as Mencap and RNIB. Ongoing engagement had helped to provide reassurance about our independence and also our ability to effectively evaluate the pilots. PT presented the findings of the evaluation of the ID pilots, highlighting the impact on voters, polling administration, security and confidence in the poll. The headline results showed that a small percentage of voters' desire or capacity to vote was impacted. There was no evidence of an impact on specific groups such as

younger voters or those with disabilities. It was difficult to gather evidence relating to these groups as there were only small sample sizes. The impact of the pilot on administration of the polls had not been significant. Where specialist IT was used it had worked well but was resource intensive to set up. A short discussion followed on cost. The team said the report would include some information on proportional cost increases as a result of the pilot. No conclusions on the impact of the pilot on the actual security of the poll could be drawn. There was an impact on the confidence expressed by voters, but this was complicated, inconsistent across the pilots and seemed to depend, at least in part, on local conditions. TH presented the conclusions and next steps. The pilots were well run but did not provide enough evidence to conclusively test the impact of voter ID schemes. Some issues included the unrepresentative nature of the localities chosen and the fact that local election turnout was usually lower than some other polls. In terms of next steps, it was expected that more pilots would be undertaken, over a wider range of locations. Future evaluations would have resource implications for the Commission. A general discussion followed. Commissioners felt that the Commission should make recommendations about the need to stage pilots in areas with a greater demographic range, though without prescribing specific localities. It was noted that the Government had a manifesto commitment to roll out voter ID by 2022. Audit Committee Annual Report SB presented the report, explaining that it had been a challenging year due to ill health of the chair, but the Committee had remained effective. The Commission had had substantial assurance from its internal auditors. The tabled papers updated the position on audit of the final accounts, following the 26 June Committee meeting. The NAO were proposing an unqualified opinion on the Commission's accounts. CB noted that the internal auditors were positive about the Commission's internal control environment, describing it as one of the best they had seen for bodies of our size. BP sought clarification on paragraph 3.3 – the increase in cost for internal audit – which was explained as being due to additional work. KR noted that the whistleblower policy elaborated in paragraph 5.14 had been updated. This was due to the particular circumstances facing the Audit Committee with the absence of the chair. He also noted that it would be updated in due course to reflect the new escalation route following the recruitment of a new independent advisor. AC asked for clarification on the priority recommendations in paragraph 3.5. It was explained that these were recommendations which were in progress and not necessarily outstanding. More detail on these recommendations was considered by the Audit Committee and could be made available to the Board. JEH commended the work of the Committee and noted that interviews for the independent advisor would take place on 10 July. He had written to the out-going Independent advisor to thank him for his work, and would convey the thanks of the Board overall as well. The report was noted. Remuneration and HR Committee annual report RV introduced the paper, drawing attention to the fact that the departure of the Head of HR in the middle of the year had been disruptive. Notwithstanding this, the team had succeeded in staying focused on the basics of the HR function, while putting more strategic issues to one side as a temporary measure. A successor was now due in post shortly, allowing renewed focus on these strategic issues later this year. There was a short discussion on the staff survey and the progress made to effect cultural change. Given the intense scrutiny the Commission was currently facing and the pressures of work, this was important. Many changes had been embedded culturally at the level of the Heads, and work was underway to take this to other staff. A further discussion followed around the mechanisms by which these changes were being produced in practice. KR outlined the developments around

training and continual support to staff to have performance management discussions. CB also explained the mechanisms for staff to take personal responsibility. She identified project based work, personal objectives and the values work being undertaken, as the practical tools being used by the Commission. RV commended the HR team, noting particularly that the basics were well advanced, and thanked CB and the Executive Team for their commitment. The report was noted. Annual review of complaints PW introduced the paper, noting that there had been an increase in the number of complaints on the previous year, and the forecast was for this to continue. Complaints were obviously affected by electoral events and press attention. The workload around complaints was unpredictable but manageable. Resources were available but mitigating action to reduce the number of complaints handled was also taking place. Also noted was the close relationship between FOI/Subject Access requests, enquiries and complaints. ECS enquired about the escalation of very serious complaints. It was noted that this would be the role of the independent adviser to the audit committee upon appointment, if deemed necessary. It was also noted that patterns in reports ought to be looked into, for instance where complainants cited vagueness of guidance. This report was an opportunity to be aware of such factors. The board noted the contents of the report by the former independent Chair of the audit committee into complaints against certain Commissioners, and the Annual Review of Complaints. Adoption of 2017-18 resource accounts and annual report KR introduced the report. It had been discussed at Audit Committee, where it was noted that the NAO's report had identified some technical issues to be addressed but nothing to stop the Board from adopting the accounts. KR noted that the aim was for the Accounting Officer to sign the accounts the following day. KR explained that the main outstanding point had been the audit reports from some parties for policy development grants, which had now been received. Some EU referendum costs were also outstanding but these had not been materially misstated. There were minor process issues on journaling and accruals at year end, but these would be resolved going forward, with clear training for relevant staff. Estimating the Commission's dilapidations provision had been an area of focus for the audit. After discussion the NAO had accepted that uncertainty over the correct estimate would be addressed at the point of the Supplementary Estimate during the current year. This would also be relevant to the upcoming end of lease terms for Bunhill Row. It was noted that the report had been subject to minor textual amendments by the Audit Committee. JEH identified unclear wording around the underspend on page 26 of the report, which would be amended to clarify the figures. BP noted that the point on financial fraud identified on page 62 should indicate that the funds had been recovered. The report and accounts were approved. Draft Business Plan 2018/19 and review of Performance Measures KR introduced the paper noting that it had been an unusual year as the Commission had released a 5 year corporate plan and a 1 year business plan. The Executive Team were working on integrating the business plan with the project plans. In the quarterly reporting, the metrics would line up against the business plan goals. CB elaborated that the Corporate Plan was designed to lead to longer term milestones, and the Business Plan represented an effort to identify what was measurable in the work of the Commission. Commissioners generally appreciated the measures produced, and understood the difficulty of using quantitative measures to report on areas of work where quality was more important.. Work in this area would continue. JRH left the meeting at 12.07pm. RV noted that the people strategy point on page 18 should be written with the internal audience of the Commission in mind, and that he would support a separate workforce focused goal in future years. AM noted that ongoing work

on the EU Referendum could be seen to be taking a long time, and invited RP to consider whether more resources would make a difference in future situations. It was also noted that the 6 month delay in campaigners providing spending reports could be seen as unnecessarily long in the digital age. SB left the meeting at 12.16 pm. Chief Executive's Update for May 2018 CB introduced the paper, highlighting the corporate plan, ongoing litigation, the work around communications, the use of plain , for example in the report on digital campaigning, and the work of the devolved offices. AI explained that the report on the annual canvass pilots from 2017 was due to be published the following day. The evaluation had found that none of the models that were tested were implementable as they had been run. Data led canvassing had the most potential as a strategy going forward and the team would be working with Cabinet Office on next steps in this area. RP noted that our work on the 2017 UKPGE financial returns showed that some of the major parties had not fully complied with the rules, for example on authorising all spending, but, given the unexpected nature of the election and the short time between announcement and polls, we were mindful of taking a proportionate regulatory approach. A number of other investigations were progressing or at advanced stages. There was a short discussion on the previous delegation of authority from Board to Chief Executive on referrals to police. RP clarified that referrals happen when we had reasonable suspicion of criminal offences, but there could be variations in the process and handling of such referrals. RV asked for clarification on the ID5 project and CB explained the project had been overtaken by work with the National Cyber Security Centre. JEH asked for an update at a future Board on the progress on the new Commission website. Forward Plan of Board business 2018-19 The plan was noted. Action tracker for May The tracker was noted. Chair's and Chief Executive's meetings, and meetings in devolved legislatures The report was noted.

Date: Thursday 5 September 2019 Location: Boothroyd Room, 3 Bunhill Row, London Who

was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Holmes, Chair Sarah Chambers (by

telephone conference) Elan Closs Stephens (by telephone conference) Alasdair Morgan

(by video conference) Rob Vincent (by telephone conference) Stephen Gilbert Alastair

Ross (by telephone conference) Joan Walley Anna Carragher (by telephone conference)

Susan Bruce (by video conference) In attendance: Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral

Administration and Guidance Craig Westwood, Director, Communications, Policy and

Research Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services, Acting Accounting

Officer Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation David Bailey, Head of Strategic Planning

and Performance Petra Crees, Planning, Performance and Governance Manager, acting as

Board Secretary Welcome The Chair welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming. It

was noted that the Chief Executive was on leave. Whilst unable to attend, he had been

fully briefed. Presentation and discussion – 2019 UKPGE Preparedness and funding The

Chair began the meeting by setting out the governance procedures under which the

meeting had been called. He clarified that it had been called under the urgency

procedure, meaning the Commissioners were being consulted by the acting Accounting

Officer on the action to be taken, and this would then be reported at the September

Commission Board. At that time the Board would be asked to endorse formally any

decisions taken, and consider whether further action was required. The Chair advised

that the Commission was faced with the possibility of an early United Kingdom

Parliamentary General Election (UKPGE) and it was necessary to ensure that the

Commission was prepared and had the funding to fulfil its obligations in the event of

an UKPGE being announced. The Commissioners heard from each of the members of the

Executive Team, who provided details on the readiness of their teams and the

contingency arrangements that were already in place ahead of any announcement. Normal

contingency planning for a UKPGE meant that plans had already been reviewed and

updated regularly and had ensured that we were confident, though not complacent, in

our preparedness. Guidance had already been prepared for electoral administrators,

political parties and campaigners and was either available now, or ready to be

finalised and published as soon as the date of any poll was confirmed. In response to

a question, the Director of Electoral Administration and Guidance advised that while

there would undoubtedly be challenges, there were no specific concerns about the

ability of local authorities to deliver a UKPGE in October. She added that it was

intended to make use of the Electoral Coordination and Advisory Board (ECAB) and the

network of Regional Returning Officers, even though they had no formal role in a

UKPGE. The Director of Regulation confirmed that our state of readiness on the

regulatory side was also good. She noted that should a UKPGE be called with only six

weeks' notice or less, there would be no time to register new political parties.

Commissioners were assured by the Director of Regulation routine monitoring of

campaign activity continued, and we continued to proactively work with parties to

promote compliance. We continued to engage with the Cabinet Office and security

agencies as appropriate. A Commissioner asked whether the Commission had provided a

response to the public consultation on a draft Code of Practice on the use of

personal data in political campaigning, recently published by the Information

Commissioners Office (ICO). The Director of Communications, Policy and Research

advised that we were planning to respond. Action: The Director of Communications, Policy and Research to circulate to Commissioners after the meeting a link to the ICO's consultation on a draft Code of Practice. The Director for Communications, Policy and Research advised that the approach to the voter registration campaign would be similar to that used for the recent EPE, which had been proven to be successful. Television advertising would be supplemented by digital advertising targeting the known under-registered groups. The maximum budget for the campaign itself would be just over £1.4 million, comparable to the spending in 2017, though the actual amount would depend upon the campaign period. As usual there would be a lot of work with partners, including working through government agencies. Plans to integrate our Your Vote Matters website with the new corporate website would continue but contingency plans were in place should there be any unforeseen issues. Assurances were given by the Executive Team that additional staffing resources required had been identified, including staff to handle additional demand from public enquiries, complaints and Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, as well as from parties and campaigners. The Director for Finance and Corporate Services advised the Commissioners that, following discussions with the Clerk to the Speaker's Committee, there would be insufficient parliamentary time to access the additional funding required to deliver a UKPGE in October through a Supplementary Estimate. The alternative was to use the Contingency Fund process run by the HM Treasury. This would be initiated once a UKPGE was inevitable and a statement had been provided to the House of Commons. There would then need to be a Supplementary Estimate through the Speaker's Committee in due course. The Commissioners were advised that the budget requirement to deliver a UKPGE was approximately £2.4 - £2.5m in 2019/20, which was broadly comparable to the budget required for the previous poll in 2017. Provision for legal costs had not been included but it was confirmed that there was a small contingency in the 2019/20 budget and costs were more likely to be incurred in the 2020/21 financial year. There would also be a need for a new Corporate Plan after any election, and there would need to be a discussion about how ambitious we should be with the development of the plan if there were little time to prepare it. A Commissioner asked that the public awareness and external communications budget figure be broken down to reflect the campaign spend and the separate spend on additional communications activity. Another Commissioner requested greater assurance that our own registration campaign spend offered good value for public money. The Director of Communications, Policy and Research provided reassurances for the current proposed campaign but noted that it would be possible to look at this in greater detail for future electoral events. Action: A deep dive session on the public value of campaign spend to be scheduled for a future Commission Board. Elan Closs Stephens left the meeting at 3.00pm. It was agreed that, following this consultation with Commissioners, the acting Accounting Officer, the Director for Finance and Corporate Services, would initiate the Contingency Funding process should a UKPGE be announced prior to the September Commission Board meeting. If this action were taken it would be formally reported at that Commission Board meeting. Action: Report to the next Commission Board the note of this meeting of Electoral Commissioners. The meeting finished at 3.10pm.

You are in the Party panels section Home How we make decisions Party panels First published: 14 July 2020 Last updated: 14 July 2020 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Labour Party: Andrew Whyte (AW), chair of meeting Scottish National Party: Scott Martin (SM) Conservative Party: Andrew Stedman (AS) Liberal Democrats: Natalia Villazan (NV) Monique Shockness (MS) Plaid Cymru: Geraint Day (GD) The Independent Group for Change: Sian Green (SG) Electoral Commission: Craig Westwood, Director of Communications, Policy & Research (CW) Louise Edwards, Director of Regulation (LE) Laura McLeod, Public Affairs Manager (LM) Minutes of the last meeting and actions arising (PPP 4/06/2019) The minutes were agreed. CW confirmed the PPP minutes for the past five years were now available on the Commission's website. SM asked about the status of the proposed PPP meeting with commissioner representatives in December. CW explained the Commission remained content to proceed with the proposed meeting in December, but that it remained the case that PPP members were expected to confirm that they would be able to send senior representatives, noting that only the Conservative Party Treasurer had confirmed. SG and NV agreed their party treasurers would attend. CW agreed to work on the basis that all parties would be represented at chair and/or treasurers level, alongside PPP members, and that the Commission would put together a proposed agenda for the meeting and circulate for approval. NV asked if the Liberal Democrats Campaigns Director could attend the PPP meetings as it had been possible to do so in the past. CW agreed to pick up the request outside the meeting so it could be considered. AS suggested it would be helpful if an Association of s representative attended the PPP meetings once a year. Other attendees agreed that the June meeting, after May local elections, would be most suitable. CW agreed to explore this proposal. Consultation on the Commission's Enforcement policy LE explained the Commission planned to consult on a new Enforcement Policy, including introducing a new section on decisions to prosecute.

She stated the Commission is confident this could deter offences from being committed, such as by parties that persistently ignore the regulatory regime, or campaigners who do not intend to be part of the regulatory regime for long and do not have a long term incentive to comply. LE explained that in the few cases where such parties and campaigners break the law, they disrupt the level playing field for voters and for other parties and campaigners. GD asked if the new Enforcement policy would apply at referendums; LE confirmed that it would. LE offered PPP members the opportunity to meet once the consultation opens. SM asked if the consultation on prosecutions covered England, Wales and Northern Ireland only; LE confirmed the Commission did not have the power to prosecute in Scotland but the consultation was open to all to respond. AW asked if the parties could raise other issues within the consultation; LE confirmed the Commission is happy to receive wider comments as part of parties' feedback. Accuracy and Completeness 2018: report CW explained the Commission's next accuracy and completeness study will be published in the coming month. He explained the meanings of both accuracy, 'there are no false entries on the electoral registers'. And completeness, 'every person who is entitled to have an entry on an electoral register is registered'. Commission Update Report CW highlighted the publication of feasibility studies, conducted to explore options to modernise electoral registration in the UK, noting the interest in the studies from parties and campaigning groups. AS asked if GDPR issues had been considered; CW confirmed this had come up. AW asked if the voter registration site could include an upfront statement that outlined to voters that parties had access to their data; CW

stated this might be possible but would need to be explored with the Cabinet Office. AS suggested a common data format be established, between registers. Regarding policy development grants, CW explained the Commission is currently reviewing the scheme to make recommendations to the Secretary of State ahead of the 2020-21 allocation in March. He outlined the two current issues which needed to be addressed: the eligibility of the Independent Group for Change, and the impact of the UK's exit from the EU. AS asked if members had to be elected in the party name to qualify for the grants; LE confirmed this was not the case, noting the example of UKIP eligibility as a result of a defection prior to the 2015 general election. SM suggested the formula should be reviewed more fully if the Independent Group for Change would qualify for the same money as the other major parties. He also recommended that the legislation be changed so as not to have to include the names of eligible parties; CW confirmed this had been proposed to the Cabinet Office but not taken forward at the current time. AW asked for an update on the PFR Online project. LE outlined the project team is currently in major development phase and the project is well advanced on the registration side. AW reiterated the PPP's preference for this to be launched at the start of their financial (i.e. calendar) year and asked if 2020 was going to be viable. LE offered to send a more granular timetable to PPP. AS asked if technical issues are going to be accounted for when considering imposing penalties. LE confirmed if it was a technical issue that was be a reasonable excuse, the Commission would not penalise. CW raised the background paper and asked if the PPP were content with new format of not including updates in the paper on substantive agenda items. SM highlighted he would prefer to have agenda items included in the paper as this is helpful when paperwork is shared with the SNP's Chief Executive. AS asked if publication dates could be added into the paper. LE agreed to include indicative dates, noting that dates can be subject to change. Any other business GD asked about the status of the Commission's guidance for parties and campaigners at a UK parliamentary general election. LE confirmed that, should an election be called, the Commission's guidance be published quickly. SM asked if the Commission is thinking of adding anything new; LE confirmed that nothing substantive would be added. She noted that the Commission would reopen its phone lines advice service for parties, candidates and campaigners. GD highlighted he already had contact from many candidates and agents. AS, AW and GD asked to be notified when any new guidance is published. LE agreed and suggested parties send over any questions they had in the interim. AS suggested it would be helpful for a summary page to be inserted at the front of the Commission's guidance that includes key dates, formulas for calculating spend and deadlines for reporting, noting that he would send a sample of an internally prepared document. LE agreed to explore the possibility of this. LE explained the Commission will shortly begin its review of the registered descriptions on the registers of political parties in Great Britain. She explained affected parties would receive a letter. Parties are given 10 working days to submit representations before a final decision is taken. AW raised the PPP felt a gap due to the officials no longer attending the electoral integrity roundtables. He highlighted it was a useful forum for SPOC engagement. SM noted in the past the PPP received a case update before meetings. LE and CW offered to take this away and report back.

Commission action Status To circulate proposed agenda for 3 December meeting, with party chairs/and or treasurers, alongside commissioner representatives. Ongoing: proposed new meeting date to be identified To invite a representative from the Association of s to attend the PPP meeting once a year, preferably the June meeting. Ongoing: Update to be provided at meeting Provide a timetable on PFR online project.

Completed: Email with timetable received from Majella La Praik. Provide an update on the modern guidance project Completed: Circulated with minutes To include publication dates in the background paper. Completed: included in February meeting's background paper To notify the PPP when any new guidance is published, should an election be called. Completed To consider the Commission's role in PPP engagement with police SPOCs on electoral integrity Ongoing: update to be provided at meeting

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published following the 2019 UK Parliament general election. It has now been replaced
by our 2022/23 to 2026/27 plan. Our Executive Team Meet our Executive Team, and find
out more about them Our Senior Leadership Team Meet our Senior Leadership Group, and
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Report: Political finance regulation at the June 2017 UK general election | Electoral Commission Search Report: Political finance regulation at the June 2017 UK general election You are in the UK general elections section Home UK general elections On this page Regulating the election Looking ahead: Regulation at future elections Download our full report Download the candidate spending data First published: 19 June 2019 Last updated: 6 April 2020 What the report includes This report identifies specific issues that emerged during the June 2017 UK Parliamentary general election campaign and highlights the proactive work we undertook to ensure that candidates, political parties and non-party campaigners were informed of, and complied with, the rules. Regulating the election Having an early and unexpected election presented practical challenges for parties and other campaigners, but we were able to work constructively with many of them. For the most part, we are pleased to observe that parties and other campaigners intended to, and did, comply with election spending and funding rules. We will monitor the pending returns that are due in later this year to check that this was indeed the case.

Digital campaigning Candidates, political parties and non-party campaigners made significant use of digital campaigning in this election. This provides new opportunities for campaigners to engage voters. But there are also risks to transparency and confidence for voters, for example, relating to the use of enhanced direct targeting techniques, including 'bots', and there is room to improve election law in this area. Looking ahead: Regulation at future elections We are ready to work with the UK's governments and legislatures to bring about the changes that are needed to provide further transparency about spending on digital and online campaigns. We repeat our previous recommendations that campaigners should be required to provide imprints on digital and online campaign material, and that staffing costs for all types of campaigners should be regulated. These changes would increase transparency for voters about who is seeking to influence their vote during election campaigns, and what techniques are being used. We also repeat our calls for having more robust powers in place to deal with breaches of the rules and that our investigative and sanctioning powers at major elections should be extended to include offences relating to candidate spending and donations. Most campaigners follow the rules, but failures to comply can reduce transparency for voters and confidence that an election was well run. It is therefore important that when breaches do occur they are dealt with robustly and effectively. The time has come for these changes to be implemented by the UK's governments and legislatures, ahead of the next national elections in 2021 and 2022. Download our full report Political finance regulation at the June 2017 UK general election Download the candidate spending data Candidate spending at the 2017 UK Parliamentary election (XLS) Candidate spending at the 2017 UK Parliamentary election (CSV) Related content Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run Results and turnout at the 2017 UK general election View the results and turnout at the 2017 general election Report: Electoral registration at the June 2017 UK general election Read our report about electoral registration at the 2017 general election Report: Voting in 2017 Read our report about voting at the general election in 2017

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campaigner? What is non-party campaigning? What type of spending is controlled
expenditure? What are the donation controls? Annexes About this Code Background This
Code of Practice has been issued by the Secretary of State under section 100B of the
Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 ('PPERA'). The draft Code was
prepared by the Electoral Commission (the 'Commission') in accordance with sections
100A and 100B PPERA following consultation with interested persons and bodies
including the Speaker's Committee and the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
Committee. The report on the consultation process can be found on the Commission's
website. A draft was approved by the Secretary of State and laid before the UK
Parliament in accordance with section 100B PPERA. The Commission must have regard to
this Code when exercising its functions under Part 6 PPERA and may revise it from
time to time in accordance with section 100A(3) PPERA. Elections covered by this Code
This Code applies to UK Parliamentary general elections (UKPGE) and Northern Ireland
Assembly elections 1 . It does not apply to elections to the Senedd or Scottish
Parliament unless the regulated period (the period when the spending laws apply) for
either of those elections overlaps with the regulated period for a UKPGE (a 'combined
regulated period'). Purpose of this Code This Code explains the operation of the
expenditure controls in Part 6 PPERA for third parties during the regulated period
for a UKPGE or Northern Ireland Assembly election or a combined regulated period. The
Commission and this Code calls third parties 'non party campaigners'. In particular,
this Code sets out: what a non-party campaigner is what non-party campaigning is the
kinds of expenses which are qualifying expenses the circumstances in which expenses
are or are not to be regarded as incurred for the purpose of promoting or procuring
electoral success the kinds of expenditure which will be dealt with as notional
controlled expenditure or donations the circumstances which will be regarded as joint
campaigning the operation of the rules on targeted controlled expenditure the
recording and reporting requirements (including for combined regulated periods). This
Code and other guidance published by the Commission This Code is statutory guidance.
This Code is different from other types of guidance that the Commission publishes
because it has been approved by Parliament. The Commission also publishes non-
statutory guidance about expenses incurred by non-party campaigners and publishes up
to date guidance about what elections are being held and which laws apply on its
website. Where this Code or any related guidance says that something must be done,
this means that it is a requirement in either primary or secondary legislation.
Offences and defence Section 100A(5) PPERA provides a defence for a non-party
campaigner charged with an offence under Part 6 PPERA. It is a defence for a non-
party campaigner to show that they complied with this Code in determining whether
their campaign activity was regulated 2 . What are the consequences of breaching this
Code? Breaches of the laws explained in this Code may lead to an offence being
committed by the non-party campaigner, the responsible person or the individual
spending the money. Committing an offence may result in a fine or prosecution. What
is a non-party campaigner? Some individuals and organisations that are not registered
political parties campaign for or against political parties or candidates or on
issues around elections, without standing candidates themselves. In electoral law,
these individuals and organisations are defined as third parties. The Commission
calls them non-party campaigners. There are laws that non-party campaigners must

follow on campaign spending, donations, and reporting. Many individuals and organisations campaign in the run up to elections and meet the definition of a non-party campaigner but are not covered by the regulatory regime. Who is covered by the law The laws on spending and donations apply to non-party campaigners who spend more than £700 on regulated campaign activity. Non-party campaigners intending to spend more than £10,000 on regulated campaign activity must submit a notification to the Commission following which they will appear on the register of notifications 3 . Only certain types of entities can submit a notification to the Commission. Registered non-party campaigners and the responsible person Once a non-party campaigner appears on the register of notifications, they are referred to as 'registered non-party campaigners'. When a non-party campaigner registers with the Commission, they must appoint a 'responsible person'. The responsible person is legally responsible for compliance with the laws in PPERA 4 . If an individual registers as a non-party campaigner, they are automatically the responsible person. Non-UK individuals and organisations Individuals and organisations that are not based in the UK or are not on a UK electoral register are not permitted to spend more than £700 on regulated campaign activity 5 . A non-party campaigner can only spend more than £700 on regulated campaign activity if they are: listed in section 88(2) PPERA as eligible to give a notification to the Commission or an unincorporated association with the requisite UK connection 6 . An unincorporated association has 'the requisite UK connection' if it consists of two or more persons, all of whom are registered overseas electors 7 . What is non-party campaigning? The non-party campaigning laws only apply to regulated campaign activity. Not all non-party campaign activities are regulated. Activities that may be regulated The following activities are regulated if they occur in relation to a general campaign during a regulated period and meet the purpose test: press conferences or other media events organised by the non-party campaigner transport in connection with publicising the campaign The following activities will only be regulated if they occur during the regulated period, meet the purpose test and are also made available to the public: production or publication of campaign material canvassing and market research public rallies and events 8 There are three elements that must all be considered when determining whether an activity is regulated campaign activity: the regulated period the purpose test whether the activity is made available to the public Regulated period Spending by non-party campaigners is regulated in the period before a UKPGE and Northern Ireland Assembly elections. This is defined in PPERA as the 'relevant period' but is commonly known as the 'regulated period'. UK Parliamentary general elections The regulated period for non-party campaigners at a UKPGE is the 365 day period leading up to and including polling day 9 . An election to the UK Parliament may be called at any time during the maximum five-year Parliamentary term. Where the period of time between the announcement of an election and polling day is shorter than the length of the regulated period, the regulated period will still run for 365 days. The regulated period will be applied retrospectively and will cover a period before the election was announced. Where a second UKPGE is held within 365 days of the previous election, the second regulated period will start on the day after the first polling day and will run up to and including the second polling day 10 . Northern Ireland Assembly elections The regulated period for non-party campaigners at a Northern Ireland Assembly general election is the four months immediately before polling day. In the event of an extraordinary election, the regulated period starts on the day on which the extraordinary poll is announced 11 . Senedd and Scottish Parliamentary elections The regulated period for a Senedd or Scottish Parliamentary election may be relevant

if it overlaps with the regulated period for a UKPGE. Where the two regulated periods overlap, a combined regulated period applies to the relevant part of the UK. This Code applies to combined regulated periods. Spending by non-party campaigners in the relevant part of the UK is regulated for the whole of the combined regulated period.

Purpose test Spending on campaign activities by non-party campaigners is only regulated if it can reasonably be regarded as intended to promote or procure the electoral success of: one or more political parties political parties or candidates who support or do not support particular policies or another particular category of candidates 12 by influencing voters at an upcoming election to vote in a particular way. This is commonly known as the ‘purpose test’. The purpose test must be applied at the time, or in the event of a retrospective regulated period as if at the time, the activity takes place. There are a number of factors that will help to determine whether an activity can be reasonably regarded as intended to influence voters to vote in a particular way at an upcoming election: A campaign that involves a call to action to voters to vote in a particular way at an upcoming election is likely to be regarded as promoting electoral success for a particular party or category of candidates and so meet the purpose test. The call to action may be explicit, or implicit. A campaign that explicitly promotes particular parties or candidates, or implicitly promotes certain political parties or candidates over others, is likely to meet the purpose test. A campaign that is positive or negative towards a political party or parties, a category of candidates or a policy closely and publicly associated with a party or category of candidate is likely to be regarded as intending to influence voters to vote in a particular way and so meet the purpose test. A campaign that is intended to change political parties’ or candidates’ views on a policy or issue may meet the purpose test if the policy or issue is so closely or publicly linked to a party, parties or category of candidates, that it is reasonable to regard the campaign as intending to influence voters to vote in a particular way. An activity can achieve other aims as well as being intended to influence how people vote. However, when determining whether an activity meets the purpose test, it is immaterial whether that activity can be reasonably regarded as intended to achieve another purpose or purposes as well 13 . Retrospective regulated period Where a regulated period is applied retrospectively, any pre-announcement activity will only be regulated if, at the time it was carried out, it could reasonably be regarded as intending to influence voters to vote in a particular way at a relevant election 14 . The following are relevant elections: UK parliamentary elections elections to the Scottish Parliament elections to the Senedd elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly elections of police and crime commissioners local government elections local elections in Northern Ireland If there are no upcoming elections, an ongoing campaign on a particular issue is unlikely to be reasonably regarded as intending to influence voters to vote in a particular way. See section on campaign activity before an election is announced. Public activities and material not publicly available ‘Public’ has no statutory definition and should be given its normal meaning. Activities or material that are made available for anyone to hear or see will be regulated campaign activity. Where access to those activities or material is restricted by the non-party campaigner to members or known supporters, this will not be regulated. Public activities that are regulated The following activities will only be regulated if they take place during the regulated period and meet the purpose test: canvassing and market research of the public public rallies and events Campaign material that is regulated Campaign material that meets the purpose test and take place during a regulated period will only be regarded as regulated campaign activity

if the material is made available to the public, or a section of the public 15 . This is sometimes referred to as the public test. Whether the material is made publicly available is determined by who has access to that material. Campaign material that is not regulated Where access to campaign material is limited in such a way that the general public would not be able to access that material, this is not regulated campaign activity. This applies regardless of the means by which the material is distributed . Where access to campaign material is restricted by the non-party campaigner, those activities will not be regulated. For example, where access is restricted to members, or supporters, this will not be regulated. Campaign material that is made available exclusively to individuals who have chosen to receive information from the non-party campaigner, will not be regulated. What are the notification and reporting requirements? Notification threshold Non-party campaigners intending to spend more than £10,000 on regulated campaign activity in the period before a UKPGE or a Northern Ireland Assembly election must notify the Commission 16 . Eligible non-party campaigners Only individuals or organisations described in s.88(2) PPERA are eligible to submit a notification to the Commission. Organisations are prohibited from registering as both a non-party campaigner and a political party 17 . Non-party campaigners are not permitted to spend more than £700 on regulated campaign activity unless they are: eligible to give a notification to the Commission by virtue of s.88(2) PPERA, or an unincorporated association with the requisite UK connection 18 . A non-party campaigner that is permitted to spend more than £700 on regulated campaign activity may spend up to £10,000 across the UK without notifying the Commission 19 . Before spending more than £10,000 on regulated campaign activity across the UK, a non-party campaigner must submit a notification to the Commission 20 . Reporting thresholds Registered non-party campaigners who spend more than: £20,000 in England, or £10,000 in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland must record and report their spending and donations 21 . These are known as the reporting thresholds. They are defined as the 'lower tier spending limits' in PPERA. At the time of notification, non-party campaigners may choose to notify the Commission that they do not intend to spend more than the reporting thresholds 22 . Registered non-party campaigners who include such a notification are not required to report their spending or donations as long as their spending does not exceed the reporting thresholds. They are still subject to the law on permissibility of donations. Once a non-party campaigner is registered, they may change their notification in relation to the reporting thresholds if their spending intentions change following registration. It is an offence to incur controlled expenditure in excess of the reporting thresholds if the non-party campaigner has notified the Commission that they would not spend more than those limits 23 . Maximum spending limit for non-party campaigners There are spending limits that restrict the total amount a non-party campaigner can spend on regulated campaign activity during a regulated period. These spending limits vary depending on the particular election and are set out in Schedule 10 PPERA. Reporting requirements All registered non-party campaigners must comply with the laws on spending and accepting donations. Only registered non-party campaigners who meet the reporting threshold must report their spending and donations. Spending up to £250,000 Registered non-party campaigners who meet the reporting threshold and who spend up to £250,000 must submit a spending return that details their spending on regulated campaign activity and any donations received during the regulated period 24 . The spending return must be submitted to the Commission within three months of the end of the relevant regulated period. More than £250,000 Registered non-party campaigners who spend more than £250,000 on regulated campaign activity must submit a spending

return that details their spending on regulated campaign activity and any donations received during the regulated period. In addition, the spending return must be accompanied by an auditors' report 25 . The spending return accompanied by an auditors' report must be submitted to the Commission within six months of the end of the relevant regulated period. Reporting donations Registered non-party campaigners who are required to submit a spending return must include any donations received during the regulated period 26 . See section on donations. UK parliamentary general elections Where a UK parliamentary term enters its fourth year, registered non-party campaigners who meet the reporting threshold, must submit quarterly donation reports to the Commission 27 . The quarterly report must include details of all reportable donations. If a non-party campaigner has not received any reportable donations during the relevant reporting period, no quarterly report is required 28 . In the period between the dissolution of Parliament for a general election and polling day, registered non-party campaigners must also submit weekly donation reports to the Commission 29 . The weekly donation report must include details of any relevant donations received with a value of more than £7,500 (a 'substantial donation') 30 . If a registered non-party campaigner does not receive any substantial donations during the relevant reporting period, no weekly report is required 31 . Weekly reports are not required by registered non-party campaigners who do not meet the reporting threshold. Statement of accounts A registered non-party campaigner who meets the reporting threshold at a UKPGE, must prepare a statement of accounts for the regulated period unless: the non-party campaigner is an individual the non-party campaigner has prepared a statement of accounts for another legal purpose that covers the regulated period 32 What type of spending is controlled expenditure? Controlled expenditure is any spending incurred in respect of regulated campaign activity.

Schedule 8A PPERA sets out the list of qualifying expenses that fall within the regulatory regime. General guidance Campaign activity before an election is announced A long running campaign on a particular issue that was carried out before an election was announced is unlikely to be reasonably regarded as intending to influence voters to vote in a particular way at an upcoming election if there is no regulated period. If a long running campaign continues unchanged once the election is announced, it is unlikely to be considered regulated campaign activity. If activity around a long running campaign increases or is altered in the run up to an election in a way that could be reasonably regarded as intending to influence voters to vote in a particular way, it may be considered regulated campaign activity. From the point the campaign is considered regulated campaign activity, the costs associated with that campaign are likely to be controlled expenditure and must be treated as such. A campaign may still be considered regulated campaign activity where it is intended to achieve another purpose other than influencing voters if the campaign can be reasonably regarded as intending to influence voters to vote in a particular way at an upcoming election.

Re-using items paid for and used at a previous election Non-party campaigners may re-use items from previous elections. Spending on items that were paid for and used at a previous election and were reported in full in a previous spending return do not need to be reported again in the spending return for the same non-party campaigner at the current election if they are used again without alteration. All new costs relating to their re-use, including storage, cleaning, or the cost of altering the items must appear in the spending return. Apportionment of items for subsequent elections Items that have been paid for and used during a regulated period cannot be apportioned or reported solely on the basis that they will be used again during a subsequent regulated period. The full value of the spending must be reported in the spending

return. Unused items Items that have been paid for by a non-party campaigner, but have not been used during the regulated period, do not need to be reported in the spending return. Items paid for prior to the commencement of the regulated period Where spending was incurred prior to the start of a regulated period on items that are used during the regulated period, the spending on those items must be reported in the spending return. Items provided free of charge or at a discount Where any items are provided free of charge or at a discount, the appropriate amount must be reported in the spending return as notional spending and/or a donation. Apportioning spending Where spending on an item or activity was incurred partly in connection with regulated campaign activity and partly in connection with non-regulated activity, the amount that must be reported is the proportion that reasonably reflects the amount spent in connection with the regulated campaign activity. Only the regulated campaign spending must be reported in the spending return. VAT Spending must be reported inclusive of VAT where applicable, even where VAT can be recovered. Overheads Overheads that are directly attributable to campaign activity must be reported. The amount that must be included in the spending return is the proportion that reasonably reflects usage during the campaign. The proportion that reasonably reflects usage is generally the cost that is incurred over and above the usual costs in a given period. Where an apportionment of overheads is necessary, an aggregated figure for each overhead is sufficient to meet the reporting obligations. Overheads include items such as: office space electricity bills the provision of phone lines and internet access mobile phones the provision of office equipment of any kind The cost of water, gas and council tax are not costs that fall to be reported as they are not sufficiently closely connected to the regulated activity. Staff costs Staff costs that are directly attributable to regulated activity must be reported. Where staff costs can only be partially attributed to regulated activity, the costs must be apportioned and only the portion attributed to regulated activity must be included in the spending return. Where an apportionment of a staff member's time is necessary, an aggregated figure for all staff time attributed to regulated activity is sufficient to meet the reporting obligations. The childcare costs of staff members are not expenses that fall to be reported as they are not sufficiently closely connected to the regulated activity 33 . Excluded items Any spending on campaign activity that falls to be reported in the spending return of a candidate or in the spending return of a registered political party, must not be reported in the spending return of a non-party campaigner. Schedule 8A Schedule 8A PPERA lists the qualifying expenses that fall within the regulatory regime. Expenses that fall outside the regulatory regime PPERA specifically excludes the following expenses from the reporting requirements: expenses incurred in respect of the publication of any matter relating to an election, other than an advertisement: in a newspaper or periodical as a broadcast made by the British Broadcasting Corporation or by Sianel Pedwar Cymru or as a programme included in any service licensed under Part 1 or 3 of the Broadcasting Act 1990 or Part 1 or 2 of the Broadcasting Act 1996 expenses incurred in respect of, or in consequence of, the translation of anything from into Welsh or from Welsh into reasonable personal expenses incurred by an individual in travelling or in providing for the individual's accommodation or other personal needs reasonable expenses that are reasonably attributable to an individual's disability expenses incurred in respect of the provision of an individual's own services provided voluntarily in the individual's own time and free of charge 34 Expenses that fall within the regulatory regime PPERA specifically lists the following expenses as falling within the regulatory regime: the production or publication of material which is made available

to the public at large or any section of the public (in whatever form and by whatever means) canvassing, or market research seeking views or information from, members of the public press conferences, or other media events, organised by or on behalf of the non-party campaigner transport (by any means) of persons to any place or places with a view to obtaining publicity expenses in respect of the transport of such persons include the costs of hiring a particular means of transport public rallies or other public events, other than: annual conferences of the non-party campaigner any public procession or protest meeting, within the meaning of the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998, in respect of which notice is given in accordance with section 6 or 7 of that Act (advance notice of public processions or related protest meetings) Expenses in respect of such events include costs incurred in connection with the attendance of persons at such events, the hire of premises for the purposes of such events or the provision of goods, services or facilities at them. But expenses in respect of such events do not include costs incurred in providing for the protection of persons or property. Annex A sets out a non-exhaustive list of the kinds of expenses that do, or do not, fall within the meaning of qualifying expenses. What is targeted expenditure? Regulated campaign spending by all registered non-party campaigners during the regulated period for a UKPGE that is aimed at promoting the electoral success of one particular registered political party or any of its candidates is called targeted spending 35 . Campaign activity that names a political party or its candidates in a way that can be regarded as intended to influence voters to vote for only that political party will count as targeted spending. A campaign on a particular issue that is so closely and publicly linked to one particular political party that it is synonymous with that party is likely to be considered targeted spending. A negative campaign aimed at influencing voters not to vote for a particular political party or any of its candidates is not targeted spending.

Targeted spending will count towards the overall spending limit for a non-party campaigner and is subject to the general laws on regulated campaign activity. Donations to registered political parties Donations to a registered political party do not fall within the definition of targeted spending. Spending limits All registered non-party campaigners are limited in how much targeted spending they can incur. The limits depend on whether or not the relevant political party has authorised the spending. Unauthorised spending Non-party campaigners can incur targeted spending up to the targeted spending limits without authorisation from the relevant political party. The targeted spending limits are set out in s.94D PPERA.

All targeted spending counts towards the total spending limit for a non-party campaigner. Any spending in excess of the targeted spending limits must be authorised by the relevant registered political party. Authorised spending A registered political party may authorise a non-party campaigner to incur targeted spending. A non-party campaigner must not exceed the amount authorised. Authorisation by a registered political party: must be in writing must be signed by either the treasurer or the deputy treasurer of the party must specify the parts of the UK in which the targeted spending may be incurred may set a limit on the amount of targeted spending authorised 36 The registered political party must give a copy of the written authorisation to the Commission. The authorisation has no effect until a copy has been given to the Commission 37 . All targeted spending counts towards the total spending limit for a non-party campaigner. Any targeted spending in excess of the targeted spending limit up to the amount authorised by the relevant political party will also count towards the registered political party's campaign expenditure 38 . Withdrawal of authorisation Authorisation may be withdrawn by the registered

political party at any time. The withdrawal must be in writing and signed by the treasurer or deputy treasurer of the party.³⁹ The withdrawal of authorisation has no effect until the registered political party has given a copy to the Commission.⁴⁰

Effect of withdrawal of authorisation A non-party campaigner must not incur any additional targeted spending above the targeted spending limit if the relevant political party withdraws its authorisation. When authorisation is withdrawn, no retrospective offence will have been committed by the non-party campaigner in relation to targeted spending incurred in accordance with the authorisation that was in effect at the time.

What is notional expenditure? Non-party campaigners may sometimes use property, services or facilities in their campaign that they did not have to spend money on, because the item or the services were provided as a benefit in kind, for free, or at a non-commercial discount. This is called 'notional spending'. **Discounts** Non-commercial discounts Non-commercial discounts are special discounts given to the non-party campaigner. This includes any special rates which are not available on the open market. When this happens, the full commercial value of the item or the services will count towards the spending limit and must be reported in the spending return.

Commercial discounts Commercial discounts are those available to other similar customers, such as discounts for bulk orders or seasonal reductions. These are not treated as notional spending.

Notional spending Items or services used by or on behalf of a non-party campaigner will be treated as notional spending if:

- they are transferred or provided free of charge or at a discount of more than 10% for the use or benefit of the non-party campaigner
- the difference in value between the commercial rate and what is paid by the non-party campaigner is over £200
- they are made use of by or on behalf of the non-party campaigner and if the expenses had been incurred by or on behalf of the non-party campaigner in respect of that use, they would have been controlled expenditure.⁴¹

The items or services are only used on behalf of the non-party campaigner if that use is directed, authorised or encouraged by the non-party campaigner or the responsible person.⁴² The value of the notional spending is the difference between the total value of what was transferred or provided and the amount that was paid, if anything. The non-party campaigner must record both: the value of the notional spending and the total amount that was paid.

Items or services will not be treated as notional spending if:

- received at a discount of 10% or less
- or the value of the discount is £200 or less

Value of notional spending Where an item is treated as notional spending, an 'appropriate amount' must be reported by the non-party campaigner as controlled expenditure. The appropriate amount is the proportion that is reasonably attributable to the use of the item, of either:

- its market value (where it is transferred free of charge)
- or the value of the discount

The value of the notional spending is the difference in value between the commercial rate for an item or service and the price that was actually paid by the non-party campaigner.

Donations The goods, services or facilities must be provided or transferred to the non-party campaigner to be treated as notional spending. This means that any notional spending will also be a donation to the non-party campaigner. The difference in value between the commercial rate and the price paid, if any, must be dealt with in accordance with the laws on donations to non-party campaigners and may need to be reported to the Commission.

Working with registered political parties Non-party campaigners may also work with a registered political party, and provide goods, services or facilities free of charge or at a non-commercial discount. If the registered political party use the goods, services or facilities during their campaign, this should be treated as notional spending on behalf of the political party. It must be reported by the registered political party and will count towards

the party's spending limit. It will not count towards the non-party campaigner's spending limit and must not be recorded in the spending return for the non-party campaigner. What is joint campaigning? Working with other non-party campaigners Non-party campaigners may decide to work together on a campaign. The rules on joint campaigning apply to registered and un-registered non-party campaigners. A non-party campaigner takes part in joint campaigning where they: enter into a plan or other arrangement with one or more other non-party campaigners all non-party campaigners involved intend to incur controlled expenditure in pursuance of that plan or arrangement one or more of the non-party campaigners involved incurs controlled expenditure in pursuance of the plan or arrangement and that plan or arrangement can reasonably be regarded as intending to achieve a common purpose. All of the spending on the joint campaign counts towards the spending limit of each of the non-party campaigners involved in the joint campaign. What is joint campaigning There must be more than one non-party campaigner Forming a new organisation that constitutes a group of other organisations and then spending money is not joint campaigning. An existing umbrella organisation that makes decisions about their campaign activity independently will not be joint campaigning unless they enter into a plan or arrangement with another non-party campaigner in which they both intend to incur controlled expenditure. There must be an agreed understanding that controlled expenditure will be incurred to achieve the common purpose If there is no intention to incur expenditure there is no joint campaigning. For example, if it is agreed that all activity will be carried out by volunteers no spending will be incurred and there will be no joint campaigning. There must be an agreed understanding as to the scope and purpose of the campaign Non-party campaigners who happen to campaign about similar or related issues are not joint campaigners. There must be an agreed understanding between the non-party campaigners that each of them will incur controlled expenditure to achieve the common purpose All controlled expenditure incurred in pursuance of the plan or arrangement will fall within the joint campaigning rules. Joint campaigning is not simply transferring or lending items to another campaigner or providing money to another campaigner This must be treated as notional spending or a donation and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate rules. Even if one of the non-party campaigners involved in the plan or arrangement does not incur their share of agreed expenditure, any expenditure incurred will still be joint campaigning and must be reported by all non-party campaigners involved.

Examples of joint campaigning A and campaigner B agree to run a campaign encouraging voters to vote for candidates who support a particular issue. Both campaigner A and campaigner B intend to incur controlled expenditure as part of the campaign. A and campaigner B both incur expenditure on the joint campaign. This is joint campaigning, and the spending should be treated as such. A and campaigner B agree to run a campaign encouraging voters to vote for a particular political party. Both intend to incur controlled expenditure as part of the joint campaign. A incurs expenditure on the joint campaign, but campaigner B never spends their intended share. This is joint campaigning, and the spending should be treated as such by both campaigner A and campaigner B. A and campaigner B agree to run a campaign encouraging voters to vote for a particular political party. Both intend to incur controlled expenditure as part of the joint campaign. Neither campaigner ends up incurring any controlled expenditure on the joint campaign. No joint campaigning has taken place. Activities that are joint campaigning Non-party campaigners who engage in the following, non-exhaustive list of activities are likely to be joint campaigners: A joint advertising campaign, whether digital, electronic or via other means, involving joint leaflets or

joint events. A co-ordinated campaign; for example where it is agreed which areas are to be covered, which issues raised or which voters targeted. Joint working where one party can veto or must approve another party's material. Activities that are not joint campaigning Non-party campaigners who engage in the following, non-exhaustive list of activities are unlikely to be joint campaigners: Endorsing another campaign by allowing your logo/brand to be used without any financial commitment or further involvement. Adding your signature to a letter alongside other non-party campaigners without any financial commitment. Speaking freely at an event organised by another non-party campaigner without any financial commitment. Holding discussions about areas of common interest without coordinating campaign activity. What are the donation controls? All registered non-party campaigners must comply with the donation controls in Schedule 11 PPERA that set out who can donate to non-party campaigners. Registered non-party campaigners that do not meet the reporting threshold must check whether the donation is from a permissible source, but they are not subject to the donation reporting requirements. Donations covered by the laws The laws on donations only apply to donations that are given to registered non-party campaigners, specifically towards their spending on regulated campaign activity. The laws do not cover money that is received for the organisation's general purposes. For the purposes of donations to non-party campaigners, a donation is: money, goods, property or services 43 given for the purpose of regulated campaign activity 44 and with a value of more than £500 45 Anything with a value of £500 or less is not a donation for the purposes PPERA. Who can donate to a non-party campaigner Non-party campaigners can only accept donations from individuals or organisations that are based in the UK 46 . The list of permissible sources is set out in s.54(2) PPERA. Non-party campaigners must not accept donations from a registered political party 47 . Non-monetary donations Non-party campaigners must put a value on any non-monetary donation. The value of a donation is the difference between the value of what is received, and the amount, if any, that the non-party campaigner pays for it 48 . Items that are received for free or at a non-commercial discount, where the difference in the commercial value and what was actually paid for it is more than £500, is a donation for the purposes of PPERA. When a non-party campaigner receives a donation of more than £500, they must promptly check whether the donation is from a permissible source. Non-party campaigners have 30 days in which to decide whether they can accept the donation 49 . A donation that cannot be identified as being from a permissible source must be returned within the 30 day period. Non-party campaigners must keep records of the donations that are received, as well as donations that have been returned. These details must be included when the donation is reported to the Commission. Annex A This Annex sets out a non-exhaustive list of the kinds of expenses that do, or do not, fall within the meaning of 'qualifying expenses' in Schedule 8A PPERA (that may be regarded as 'controlled expenditure' within the meaning of section 85(2)). Expenses fall within the meaning of qualifying expenses if they are expenses incurred in respect of any of the matters set out in paragraph 1 of Schedule 8A. Schedule 8A, paragraph 1(1) The production or publication of material which is made available to the public at large or any section of the public (in whatever form and by whatever means). This paragraph includes: Services, equipment, facilities or premises provided by others This includes the cost of use, or hire, of any: agency, individual or organisation services provided by any agency, individual or organisation premises or facilities equipment that is used to: prepare, produce or publish material which is made available to the public at large or any section of the public For example, the hire of a photographer and premises to produce images for use

in advertising material. Specific costs in connection with producing or disseminating digital or electronic advertising material This includes the cost of any software, of any kind, for use on any device to: design and produce advertising material in-house disseminate or facilitate dissemination of advertising material whether that material is distributed digitally, electronically or via other means. For example, a licencing fee for a software application for use on a device. It also includes any cost attributable to increasing the visibility of content by any means. For example, the purchase of a more prominent position on a page within a search engine. It includes the cost of preparing, producing or facilitating the production of advertising material for: download and use by others posting on and promoting material via any kind of social media channel or platform For example, the costs of producing advertising material promoting the campaign that is posted to a page on a social media channel encouraging followers to share it. It includes the cost of accessing, purchasing, developing and maintaining any digital or other network which: facilitates distribution or dissemination of material by any means promotes or increases the visibility of material by any means For example, the purchase of digital identities to make material appear as if it has been seen and approved by a high number of users on a social media platform. It includes the costs of: hosting, maintaining, designing or building a website or other electronic/digital material that promotes the outcome of the election any licensing or other rights fee for any image used in producing relevant material Other costs It includes the cost of purchase and use of any equipment used for: the preparation, production or facilitating the production of the material dissemination of the material by distribution or otherwise It includes the cost of: paper or any other medium on which material is printed physically displaying material in any location, for example cable ties or glue for putting up posters It includes the cost of printing material or the purchase, hire or use of: photocopying equipment printing equipment It includes the cost of accessing, obtaining, purchasing, developing or maintaining: IT software or contact databases any information, by whatever means, that is used to facilitate the sending of material to voters (for example, the purchase of email addresses) It includes the cost of accessing, obtaining, purchasing developing or maintaining data sets, including data analytics to target voters by whatever means, including the cost of agencies, organisations or others that identify groups of voters, by whatever means. For example, the cost of any agency paid to analyse social media content to facilitate targeting of voters across electoral areas and the cost of modelling by any agency based on that analysis. It includes any services to identify voters that are purchased, developed or provided before the regulated period, but are used to target voters during the regulated period. Where information or access to information is obtained from an external source, it includes the commercial cost of obtaining that information from the external source. It includes delivering material by any means including electronic means, for example the purchase of a system for sending emails or a licensing fee for a software application for use on a device, as well as physical distribution, for example the cost of envelopes and stamps. It includes oversight and maintenance of all social media, digital or other forms of distribution of material including the maintenance of all social media accounts whether or not maintained by another entity/individual. Schedule 8A, paragraph 1(2) Canvassing, or market research seeking views or information from, members of the public. This paragraph includes: Services, premises, facilities, or equipment provided by others It includes the cost of use, or hire, of any: agency, individual or organisation services provided by any agency, individual or organisation premises or facilities

equipment used to: to prepare, produce, facilitate, conduct or co-ordinate canvassing or market research including recording or analysing or otherwise utilising the results of any market research or canvassing activity For example, the cost of using phone banks to contact voters, including the development of scripts for use by phone bank employees that are designed to influence voters. Costs of obtaining or maintaining data This includes the cost of accessing, purchasing, developing and maintaining: IT software or contact databases data sets, including the use of data analytics to facilitate or undertake market research or canvassing For example, it includes the cost of undertaking social media listening and analysing the result to analyse the intention of voters. Other costs It includes the cost of any purchase and use of any equipment required to: prepare, produce or facilitate canvassing or market research conduct or co-ordinate canvassing or market research record or analyse or otherwise utilise the results of any market research or canvassing activity For example, laptops or tablets if used for canvassing and mobile phones if used by the leader/co-ordinator of the canvassing where that equipment and/or associated costs are paid for or reimbursed by registered third party. Schedule 8, paragraph 1(3)

Press conferences, or other media events, organised by or on behalf of the third party. This paragraph includes: Cost of press conferences or other dealings with the media This includes the cost of purchase, use or hire of any: agency, individual or organisation services provided by any agency, individual or organisation equipment premises or facilities used to prepare, produce, facilitate or conduct press conferences or other media events. Other costs It includes the costs of any rights or licensing fee for any image used in preparation, production, facilitating or conducting press conferences or other media events. It includes the cost of purchase and use of any equipment in connection with preparation, production, facilitating or conducting press conferences or other media events. Schedule 8, paragraph 1(4)

Transport (by any means) of persons to any place or places with a view to obtaining publicity. Expenses in respect of the transport of such persons include the costs of hiring a particular means of transport. This paragraph includes: Transport of volunteers or campaigners It includes the cost of transporting: volunteers members, including staff members others campaigning on behalf of the non-party campaigner around an electoral area, or to and from an electoral area, including the cost of: tickets for any transport, hiring of any transport fuel purchased for any transport parking for any transport where they are undertaking campaigning on behalf of the non-party campaigner. Other costs This includes the cost of use, or hire, of any vehicle or form of transport that displays material promoting the election result, including: design and application of the design to the vehicle or form of transport travelling between electoral areas travelling around an electoral area parking fees where a vehicle is used to display material Reportable costs include all transport costs associated with one of the other listed activities. For example, transporting someone to a rally. Schedule 8A, paragraph 1(5)

Public rallies or other public events, other than— (a) annual conferences of the third party, or (b) any public procession or protest meeting, within the meaning of the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998 , in respect of which notice is given in accordance with section 6 or 7 of that Act (advance notice of public processions or related protest meetings). Expenses in respect of such events include costs incurred in connection with the attendance of persons at such events, the hire of premises for the purposes of such events or the provision of goods, services or facilities at them. But expenses in respect of such events do not include costs incurred in providing for the protection of persons or property. This paragraph includes: Services, premises, facilities or

equipment provided by others This includes the cost of use, or hire, of any: agency, individual or organisation services provided by any agency, individual or organisation premises or facilities equipment used in: promoting a rally or other event holding or conducting a rally or other event live streaming or broadcasting a rally or other event by any means Other costs It includes the cost of promoting or advertising the rally or event by any means. It includes the provision of any goods, services or facilities at the event, for example the cost of hiring seating. It includes the purchase of any equipment in connection with: holding or conducting a public meeting live streaming or broadcasting a public meeting by any means Costs that are excluded Reportable costs do not include the cost of providing specific security for any person appearing or attending at the event or the costs of providing general security for persons or property at the event. Annex B Definitions and key terms The following terms are used in this Code as they are defined in the legislation In this Code the following definitions apply:

Appropriate amount

Appropriate amount has the same meaning as in section 86 PPERA. Campaign expenditure

Campaign expenditure

Campaign expenditure has the same meaning as in section 72 PPERA. Candidate

Candidate

means a candidate at a relevant election under section 22 PPERA. Controlled expenditure

Controlled expenditure

Controlled expenditure has the same meaning as in section 85 PPERA.

Donation

Donation has the same meaning as in Schedule 11 PPERA. Notional expenditure

Notional expenditure

Notional expenditure has the same meaning as in section 86 PPERA. means a party which is registered under Part II PPERA. Regulated period

Regulated period

means the 'relevant period' for an election as set out in Schedule 9A PPERA. Costs

Costs

has its ordinary meaning of the expense of, or associated with, an item. It includes the appropriate amount to be treated as incurred by the non-party campaigner under the laws on notional spending. Incur

Incur

Incur means make a legal commitment to spend money.

Non-party campaigner

Non-party campaigner means an individual or organisation that campaigns around elections without standing candidates themselves. In the legislation, non-party campaigners are referred to as 'third parties'. Registered non-party campaigner

Registered non-party campaigner

Registered non-party campaigner means a non-party campaigner that is on the register held by the Commission pursuant to a notification given to the Commission under section 88 PPERA. Registered non-party campaigners are referred to as 'recognised third parties' in PPERA (see section 88 for the statutory definition).

Reporting threshold

Reporting threshold means the 'lower tier spending limits' set out in sections 85(5B) and 94(5) PPERA as £20,000 in England and £10,000 for each of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Spending return

Spending return

means a controlled expenditure return by a registered non-party campaigner as required under section 96 PPERA.

1. S.100A(1) Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA)

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2. S.100A(5) PPERA

■ Back to content at footnote 2

3. S.94(3) PPERA

■ Back to content at footnote 3

4. S.88(3)(c)(ii) PPERA

■ Back to content at footnote 4

5. S.89A PPERA

■ Back to content at footnote 5

6. S.89A(1) PPERA

■ Back to content at footnote 6

7. S.89A(6) PPERA

■ Back to content at footnote 7

8. Sch.8A para.1 PPERA

■ Back to content at footnote 8

9. Sch.10 para.3(3) PPERA

■ Back to content at footnote 9

10. Schedule 10, Part 2, para 3(3)(b) PPERA

■ Back to content at footnote 10

11. Sch.10 para.7 Northern Ireland Act 1998

■ Back to content at footnote 11

12. S.85(3) PPERA

■ Back to content at footnote 12

13. S.85(4A) PPERA

■ Back to content at footnote 13

14. S.85(6) PPERA (s.22(5) PPERA)

■ Back to content at footnote 14

15. Sch.8A para.1 PPERA

■ Back to content at footnote 15

16. S.94(3) PPERA

■ Back to content at footnote 16

17. S.88 & s.28(7A) PPERA

■ Back to content at footnote 17

18. S.89A(2) PPERA (s.26 Elections Act 2022)

■ Back to content at footnote 18

19. S.89A(1) PPERA (s.26 Elections Act)

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2022) & s.89A(4) PPERA ■ Back to content at footnote 19 20. S.94(3)(ai),
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27. S.95A PPERA ■ Back to content at footnote 27 28. S.95A(10) PPERA ■ Back to
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& (6) PPERA ■ Back to content at footnote 30 31. S.95B(9) PPERA ■ Back to content at
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43. Sch.11 para.(2) PPERA ■ Back to content at footnote 43 44. Sch.11 para.1(4) PPERA
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para.1(6) PPERA ■ Back to content at footnote 47 48. Sch.11 para.5 PPERA ■ Back to
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Commission update report Any other business Actions First published: 5 December 2017

Last updated: 2 September 2019 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting

Conservative Party: Andrew Stedman (AS) Megan Tucker (MT) Labour: John Stolliday (JS)

Jordan Hall (JH) Liberal Democrats: David Allworthy (DA) Darren Briddock (DB)

Scottish National Party: Scott Martin (SM) Electoral Commission: Craig Westwood, Director of Communications & Research (CW) Ailsa Irvine, Director of Electoral Administration and Guidance (AI) Bob Posner, Director of Political Finance and Regulation & Legal Counsel (BP) Carol Sweetenham, Head of Guidance and Strategy, (CS)

Alasdair Morgan, Electoral Commissioner (AM) Cary Mitchell, Communications Officer (CM) Minutes of the last meeting and actions arising (ECPPP 04/07/2017) DA suggested

as Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) was unable to attend as per action agreed

at last meeting, the Panel would set up a separate meeting with the ICO as soon as

possible. BP agreed a representative of the Electoral Commission should attend and

thanked the Panel for their invite. AS asked that the minutes be amended to show the

action on post-election regulation assurance meetings with parties is incomplete or

ongoing. Meetings had been arranged but later cancelled and as a result the parties

had not received the expected guidance. DA said the content of the questions they

received covered unexpected areas which meant involving members of staff from other

teams in the party. BP apologised for any confusion or inconvenience caused and said

that as a new process the format is still being worked out and the Commission

appreciates any feedback. DB pointed out there is no longer enough time to meet with

the Commission. BP confirmed the original intent agreed at previous meetings for the

process remains the same but the approach has evolved. The minutes from 21/02/2017

were agreed subject to amendments. Delivering modern guidance project DA asked for an

update on the delivering modern guidance project. AI explained that decisions would

be taken early in the New Year about moving to web-based digital guidance. AI thanked

members of the Panel for taking part in one-to-one discussions and providing feedback

to the project team. JS thanked AI and CS for holding productive discussions on the

process, and DA agreed. All sides were keen to continue constructive engagement. PFR

Online update CS reported that the Commission had received six good quality bids in

the procurement process through the Government's digital market place to update the

PFR Online system. The Commission would shortlist later that week before moving to

the second stage of procurement. CS offered to send the Panel copies of draft

headline requirements for the second stage of the procurement process, and would be

keen to receive any feedback the Panel may have. The Commission was planning to have

a supplier in place by the end of March 2018. AS said he would be happy to look at

the draft and he was pleased with the Commission's approach so far. DB agreed the

conversations had with the project team have been useful. CS said she was grateful

for the input to the initial requirements gathering. DB asked whether sprints would

be weekly or on some other basis. CS said the suppliers would set out their proposed

process; her preferred approach was for fortnightly sprints. AS and DB agreed. Both

sides agreed on the need for constructive engagement with the project through the

user group. Standing for office in 2017 report CW introduced findings of the report,

highlighting that some of the recommendations around the demographics of candidates

and the need to make sure elections are open to all would affect parties. CW asked whether any issues raised surprised the Panel and whether they had anything they wished to take forward. BP said recommendations in the report are challenging to take forward but that it is important to find a way to improve on these issues. DA raised the intimidation of candidates and noted that prior to the June 2017 general election the focus was on the potential for physical attacks after the murder of Jo Cox, while the focus now seems to be on social media harassment. DB agreed that candidates were more likely to be harassed than face physical violence. JS suggested the next SPOC conference could cover intimidation. DA agreed, saying usual focus at the conferences is on electoral offences rather than civil offenses that occur in relation to elections but not usually counted as 'electoral'. DB said it was particularly useful that the report recommended allowing all candidates to keep home addresses private as current requirement at some elections to make addresses public deters people from standing. BP reminded the Panel that some of the recommendations would require legislation. Election integrity preparation for elections in 2018 AI reminded the Panel that May 2018 will see local elections across parts of England, including a series of pilots looking at voter ID and postal voting. Ahead of these elections, the Commission is looking at electoral fraud as part of its risk assessment work, taking into account available data and information which may indicate a higher risk of fraud – for example, the closeness of the contest and past allegations of fraud. AI said this work will help identify areas where closer liaison with Returning Officers (ROs) is needed. AI also indicated that the Commission is keen to be able to escalate local issues to the national parties where needed as has been the case at recent elections, and proposed discussing any electoral fraud concerns or issues in more detail in the New Year with the Panel, either collectively or individually. DB said guidance for ROs on running postal vote counts should be updated. He said in many areas postal vote agents from the parties are kept so far away from the counting and scanning of ballot packs that they cannot do their job of confirming that the process is being conducted correctly. AI suggested a reminder could be sent to ROs through the Commission's Electoral Administration Bulletin about the role party agents have in the process. DB suggested that agents being kept away from the process increases a perception that fraud is or could be occurring, while pointing out that the perception of fraud is worse than the actual number incidents of fraud. AI requested that parties contact the Commission at the point any issues arise so that follow up with local authorities can be carried out in a timely way. DB asked for a list of the areas involved in pilots in May so local campaigners can be informed and local campaign material can also include information for voters on what to expect. AI responded that Gosport, Bromley, Woking and Watford have been announced as taking part in voter ID pilots and Tower Hamlets is expected to host a postal voting pilot but Cabinet Office is best placed to provide further information Recent investigation announcements DA asked for an update on recent investigations and whether the outcomes could result in recommendations for changes in the rules. BP reminded the Panel that it was inappropriate for the Commission to comment on ongoing investigations. He noted the work being undertaken will influence the Commission's thinking going forward and if a decision is made that rules should be changed as a result the Panel's views would be important. JS raised social media campaigning and its important role as a communication and campaigning tool. BP responded that campaigning is an important part of our democracy and should continue on social media. He said the Commission will work with the Panel on this issue as thinking evolves and that it is important to remember the ICO's role in digital campaigning

regulation. AS asked whether the Commission expects to conclude its investigations by the middle of 2018. BP said the time taken to conclude investigations cannot be predicted but the Commission will gain experience through ongoing regulatory work and may have recommendations based on that experience next year. SM asked about working together rules for referendums and whether there were plans to clarify or reform them. BP suggested it may be that Parliament needs to clarify the rules in legislation. SM asked whether the Commission would be responding to the UCL Commission on Referendums. BP explained that the Commission is in contact with them and would be providing them with reference information. Commission update report DA asked about the Plymouth election report and AS asked whether the Commission has done work to assess the resourcing of ROs and EROs. AI said there is clearly a challenge in this area, with experienced people leaving elections along with a general pressure on local authority resources, and the Commission is starting a piece of work with SOLACE and the AEA looking at how to address this risk. DA raised the elections for everyone report. AI said the Commission is particularly proud of the work in this area, drawing on the actual experiences of voters with disabilities. Before the June election there was a lot of interest in accessibility of elections and it was right that the report looked at it in detail. DA raised the PFR report and agreed it is an anomaly the Commission has powers to regulate party finance but not candidates' which is for the police. Any other business The Panel agreed the next meeting would be held on 20 February 2018, chaired by the Conservatives. Subsequent meetings in 2018 will be on Tuesday 5 June 2018 (SNP chair); Tuesday 4 September 2018 (Labour chair); Tuesday 4 December 2018 (Lib Dems chair). SM asked for a list of future publication dates for PFR reporting. Actions Action Owner Status Circulate draft 2nd stage procurement requirements document. CS Complete Add intimidation of candidates to next SPOC conference. BP Complete SPOC seminar 9 February 2018 Electoral Administration Bulletin reminder for ROs about the role of party agents at postal vote counts. AI Complete Included on forward plan to go out closer to the polls Circulate a list of PFR publication dates. BP Complete Related content Party registration decisions View our decisions on political party names, descriptions and emblems View current applications View the political party names, descriptions and emblems which we are currently considering as part of our assessment process Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Registers of unincorporated associations Download and view the registers of unincorporated associations

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published: 19 May 2023 Last updated: 1 June 2023 Board minutes Wednesday 22 March
2023 Wednesday 22 March 2023, 9:30am Bunhill Row, London, and by Video conference
Date of next scheduled Board meeting: Tuesday 25 April 2023 Who was at the meeting
Who was at the meeting John Pullinger Chair Alex Attwood Sarah Chambers Stephen
Gilbert [Until 12.30pm] Roseanna Cunningham [item 5 onwards] Chris Ruane Katy
Radford Elan Closs Stephens [item 5 onwards] Sue Bruce In attendance: Shaun McNally
Chief Executive Kieran Rix Director, Finance and Corporate Services Craig Westwood
Director, Communications, Policy and Research Ailsa Irvine Director, Electoral
Administration and Guidance Louise Edwards Director, Regulation Binnie Goh General
Counsel Sal Naseem Independent Adviser to the Commission Board on Equality,
Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Matt Pledger Senior Adviser, Governance Zena Khan
Senior Adviser, Governance Lilly Malik Legal Officer (meeting support) Denise Morgan
Head of Human Resources [item 1] Sarah Wass Rheolwr Learning and Development Manager
[item 1] Fadilah Shuaibu Human Resources Operations Manager [item 1] Jane Gordon
Human Resources Business Partner [item 1] Regine Mbungu-Binda Human Resources Adviser
[item 1] Paul Conway Human Resources Systems & Data Analyst [item 1] Bola Raji
Planning and Performance Manager [item 6] Tom Hawthorn Head of Policy [item 7]
Michela Palese Policy Manager [item 7] Niki Nixon Head of External Communications
[item 7] Welcomes and apologies, followed by an introduction to the Human Resources
Team providing an overview of their work The Board received apologies from Rob
Vincent. The Board welcomed the Human Resources Team who provided an outline of their
work. The Board noted the level of support provided by the Human Resources Team to
Commission staff. The Board thanked the Human Resources Team for their time and
update. Declarations of Interests The Board noted the following updated entries of
declarations of interests since the February 2023 Board meeting: Chief Executive:
Shaun McNally: Association of Chief Executives: Board Member Commissioner: Katy
Radford: Police Service Northern Ireland: External Reference Group member
Commissioner: Katy Radford: British Council: Member of the Board of Trustees Minutes
(EC 183/23) Resolved: That the Board agreed the minutes of the Board meeting of 17
February 2023. Commission Board action tracker (EC 184/23) Resolved: That the Board
noted the progress against actions requested by the Board. Chief Executive's update
(EC 185/23) The Chief Executive, with other members of the Executive Team, reported
to the Board regarding the work of the Commission. The Director, Communications,
Policy and Research provided an update on communications activity ahead of the May
2023 polls, in particular on progress with the public awareness campaign on voter ID.
The Board noted that the campaign is progressing well, with data indicating awareness
levels of 63% at the end of February 2023, up from 22% in December 2022. The Board
noted that following a proposal from the UK Government Minister, the Speaker's
Committee had increased the Commission's financial estimate for FY2023/24 to allow
for additional spending on voter ID awareness-raising. The Board noted the report
from the Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance as to preparations for the
May polls, which included confirmation that hard copies of the updated Polling

Station Handbook had been issued as planned, concluding the proactive guidance activity of the Commission. There was currently significant engagement underway with local authorities, largely at this stage reactive in response to queries. The Board also noted that there had been a huge increase in public enquiries coming into the Commission. The Board noted that the Regulatory Support Team and the Northern Ireland Office were hosting webinars and advice surgeries for candidates and agents. Areas to be covered included guidance around intimidation of candidates. The Board noted the arrangements for Commission representatives observing the May polls and the proposed approach for post-poll reporting. Commissioners were invited to express interest in being paired with Commission staff to observe the polls. Resolved: That the Board noted the Chief Executive's update on operations and matters arising. Commission Strategic Direction (EC 186//23) The Board noted the positive discussion about the scale of the Commission's ambition at the February 2023 Board event in Chorley. The Chief Executive presented his paper and slides, explaining the impact of implementing the Elections Act 2022 on the capacity of the organisation. Given that impact, the Board noted that the priority must be for the Commission to ensure that statutory obligations are undertaken, particularly in supporting the delivery of elections. The Board further noted that a commitment had been made for the resource envelope on core activities for the Commission be no higher in real terms at the end of the current Corporate Plan cycle than it was at the beginning. The Board noted that the recommended method for it to undertake a forward look at corporate planning was through the lens of thematic reviews by strategic objective. The Board further noted that the resulting Corporate Plan, which would follow a UK Parliamentary general election, would need to take account of the outcome of that election, given the Commission's role in implementing any reforms. Resolved : That the Board noted the report and agreed to hold thematic reviews to co-create and develop the strategic objectives, including underpinning factors such as EDI, as well as looking at strategic risks over the next 12-18 months. Resolved : That the Board agreed to hold a one day event in July 2023 to continue to develop Commission Strategic Direction. Commissioners should be invited to co-create the agenda and content for thematic reviews. Priority policy recommendations (EC 187/23) The Director, Communications, Policy and Research and Head of Policy introduced the report outlining recent progress towards achieving priority policy recommendations and setting out a recommended approach for the next 18 months. The Head of Policy reported that in reviewing the proposed priority policy recommendations, the team had taken into account the potential impact changes would have on voters, administrators, and parties and campaigners; the potential to achieve progress; and the mechanism for delivering change. The Board agreed the proposed prioritisation, including noting that highlighted in the report were areas of recommendations that were not proposed to be included as priorities for proactive communication. Members noted the ongoing importance of reform in the area of digital campaigning, and that it would be important to add updated recommendations as these are refreshed during the next period. Resolved: That the Board noted and agreed the update on the priority policy recommendations. Annual review of governance (EC188/23) The General Counsel introduced the item, reporting to the Board that the amendments to the documentation were illustrated through tracked changes. The Board noted that further guidance had been provided regarding conflicts of interests which reflected discussions with Commissioners. Members of the Board requested some changes to clauses 14, 15 and 16 of the Annex to Appendix 8 Electoral Commission decision-making - Managing legal and reputational risks. The Board agreed amendments to the Terms of Reference, including

the name change to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC). The Board agreed not to expand committee numbers, and Commissioners were to be encouraged to attend meetings to observe. Clarification was provided in the Terms of Reference that the Independent Adviser, in attendance at ARAC, would not assume the role of Chair in their absence. The Board agreed that the membership terms for ARAC should be amended to allow for the Chair to sit for longer than six years in total. The Board agreed with the recommendation from the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee meeting the day before for an uplift of the day and half day fee rate for the Independent Advisers, in line with the uplift for Commissioners' fees. Resolved: That the Board agreed that the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) be renamed to Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC). Resolved: That the Board agreed amendments to enable an extension to the length of office of ARAC Chair and that in the absence of the Chair the Independent Adviser to the Committee would not assume the Chair for meetings of the ARAC. Resolved: That the Board agreed the amendments to the Corporate Governance Framework to reflect the legal duties of Commissioners as set out in PPERA subject to amendments to the ARAC terms of reference on membership terms and to the conflicts of interest guidance in the Commissioner Code of Conduct. The Board agreed for the redraft to be signed off by the Chair prior to publication. Resolved: That the Board agreed an uplift in the Independent Adviser fees in line with commissioners. Update from Audit and Risk Committee Chair (EC 189/23) The Chair of Audit and Risk Committee provided the Board with an update of the work of the committee at its last meeting highlighting the following areas: Internal Audit specification Internal Report Annual tracker survey Update from NAO external audit Risk Management Resolved: That the Board agreed to note the work of the Audit and Risk Committee at its meeting of 21 February 2023 Update from the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo) Chair (EC 190/23) In the absence of the RemCo Chair, committee member Sarah Chambers reported to the Board the work of the committee at its meeting of 21 March 2023 Key discussion Agreed to have four meetings a year RemCo to meet with a large group of staff People strategy update Update provided regarding the tendering of the Human Resources IT system Update provided regarding Civil Service Learning Update provided regarding Recruitment Update provided regarding Performance management Draft Annual Report Update provided on key management information Update provided regarding Staff Survey, agreed to share with the Board the overview Resolved: That the Board agreed to note the work of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee at its meeting of 21 March 2023

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Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 You are in the Our plans and priorities section Home Our plans and priorities In this section Performance analysis 2021/22: Goal one Performance analysis 2021/22: Goal two Performance analysis 2021/22: Goal three Performance analysis 2021/22: Goal four Wales (devolved) annual report 2021/22 Scotland (devolved) annual report Focus on Northern Ireland Looking ahead to 2022/23 Using our resources to support the delivery of our goals 2021/22 Overview This section provides an overview of the Electoral Commission, our purpose, our performance during the last year and the key risks to achieving our goals. We have included summary financial information within the performance report. This is consistent with the financial statements, where more detail is available. The Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPEREA) established the Electoral Commission. We are independent of government and political parties and directly accountable to the UK, Scottish and Welsh Parliaments. We have prepared our 2021/22 Annual Report and Accounts in accordance with an accounts direction, set out on page 139, issued by HM Treasury under paragraph 17(2) of Schedule 1 PPERA. We have prepared the powers and sanctions report on page 54 in accordance with paragraph 15 Schedule 19(b) and paragraph 27 Schedule 19(c) PPERA. Preface and forward Preface This year's elections marked 12 months since I joined the Commission as Chair, and went out in my first week to visit polling stations and observe first-hand the hard work that everyone in the electoral community does to deliver elections across the UK. I saw for myself the huge efforts that went into delivering Covid-safe elections last year, and gained insight into the work of the Commission, and the people we work with and support. Since that first week, I have continued to get out and meet members of the electoral community. I have heard from party treasurers and chairs, members of the UK's governments and parliaments, Returning Officers and electoral administrators and many others engaged in making our democracy function well. Emerging from these discussions are three key things people want to see from the Commission: high performance, cooperation and independence. We have been able to build these areas into our new five-year corporate plan, ensuring that our work over the next five years will meet the needs of all those we support. High performance is, of course, critical if we want to continue to command trust and confidence. We have developed stretching targets and an ambitious set of performance indicators to ensure, not only that the Commission delivers to a high standard, but that the wider system meets the needs of voters and everyone else involved in elections. We will measure public satisfaction with voting and voter registration, the timeliness of our enforcement work and the provision of guidance, and public perceptions of fraud and abuse. To achieve our targets, we need to work closely with other organisations, including local authorities, the police, parties and campaigners. We have a programme of support for electoral administrators and local authorities to assist them to deliver effective, resilient and consistent local electoral services. We also have a new support strategy for our regulated community to help parties and campaigners comply with electoral law and to ensure voters have transparency over the money given to and spent by these groups. As ever, the Commission's independence underpins this work. It is essential that we remain independent and free to take impartial decisions, informed by evidence. We will carefully consider the implications of the UK Government's Strategy and Policy Statement, due to be published later this year, and share our views via the scheduled consultation. Performance, cooperation and independence will be particularly important as the Commission implements the UK Government's Elections Act and the electoral agendas for Scotland and Wales over the

coming years. Alongside the electoral community, we will be working to deliver significant changes for voters, administrators and campaigners. We will continue to advise on timeframes, resources and impact to ensure the changes can be delivered as intended. Delivering the corporate plan and implementing the Elections Act will require a resilient and skilled team. I have been pleased to welcome to the Commission Shaun McNally CBE, our new Chief Executive, who together with our Senior Leadership Team is already making great progress on this work. I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Bob Posner, our retiring Chief Executive, who has been a calm, approachable and supportive leader over many years of service to the Commission. John Pullinger CB, Chair Foreward Having recently joined the Commission as Chief Executive, I have been pleased to see the excellent work the Commission has undertaken to promote public confidence in the democratic process and ensure its integrity. This annual report sets out in detail the organisation's progress against its four strategic objectives, but there are a number of achievements worth highlighting. May 2021 saw a particularly complex set of polls take place across Great Britain, including elections to the Scottish Parliament, Senedd and London Assembly, with some contests postponed from May 2020. The additional challenge of the coronavirus pandemic brought uncertainty and changes for voters, campaigners and administrators who were required to observe public health guidance while participating. Commission colleagues worked with public health bodies and the electoral community to support all those involved, providing detailed guidance to campaigners and administrators and running public awareness campaigns to help voters understand their voting options. I was pleased to see that more than a million people registered to vote during the period of the Commission's voter registration campaign, 'Got 5?', and our research found that there was no decline in turnout, despite the pandemic. Changes put in place by the UK's governments, the Commission and electoral administrators helped support and reassure voters and campaigners. People were confident that they could vote safely at the elections, the overwhelming majority were able to vote using their preferred method, and overall, candidates and campaigners were able to put their case to voters face-to-face, online and through printed material. Shortly before the polls, Commission research found that public confidence in the running of elections hit a ten-year high. Eighty per cent of respondents said they were confident that elections in the UK are well run, and 86% were satisfied with the process of voting and registering to vote. This is a great outcome and something we must continue to build on. As well as overseeing elections, the Commission is also responsible for overseeing compliance and promoting a good understanding of the rules among the regulated community. Last year, colleagues carried out research with our regulated community to understand the challenges they face, and the kind of support and assistance they want from us in the future. We want to work with campaigners to deliver more proactive support and engagement, helping them to get ahead of any potential compliance issues. We have set up a new team dedicated to developing, testing and implementing a selection of new support tools. The team contacted a wide range of organisations and individuals from across the regulated community, including political parties large and small, non-party campaigners, and elected representatives. We heard back from nearly 350 people from across the UK who have provided us with information that will help us design a regulatory support strategy around their needs. This will help ensure we continue to enjoy high levels of compliance, which further supports voter confidence in our electoral system. Another key focus for the Commission over the last year has been the UK Government's Elections Act, the most significant piece of electoral

legislation in nearly 20 years. The Commission spent much of the last year providing independent, evidence-based advice to parliamentarians to support their consideration of the Bill's measures. Having now received Royal Assent, the Elections Act brings considerable changes for those delivering, participating and campaigning in elections in the UK. Our focus and that of our partners now turns to implementation, and ensuring all those involved in our democratic processes have time to understand and prepare for the new measures. Work on this has already begun and will be a significant priority for the years ahead. Plans are underway for a public awareness campaign to support new voter ID requirements, and our teams are looking carefully at how we can reflect the new legislation in our guidance. Finally, the last year has seen important changes to the Commission's funding and accountability arrangements. The Scottish Parliament and Senedd now fund the direct costs of delivering Commission functions. These arrangements have now been in place for a full year, bringing increased accountability and transparency for the Commission. You will notice these arrangements reflected throughout this document, both in the Commission's accounts and in the two devolved sections of the report. The work of the last year puts us in a strong position for the year to come. We have a new Corporate Plan, which sets ambitious objectives for the next five-year period. It will drive our work with the wider electoral community, with voters, campaigners, administrators, partners and the UK's governments to strengthen further trust in the electoral system. It will also drive collaboration and improvement within the Commission. In order to support our stakeholders, we need to support our staff. We will refresh our learning and development offering and invest in technology to ensure everyone has the skills, tools and support they need to deliver. Internal innovation will equip us to keep pace with external innovation. With new electoral legislation from the UK Government and ambitious reform agendas in both Scotland and Wales, there is a lot of change on the horizon. We are well placed to support the electoral community through these changes, and to make the case for any further reforms our system might need to ensure voters and campaigners can continue to participate with confidence.

Shaun McNally
CBE, Chief Executive and Accounting Officer

Our role

The Electoral Commission is the independent body which oversees elections and regulates political finance in the United Kingdom. . Our vision and goals

Our vision is to be a world-class public sector organisation – innovative, delivering great value and getting right what matters most to voters and legislators. In 2021/22 we worked towards achieving four goals:

- To enable the continued delivery of free and fair elections and referendums, focusing on the needs of electors and addressing the changing environment to ensure every vote remains secure and accessible
- To ensure an increasingly trusted and transparent system of regulation in political finance, overseeing compliance, promoting understanding amongst those regulated and proactively pursuing breaches
- To be an independent and respected centre of expertise, using knowledge and insight to further the transparency, fairness and efficiency of our democratic system, and help adapt it to the modern, digital age
- To provide value for money, making best use of our resources and expertise to deliver services that are attuned to what matters most to voters.

This goal underpins and supports all of our work

From 2022/23 we have updated our vision and strategic objectives in our Corporate Plan . As an organisation, we will work to promote public confidence in the electoral system and ensure its integrity. Our vision will be to ensure people trust, value and take part in elections. We plan to achieve this vision by delivering these five strategic objectives:

- Accessible registration and voting
- Transparent political campaigning and compliant political finance
- Resilient local electoral services
- Fair and effective

electoral law A modern and sustainable electoral system Our role across the UK We deliver for voters across all parts of the UK, with Electoral Commission offices in Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh and London. We work closely with the UK and devolved governments and, since April 2021, we now have accountabilities to the UK Parliament, the Scottish Parliament and the Senedd, and are funded by each of these for the work undertaken on elections under their devolved or retained powers. Our Governance Section includes more detail on our accountability arrangements and, from page 31, sets out specific reports in relation to our work for the Scottish Parliament and Senedd. Our 2021/22 year at a glance April to June 2021 We supported the successful delivery of the complex set of polls in May 2021, including those elections deferred from May 2020 due to COVID-19. Over one million people registered to vote in Great Britain during the period of our 'Got 5' voter registration campaign. Our 'Your Vote is Yours Alone' campaign raised awareness among voters of their rights and produced a suite of resources, for local authorities and other organisations to use to spread the message. We achieved an 87% response rate in our Pulse staff survey. This is 8 percentage points higher than the pulse survey in November 2020, and 1 percentage point higher than the last full 'all staff' survey in March 2020. John Pullinger started as Chair of the Electoral Commission. From 1 April the Electoral Commission became accountable to, and funded by, the Scottish Parliament and Senedd for devolved functions and elections. 64% of the public surveyed said they were satisfied with our public information service. July to September 2021 We supported the electoral registration canvass across Great Britain and in Northern Ireland, providing advice and support to Electoral Registration Officers and running a new public awareness campaign in Northern Ireland. We published three evaluation reports on the May 2021 elections, concluding the elections had been well-run despite the challenging circumstances. The Committee on Standards in Public Life published a report on the regulation of election finance, recommending important changes to the Commission's role and powers. The Elections Bill was published and introduced in the UK Parliament. We worked with officials to provide advice and expertise as required. We issued our regulatory support survey, to support us to understand our stakeholders' needs better. Dr Katy Radford was appointed as Commissioner for Northern Ireland. October to December 2021 We published guidance for electoral administrators, parties and campaigners in advance of the May 2022 elections. We published research looking at public attitudes to voting processes and the information available around elections. We published the campaign spending returns of political parties and registered non-party campaigners that spent £250,000 or less campaigning at the 2021 Scottish Parliament election or Senedd election. We submitted our first Wales Corporate Plan and estimate to the Llywydd's Committee and our first estimate to the Scottish Parliament Corporate Body. We consulted in Great Britain and in Northern Ireland on a new equality, diversity and inclusion strategy and on a refreshed approach to Equality Impact Assessments. January to March 2022 We published the campaign spending returns of political parties that spent over £250,000 campaigning at the 2021 Scottish Parliament election or Senedd election. We published our report on the 2021 Northern Ireland electoral registration canvass. We ran our first virtual pre-election seminar in Northern Ireland for candidates and agents contesting the May 2022 Assembly election. To support Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers in advance of the May 2022 elections, we held joint briefing events with the Electoral Management Board for Scotland and Wales Electoral Coordination Board We ran 'Welcome to your vote week' in Scotland and Wales in partnership with education bodies and youth groups, to provide information on registering and voting to 15-17

year olds. We launched a day of activity to target newly enfranchised foreign nationals in Scotland and Wales with information about registration and voting. Our year in numbers Used £17.2m of voted resources, including £0.7m capital spend Invested 65% of our net resource expenditure on staff costs (£10.8m) Achieved 67% employee engagement score Answered 5,324 public enquiries – a 18% increase on last year Responded to 150 Freedom of Information requests Published 412 donation and loan reports from parties and campaigners Notified 93.9% of applicants of the outcome of their registration application within targets based on complexity (simple applications: 35 working days, complex applications: 45 working days, Non-Party s: 5 working days) Completed 66.7% of investigations within targets based on complexity (simple cases: 90 calendar days, complex cases: 180 calendar days, highly complex: individual targets set on a case by case basis) Published 724 annual statement of accounts for political parties and accounting units Published 100% of our guidance products on time with no substantial errors Responded to 99.5% requests for advice from local authorities within 3 days Issued £58k of civil sanctions in our role as a regulator Performance analysis Jump to: Goal one Goal two Goal three Goal four Wales (devolved) annual report Scotland (devolved) annual report Focus on Northern Ireland Looking ahead to 2022/23 Using our resources to support the delivery of our goals Download our full Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22

presented in this study further supports our position, first set out in 2015, that the electoral registration system in Great Britain requires modernisation to provide the best possible opportunity for ensuring that as many people as possible are correctly registered. This research confirms that age and mobility continue to be the strongest variables associated with lower levels of completeness. Plans to reform the annual canvass starting in 2020 are an important first step, enabling EROs to focus resources on households that have changed composition, but there is more that could and should be done to modernise registration processes in Great Britain. Our vision of a modern electoral register is one which: Uses trusted public data to keep itself accurate and complete throughout the year without relying solely on action by individuals; and Makes it as easy as possible for electors to ensure their own registration record is accurate and complete, particularly ahead of elections and referendums. Earlier this year we published the findings from a series of feasibility studies exploring how electoral registration reforms could be delivered, to help inform the debate about registration reform. These studies looked at the potential for giving EROs access to data from other public service providers; integration of electoral registration into other public service transactions; and automatic or more automated forms of registration. The options explored in the studies could help address some of the specific challenges highlighted in this research. For example: For people who have recently changed address, including those who move more frequently, registering to vote may not always be an immediate priority. Regular access to reliable data from a wider range of public services about people who have recently updated their address details would allow EROs to make contact directly with them at their new address to encourage them to register to vote. Integrating electoral registration applications into other public service transactions could make it easier for individuals to keep their registration details up to date and accurate.

This could be particularly effective for those who have moved recently and who are in the process of updating their details with other agencies and public bodies. Making better use of existing public data sources could also help to improve levels of completeness among some of the specific under-registered groups identified in this study. Data from the education sector – such as information held by the Education and Skills Funding Agency Learning Records Service, which collects data relating to learners in England, Wales and Northern Ireland registering for relevant post-14 qualifications, and the Scottish Qualifications Authority – could help EROs identify attainers and other young people. Also, data from the Department for Work and Pensions could potentially be used by EROs to register young people to vote automatically when they are allocated their National Insurance number ahead of their 16th birthday. Our feasibility studies found that these reforms were feasible from a technical and operational perspective and could be implemented without radically altering the structure of the electoral registration system in the UK. While reforms of this nature undoubtedly raise important questions about data sharing, data protection and the implications of automatic registration, they offer considerable potential to address the challenges of achieving accurate and complete registers in Great Britain. We want to encourage a wider debate on the potential benefits of further modernisation and electoral registration reform and look forward to

discussing the findings of our feasibility studies with governments and other interested groups.

imprints has been submitted for ministerial approval. Close alert Statutory guidance
on digital imprints - final draft You are in the Response to consultation on
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- Show page contents On this page What is digital material and when does it need an
imprint Requirements for the imprint Sharing and republishing material Enforcement of
the regime Key terms About this guidance The guidance has been prepared by the
Electoral Commission, and laid before Parliament, in accordance with section 54 of
the Elections Act 2022. It applies throughout the United Kingdom of Great Britain and
Northern Ireland. The purpose of this guidance is to: explain the operation of Part 6
of the Act, concerned with information that is to be included with digital material
and how to comply with its requirements explain how the Electoral Commission and the
police will undertake their enforcement functions where there is a breach or
suspected breach of Part 6 of the Act. Where the guidance says that something must be
done, this means that it is a requirement in either primary or secondary legislation.

The guidance uses 'you' to mean both the promoter of the material, and anyone else on
whose behalf it has been published. This is because it is the promoter and/or anyone
on whose behalf material has been published who commit an offence under section 48 of
the Elections Act 2022 if material is published contrary to Part 6 of the Act. Key
terms are explained throughout the guidance, and also provided in an alphabetical
list at the end of the document. The Electoral Commission and the police must have
regard to this guidance when exercising their functions under Part 6 of the Act. The
Electoral Commission may propose revisions to this guidance from time to time in
accordance with the Act or when directed to do so by the Secretary of State. The
examples used in this guidance relate to functionality on digital platforms as of May
2023. The general principles set out in the guidance continue to apply in the event
that functionality changes, or new platforms emerge. Introduction When certain
campaign material is published, it must contain specific details to show who is
responsible for publishing it. These details are known as an 'imprint'. The imprint
helps to ensure there is transparency for voters about who is campaigning. There are
already UK-wide laws requiring imprints on printed election, referendum and recall
petition material, and on digital election material used at Scottish devolved
elections. For these laws, please see the Electoral Commission's non-statutory
guidance . Under the Elections Act 2022, the law requires imprints on some kinds of
electronic material. This guidance refers to electronic material as 'digital
material'. Examples of the types of digital material that need an imprint are
explained in the guidance. The digital imprint requirements do not apply to digital
material published prior to the commencement of Part 6 of the Act. However if that
material is republished once the Act has been commenced, the republished material
will become subject to the requirements. What is digital material? An imprint may be
required on any digital material, provided the material meets the criteria which are
set out in the following sections. Digital material is material in electronic form
that consists of or includes text, moving images, still images, speech or music. It
does not include telephone calls or SMS messages. It can apply to material published
in messaging services which do not use SMS, such as WhatsApp or Signal. The
requirement to include an imprint only applies to digital material that is published,
which means made available to the public or any section of the public. For example,
it would not apply to a private messaging group between friends, or an email sent out

by a party only to its members. If material is made available in the UK, then the digital imprint rules will apply, no matter where the content is published from, or where the promoter is. For example, you could be outside the UK, but publish material on a digital platform making it available to a section of the public in the UK.

Imprints may be required on published material including (though this is not an exhaustive list): Pop-up ads Social media posts Any advert that appears in any website, search engine result, app or social media platform Adverts on internet radio or other audio streaming platforms such as Spotify Adverts on digital TV streaming services Adverts in podcasts Adverts in online newspapers Messages on WhatsApp, Signal or Telegram MMS messages Websites Images Videos Electronic billboards Definitions of material in scope of the regime may also be updated by secondary legislation to allow for emerging technology. What sort of material requires an imprint? There are two different sets of criteria which determine if your digital material requires an imprint under the Elections Act 2022. The first applies to paid adverts. The second applies to any other material. This guidance refers to material that is not a paid advert as 'organic material'. If you have paid for the material to be published as an advert, then it must have an imprint if it is 'political material'. This requirement applies to anyone publishing political material as a paid advert. If you have not paid for the material to be published as an advert, then it is organic material. Organic material must have an imprint if it is election material, referendum material or recall petition material, and it is published by or on behalf of a relevant entity, such as a candidate or registered political party.

There are also exceptions for some kinds of material under the Elections Act. This guidance refers to these as exemptions. All these concepts are explained in more detail in the following sections. Imprints are important for transparency in campaigning. It is therefore good practice to include an imprint on all digital material that relates to elections, referendums or recall petitions, even if the material does not require one by law. Paid adverts If you have paid for digital material to be published as an advert, then it must have an imprint if it is 'political material'. This requirement applies to anyone placing a paid advert.

Payment includes payments of any kind – for example 'pay-per-click' and 'pay-per-impression' advertising. Payment is not limited to just money. It can also include benefits in kind, for example goods or services being provided for free or at a discount by the promoter to the digital platform hosting the advert. It does not include payments as part of the costs of creating, setting up, operating or maintaining the material. It is limited to payments made specifically to the service provider or platform hosting the adverts for the publication of those adverts. If the service provider hosting the advert (for example, a digital platform or electronic billboard advertiser) has not been paid for the material to be published on the platform, then the material is not a paid advert. Example For example, if you employ a digital agency to pay social media platforms for placing adverts on their platforms, then these are paid adverts because the agency is paying the platforms for the adverts to be published. By contrast, if you employ a digital agency to publish digital material on their own social media channels, then these are not paid adverts, because the platforms on which the material is published are not being paid. The fact that the agency is being paid does not make the material a paid advert. Similarly, if you pay an influencer or ambassador to post material on their own social media channels, then these are not paid adverts, because the platforms on which the material is published are not being paid for the material to be published. This is the case even if the posts are classed as adverts for the purposes of other

legislation. Paid adverts2 Not all payments to the service provider hosting the material will mean the material is a paid advert – only those made to the service provider specifically for the material to be published as an advert. Example For example, if you pay a social media company for a certain type of account (e.g. the paid Twitter Blue account), this does not make all your posts paid adverts. By contrast, if you pay a social media company to increase the reach of a post by publishing it as an advert (e.g. boosting a post), then this will be a paid advert.

Paid adverts3 If material is not a paid advert, then it is ‘organic material’.

Organic material may still require an imprint – see the section ‘Organic material’.

Political material Political material is material whose sole or primary purpose can reasonably be regarded as intended to influence the public, or any section of the public, to give support to or withhold support from: one or more political parties a particular candidate or a particular future candidate (in their capacity as such) a

particular elected office-holder (in their capacity as such) political parties, candidates, future candidates or elected office-holders that are linked by their support for or opposition to particular policies, or by holding particular opinions

other categories of candidates, future candidates or elected office-holders that are not based on policies or opinions – for example, candidates who went to a state school, or MPs who grew up in their constituency the holding of a referendum, or a

particular outcome of a referendum any combination of the above The following are examples of digital paid adverts that constitute political material: Political

material whose sole or primary purpose can reasonably be regarded as intended to influence the public, or any section of the public, to give support to a political party. Political material whose sole or primary purpose can reasonably be regarded as intended to influence the public, or any section of the public, to give support to a particular candidate. Political material whose sole or primary purpose can reasonably be regarded as intended to influence the public, or any section of the public, to withhold support from a particular elected office-holder. Political material whose sole or primary purpose can reasonably be regarded as intended to influence the public, or any section of the public, to withhold support from a particular elected office-holder. Political material whose sole or primary purpose can reasonably be regarded as intended to influence the public, or any section of the public, to give support to or withhold support from a category of candidates linked by something

other than their support for a policy. Political material whose sole or primary purpose can reasonably be regarded as intended to influence the public, or any section of the public, to give support to the outcome of a referendum. Material can be political material at any time, not just in election or referendum periods. For example, you could pay for a digital advert promoting a party or elected office-holder at any time, without it being related to an electoral event. Paid adverts only need an imprint if their sole or primary purpose can reasonably be regarded as one of those on the list above. Example For example, a sponsored Facebook post of a comedian doing a routine criticising a government minister would not usually need an imprint, because the primary purpose of the clip is usually reasonably regarded as being to promote the comedian. Paid adverts4 If an organisation publishes digital material, the sole or primary purpose of any given piece of material will not always be the same as the overall purpose of the organisation. It will be a matter of fact in each case whether the sole or primary purpose of any particular piece of material can reasonably be regarded as being one of those in the list above. In particular, where the primary purpose of a specific piece of material is to do with a campaign issue itself and not any of those on the list above, then it will not be political

material. Example For example, suppose a campaigning organisation in 2023 has as its main objective to bring back the death penalty. It runs three sets of paid adverts. The first criticises a political party which is opposed to the death penalty. The primary purpose of this material can reasonably be regarded as to influence the public to withhold support from the party. Therefore it requires an imprint. The second argues for holding a referendum on reinstating the death penalty. The primary purpose of this material can reasonably be regarded as to influence the public to give support to the holding of a referendum. Therefore it requires an imprint. The third advert lists a number of positive predictions about the effects of reinstating the death penalty. The primary purpose of this material can reasonably be regarded as to influence the public to support the death penalty. Therefore it does not require an imprint. Although the organisation has an overarching primary organisational purpose, the different pieces of digital material it publishes have distinct primary purposes. This means that some of the material requires an imprint and some does not, depending on the facts.

Paid adverts⁵ Political material relating to referendums A paid advert will be political material if its sole or primary purpose can reasonably be regarded as intended to influence the public, or any section of the public, to give support to or withhold support from the holding of, or a particular outcome of, any kind of referendum in the UK, such as: a UK-wide referendum a referendum held in England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, or any combination of those a Senedd referendum a local authority governance referendum a local government referendum a local poll a council tax increases referendum a parish poll a Neighbourhood Planning referendum Any paid digital advert that supports an outcome in a referendum that is being held must have an imprint. Any paid digital advert that promotes an outcome in a potential future referendum must have an imprint, even if that referendum has not yet been called or legislated for. Example For example, there is speculation about a referendum being held on an issue, but it has not yet been officially called or legislated for. If a campaigner places a paid advert saying 'VOTE YES' to the particular issue, this could be reasonably regarded as influencing the public to support a particular outcome (Yes) in a future referendum. Therefore it would require an imprint.

Paid adverts⁶ Any paid digital advert that expressly advocates the holding of a new referendum must have an imprint. It does not matter if the referendum is unlikely to be held – the imprint requirements still apply.

Example For example, a paid digital advert calling for a referendum on an independent North of England would require an imprint.

Paid adverts⁷ Paid adverts relating only to referendums held in the past will not be political material under the referendum part of the definition.

Example For example, a paid advert marking the anniversary of the 1998 referendum in Northern Ireland which endorsed the Good Friday Agreement would not need an imprint.

Paid adverts⁸ Some paid digital adverts may relate to: the subject matter of a past referendum the consequences of the outcome of a referendum the implementation of a referendum result Since in these cases the referendum is over, this material will only require an imprint if it meets one of the other criteria for political material.

Example For example, a paid advert published after a referendum saying 'RESPECT THE RESULT' could not be reasonably regarded as intended to influence the public to give support to the winning outcome in the referendum, because the referendum is already over. However, depending on the context and the material, it may be political material for another reason. For example, it might be reasonably regarded as intended to influence the public to give support to a particular party or category of elected office-holders who have particular views on how to implement the result, or to withhold support for the holding of a second

referendum. Organic material If you have not paid for the digital material to be published as an advert – for example, you just posted it on your own social media – then it is organic material. Organic material must include an imprint if it is both: published by or on behalf of a relevant entity any of: election material referendum material recall petition material These concepts are explained below. Relevant entities The relevant entities are: a registered party a registered non-party campaigner a candidate or future candidate an elected office-holder a registered referendum campaigner a registered recall petition campaigner If someone is not a relevant entity, and they publish organic material on their own behalf, then the material does not require an imprint. Organic material published by or on behalf of a relevant entity must include an imprint, even if they have not paid for it to be published, if it is any of: election material referendum material recall petition material Unlike in relation to paid adverts, the three kinds of organic material which require an imprint are all related to specific electoral events. Organic material is therefore more likely to need an imprint during the campaigns leading up to these events. Election material Election material is material whose purpose can reasonably be regarded as intending to promote or procure electoral success for: one or more political parties a candidate or future candidate political parties, candidates, or future candidates that are linked by their support for or opposition to particular policies, or by holding particular opinions other categories of candidates or future candidates that are not based on policies or opinions – for example, candidates or future candidates who went to a state school, or independent candidates (who do not stand for a political party) any combination of the above It includes material that is reasonably regarded as intended to influence voters to vote for or against one of the entities listed above – for example it includes both a positive campaign about a party's policies, and a negative campaign criticising a rival party's policies. If material meets any of these criteria, it will be election material even if the material can reasonably be regarded as intended to achieve other purposes as well. There is more detail on this point in the section about non-party campaigners. Organic digital material which is election material and is published by or on behalf of a relevant entity must include an imprint. The following are examples of organic material that constitute election material: Election material which can reasonably be regarded as intended to influence voters to vote against a political party. Election material which can reasonably be regarded as intending to promote or procure electoral success for a candidate. Election material which can reasonably be regarded as intending to promote or procure electoral success for a category of candidates that are linked by their support for a policy. Election material which can reasonably be regarded as intending to promote or procure electoral success for a category of candidates that are linked by something other than a policy. Referendum material Referendum material is material that wholly or mainly relates to a PPERA referendum, and which is published during the referendum period. This means that in the rules for organic material, referendum material only relates to a referendum that is being held – unlike in the rules for paid adverts, which can also apply to material concerned with referendums that may not happen. A PPERA referendum is a referendum held under Part 7 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, including: a UK-wide referendum a referendum held in one or more of England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland (but not including a Senedd referendum) The rules for organic material do not apply to material relating to any other type of referendum, for example: Senedd referendum local government referendum local authority governance referendum local poll council tax increases referendum parish

poll Neighbourhood Planning referendum Organic digital material that is referendum material and is published by or on behalf of a relevant entity must include an imprint. Recall petition material Recall petition material is material whose purpose can reasonably be regarded as intending to promote or procure the success or failure of a recall petition. Organic digital material that is recall petition material and is published by or on behalf of a relevant entity must include an imprint. Exemptions The following types of material do not need to carry an imprint because they are specifically exempted: Material, other than an advert, published on a website or app which is primarily for journalism Any party political broadcast or referendum campaign broadcast Certain shared material which still includes the original imprint. See ‘Sharing and republishing material’ for more details Material published on a website or app which is primarily for journalism Material, other than an advert, which is published on a website or mobile app whose primary purpose (or one of whose primary purposes) is journalism does not need to include an imprint. This exemption does not apply to adverts, regardless of whether the platform has been paid to publish the advert or not. Websites or apps which have journalism as one of their primary purposes can include for example: Online newspapers or news channels Newspaper apps Online radio stations Party political broadcast or referendum campaign broadcast Digital imprints are not required on any party political broadcast or referendum campaign broadcast included by a broadcaster in its broadcasting services. A “broadcaster” means: the holder of a licence under the Broadcasting Act 1990 or 1996, the British Broadcasting Corporation, or Sianel Pedwar Cymru. A ‘referendum campaign broadcast’ means any broadcast whose purpose (or main purpose) is or may reasonably be assumed to be to further any campaign conducted with a view to promoting or procuring a particular outcome in relation to any question asked in a referendum to which Part 7 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 applies, or otherwise to promote or procure any such outcome. If a party publishes the same material on a digital platform, for example on their website, then this will not be a party political broadcast and so will not be exempt. Candidates and future candidates If you are a candidate or a future candidate, you must include an imprint on any material that meets the criteria set out in the previous sections. For example, although this is not an exhaustive list, both for paid adverts and for organic material, an imprint will be required on any material that: promotes your candidacy criticises another candidate promotes your political party (if you have one) in the election criticises another political party in the election Becoming a future candidate You become a future candidate when you announce your intention to stand in the next election, or someone else announces it on your behalf. For example, your party may have issued a press release when you were selected, or you might have mentioned your intention at a residents’ meeting. This means that it is possible to be a future candidate for a long time before the election. As soon as your intention to stand is declared, you are a future candidate, and therefore you are a relevant entity who will be required to include imprints on organic material if it is election material, referendum material or recall petition material. You will stop being a future candidate if you withdraw your declaration of intention to stand, or when you become a candidate. If you are a future candidate, you will become a candidate on the last date for publication of notice of election, or for parliamentary general elections, on the date Parliament is dissolved. Even before you are a candidate or future candidate, you will still need to include an imprint on a digital paid advert if it is political material. Political parties It is good practice for political parties to include an imprint on all of their digital material. Organic material A

political party that is registered with the Electoral Commission is one of the relevant entities. This means that a registered party must include an imprint on any organic material that is either election material, referendum material or recall petition material. In particular, although this is not an exhaustive list, a party must include an imprint on any organic material which: promotes the party or any of its candidates or future candidates at an election criticises another party or any of its candidates or future candidates at an election promotes an outcome in a PPERA referendum – even if the party is not registered with the Electoral Commission as a referendum campaigner promotes an outcome in a recall petition – even if the party is not registered as a recall petition campaigner with the Petition Officer Paid adverts Like anyone else, a political party must include an imprint on any paid advert which is political material. In particular, although this is not an exhaustive list, this includes any digital paid advert, published at any time, which can reasonably be regarded as having the sole or primary purpose of influencing the public: to support the party or any of its candidates, future candidates or elected office-holders to withhold support from another party or any of its candidates, future candidates or elected office-holders to support or withhold support from the holding of a referendum to support or withhold support from an outcome in a referendum that is happening, even if the party is not registered with the Electoral Commission as a referendum campaigner to support or withhold support from an outcome in a recall petition – even if the party is not registered as a recall petition campaigner with the Petition Officer Non-party campaigners Non-party campaigners are individuals and organisations who campaign around elections without standing candidates themselves. s being able to get their messages to voters is a fundamental part of the democratic process, and it is important that voters hear from a wide and diverse variety of campaigners. Non-party campaigners who spend over a certain amount on campaigning at elections must register with the Electoral Commission. Unlike a political party, where a lot of their material is likely to require an imprint, if you are a non-party campaigner that campaigns on an issue, you may find that only some of your material requires an imprint. You should consider whether an imprint is required for each piece of material, according to the facts. Imprints are important for transparency in campaigning. It is therefore good practice to include an imprint on all digital material that relates to elections, referendums and recall petitions, even if the material does not need to include one by law. If a campaigner includes an imprint on their material, that does not mean that the material requires one by law. The campaigner may well simply be including one as best practice for transparency. The following sections give guidance on the two types of material that may require an imprint. Paid adverts – all campaigners If you pay a digital platform to publish a digital advert, you will need to determine if the advert is ‘political material’. Your advert will be political material if its sole or primary purpose can reasonably be regarded as one of the purposes on the list. If you are a non-party campaigner campaigning on an issue, the primary purpose of your overall campaign is likely to be based on that issue. However, what matters for whether your digital advert is political material is not your organisation’s overall aim, but whether the sole or primary purpose of a particular paid advert is a purpose that makes the advert political material (see paid adverts section for examples on this point and the definition of political material). If you are a registered charity, and you follow charity law and guidance from the relevant charity regulator, your material is unlikely to have a sole or primary purpose on the list, because many of the sorts of campaigns that have those purposes are prohibited. For example, charities must remain

independent of party politics and must not support a political party or candidate, or create a perception of support as a result of their actions or participation. This may also apply to other organisations who have limits on their political activities, for example in their constitution. Organic material – registered campaigners If you are a non-party campaigner registered with the Electoral Commission, then as well as for paid adverts, you must also include an imprint on organic material – including anything you post on social media – if it is election material, referendum material or recall petition material. Election material is very similar to material which meets the ‘purpose test’ for regulated non-party campaigner spending (see the Commission’s spending guidance for more information). If you have determined that your digital material meets the purpose test, then it will also need to carry an imprint. The primary intention of your material may not be to influence voters. For example, you might publish material with one or more of the following intentions: raising awareness of an issue influencing political parties to adopt a policy in their manifestos campaigning for or against government legislation providing information to voters encouraging people to register to vote encouraging people to vote, but not for anyone in particular Material that can reasonably be regarded as having one of these intentions will not be election material unless it can also reasonably be regarded as having the intention to influence voters to vote for or against certain parties, candidates or future candidates. Even if your primary intention is something else, your material will still be election material if it can reasonably be regarded as intended to influence voters to vote for or against certain parties, candidates or future candidates. For example, suppose your intention is to influence political parties to adopt a policy. If you go about this by publishing material promoting parties and candidates who have already adopted the policy, then this will be election material because the purpose of your material can reasonably be regarded as being to influence voters to support those parties and candidates.

Election material which can reasonably be regarded as intended to promote a party on the basis of its support for an issue. If issues-based material cannot reasonably be regarded as intended to influence voters to vote for certain parties, candidates or future candidates, then it is not election material. Campaign material which is not election material (but which carries an imprint as best practice). More examples are included below.

Example Before any election is announced, an animal welfare organisation publishes a tweet-thread explaining what it regards as mistreatment of animals in captivity. As well as setting out problems, it argues that one of the causes is government policy and underfunding. It does not mention elections, candidates or political parties. This is not election material and does not require an imprint. Although the material is critical of the government, it is not reasonably regarded as intended to influence voters in an election.

Example Two months before a UK Parliamentary general election, the animal welfare organisation, that is registered with the Electoral Commission, retweets, without commenting on it, a news article reporting that the party of government has announced they will legalise fox hunting if they are re-elected. This is not election material. This is merely sharing information, and the organisation would be expected to share any news relevant to their work. No imprint is required.

Example Once all the main parties have launched their manifestos in advance of a UK Parliamentary general election, the registered non-party campaigner compares their manifesto pledges on fox hunting. They create a graphic comparing the parties’ positions on the issue, giving marks out of ten and saying which party has the best policies. They then publish the graphic on their own social media channels. Because the campaigner has compared the parties and said which

is better in this context, they have effectively promoted some over others. The graphic is therefore reasonably regarded as promoting those parties the campaigner considers to have better policies, so is election material. An imprint is required on the material. Example During the referendum period for a PPERA referendum, a registered non-party campaigner publishes a blog post on their website setting out what they see as the consequences of each outcome for their service users. This requires an imprint. For organic material which is published during the referendum period, it does not matter whether or not the material promotes an outcome in the referendum – it only needs to wholly or mainly relate to the referendum. Non-party campaigners² Organic material – unregistered campaigners If you are a non-party campaigner who is not registered with the Electoral Commission, then you do not need to include an imprint on any organic digital material you publish on your own behalf.

This is because an unregistered non-party campaigner is not a relevant entity.

Unregistered non-party campaigners who only publish material on their own behalf will only need to include an imprint on paid adverts. What information must you include in the imprint? You must include the name and address of: the promoter any person on behalf of whom the material is being published (and who is not the promoter) You must use a postal address where you can be contacted. It can be an office or business address, or a home address. You can also use a PO Box address, or other mailbox service. The imprint must be in text form, unless it is included as a part of solely audio material. In this case, the imprint must be included as audio material. The imprint must be legible, or in the case of audio material, audible, no matter what device is used to access the information. In order to comply with the law, you must ensure that a written imprint is on screen for long enough that it can be read.

Similarly, an audio imprint must be read at a speed at which it can be heard and understood. If digital material which requires an imprint is published without one, the promoter and anyone on whose behalf it has been published may be liable for an offence under section 48 of the Elections Act 2022. The promoter and anyone on whose behalf the material is being published The promoter is whoever has caused the material to be published. Both the promoter and any person on behalf of whom the material is being published may be an individual or an organisation. If the material is published by an organisation, then the promoter is the organisation itself. The details of an individual are not required. Example For example, if an employee of a registered non-party campaigner publishes material for the campaigner in the course of their role as an employee, then it is the non-party campaigner itself who is the promoter and whose details must be provided. What information² The imprint must include the details of both the promoter and anyone else on whose behalf the material has been published. This means that your own details will not always be enough to meet the imprint requirements, depending on your particular situation. Example For example, if an agent publishes material on behalf of their candidate, then the imprint must include both the details of the agent, as promoter, and of the candidate on whose behalf the material has been published. For another example, suppose someone is an agent for a candidate, and also publishes material as part of their role volunteering for a political party. Some of the material they promote will be on behalf of the candidate, and so need to include the agent's details as promoter, and the candidate's details as the other person on whose behalf the material has been published. Some of it will be for the party, and so need the details of the party instead. What information³ Material could be published on someone's behalf for a number of reasons, including: the role someone plays in a campaign – for example, an agent may publish material on behalf of their candidate, making the agent the

promoter. They are paying for a service – for example, a social media influencer may publish their own organic material on behalf of the political party that has engaged them to do so, making the influencer the promoter. They are part of a wider group involved in publishing the material – for example, a non-party campaigner may publish material on behalf of a coalition of non-party campaigners, making that non-party campaigner the promoter. If you are being paid to publish the material, the material must include an imprint which includes the details of whoever is paying you. This is because, depending on the facts, either they are the promoter, or you are publishing the material on their behalf. If you are an organisation that receives donations for your general operations, this does not mean that material you publish is published on behalf of your donors. If a staff member or volunteer publishes their own material of their own accord, in their personal capacity on their own social media accounts, this will not count as being done on behalf of their organisation. For material published by or on behalf of a party which promotes more than one of the party's candidates or future candidates, the imprint does not need to include the details of every individual candidate or future candidate. You can instead include the party's details in the imprint. Where must the imprint appear? The imprint must be included as a part of the material, unless it is not reasonably practicable to do so. Whether it is reasonably practicable to include the imprint as part of the material depends on the technical capability of the platform on which the material is published. It does not depend on, for example, whether including an imprint will affect: your preferences about the design or appearance of the material how effective you think the material will be how much time it will take to publish the material If the imprint is included as a part of the material, it must be included in such a way that if the material is shared as it is, the imprint will still be a part of it. Example For example, if the material is a picture and contains an imprint, then if the picture is shared unaltered, the imprint will still appear. Where must the imprint appear?2 If it is not reasonably practicable to include the imprint as a part of the material, then the imprint must appear somewhere directly accessible from the material. In practice, this means it can be reached via a direct link, usually one click or equivalent, where both the link and the imprint are easy for a voter to locate. If the imprint appears somewhere directly accessible from the material, it must be included in such a way that if the material is shared as it is, the imprint will still be accessible from the shared material. Example For example, if the material is a tweet, and the imprint is included in your Twitter bio, then if the material is retweeted, the imprint in your bio will still be accessible from the retweet. Where must the imprint appear?3 This means that you must not delete the imprint from your bio for as long as an imprint is required and the material remains published. If you were to delete the imprint, then it would no longer be accessible if your material is shared. Similarly, you cannot include your imprint somewhere which would not be accessible by those who can view the material itself. Example For example, the imprint cannot be behind a firewall or otherwise protected area of the internet, if that would mean that voters would see the shared material but would not have the necessary permission to view the imprint itself. Where must the imprint appear?4 Beyond these requirements, the original promoter of the material is not liable for any imprint offences that are due to the material being shared by other people later on. The liability is on the people republishing the material – see Sharing and republishing . If the imprint is included somewhere directly accessible from the material, it must be clear that the imprint relates to the material. For example, it would not be acceptable to publish a list of different imprints in one location, directly

accessible from lots of different material, without it being clear which imprint relates to which material. The next sections give some detailed guidance on particular types or categories of digital material, and on what is typically reasonably practicable.

Social media

Usually, the material on social media will be the whole social media post. You must include the imprint in the post itself, unless it is not reasonably practicable.

Example For example, for paid adverts , it will usually be reasonably practicable to include the imprint as a part of the material – you can include the imprint in the content of the advert, or in the disclaimer text which appears at the top of the advert. Where must the imprint appear?⁵ On some digital platforms, the design of the platform, such as there being a character limit on posts, may mean that it is not reasonably practicable to include the imprint as a part of the post. In this case, you must display a legible imprint somewhere directly accessible from the post. The imprint must be directly accessible from the post no matter what device is used. There are a number of different ways that you can do this.

Example For example, , it may often not be reasonably practicable to include the imprint in the post itself because of a character limit. If this is the case, your imprint can be included on your profile, for example underneath your name, or as a pinned post or tweet. Alternatively the imprint can be included somewhere else that you directly link to from your post, for example on your own website.

Where must the imprint appear?⁶ Candidate imprint as a pinned tweet, where the candidate is their own agent. Candidate imprint in social media profile. Usually the ‘About’ section of a profile on a digital platform is not directly accessible from a post, because the hyperlink to the profile does not directly take you to that section. In this case, the ‘About’ section will only be directly accessible from a post if you add your own direct link to the ‘About’ section into the post. If material requires an imprint, you must ensure it is published on a platform that enables you either to include the imprint as part of the material or, if not reasonably practicable, somewhere directly accessible from the material. If a platform has such limited functionality that you cannot do either, then material that requires an imprint must not be published on that platform. If you publish material that requires an imprint on a platform that has limited functionality, you must include the imprint no matter what the limitations of that platform are. For example, TikTok has an 80-character bio, you cannot include links in a caption, and pinned posts are not available to all users. The best way to avoid these limitations is to include the imprint within the content of your TikTok video itself.

Videos, images and cartoons A video or image can still be required to display an imprint even if it contains no text. If your material is a video or image, it will usually be reasonably practicable to include the imprint in the video or image, especially if you have created it yourself. If this is not reasonably practicable, for example if the material is a very small image, you must include the imprint somewhere directly accessible from it. If your material is a social media post which contains a video or image, then it will usually be reasonably practicable to include the imprint as a part of the post. Where it is reasonably practicable to include the imprint as part of the post, the best way to do this is to include it in the content of the video or image itself. This is because if it is shared, the imprint is more likely to remain a part of the material. This means that voters will see the original imprint as it is shared, which provides the most effective transparency. It is also less likely that people sharing the material will be required to include their own imprint when they share it. Further detail is included in the section Sharing and republishing . Alternatively, you can include the imprint somewhere else in the post. For example when uploading a video to YouTube,

you can include the imprint in the video's description. Websites Where the digital material is a website or webpage, it will usually be reasonably practicable to include the imprint on the relevant webpage. For example, it could be displayed in the footer. Where the material is just a part of the webpage, for example a social media post embedded in the page, then the imprint must be included as a part of the material unless it is not reasonably practicable. If it is not reasonably practicable, then it can appear somewhere directly accessible from the material – for example, somewhere else on the same webpage, such as the footer, or somewhere hyperlinked from the material. Example For example, if your material is a Google search advertisement, the character limit of the description may not be sufficient to contain the information required by the imprint in the material itself. In this case, you can include the imprint somewhere directly accessible from the Google search advertisement, such as the page that the advert links to. Where must the imprint appear?⁷ Audio material On solely audio material, the imprint must be included as a part of the material. For example, you could include someone reading out the imprint at the end. The imprint must be audible. The imprint must be read at a speed at which it can be heard and understood. For how long does material need an imprint? In all cases, digital material must include an imprint for as long as both: the imprint is required by the law the material remains published Material remains published for as long as it is being made available to the public or a section of the public. For example, if a post remains available on your social media channels, then it remains published. Organic material For organic material, the imprint is required on material published by a relevant entity for as long as the published material remains any of: election material referendum material recall petition material Because these types of material are all related to a particular electoral event, in many cases the imprint will stop being required once that event is over. For example, a video saying 'Vote NO on 10 May' in relation to an upcoming referendum will cease to be referendum material after 10 May when the referendum is over. Paid adverts For a paid advert, an imprint is required for as long as the material remains political material. How long the material remains political material will depend on who or what your material is reasonably regarded as intended to influence public support for or against. If the material is linked to a particular electoral event or electoral cycle, then it will have a natural end point. For example: a future candidate could decide not to stand a candidate ceases to be a candidate after polling day an elected office-holder ceases to be an elected office-holder when their term ends support for or against a particular outcome in a referendum cannot be influenced after polling day Some political material will not have such a clear end point. For example, material promoting support for or against a political party could continue doing that for as long as the party exists. Sharing and republishing material When you share material to the public or a section of the public, including on social media, this is a type of publication. In the legislation, this is referred to as 'republishing'. The law on imprints therefore also applies to material that you share – for example, using the 'retweet' function , the 'Share' button , the 'duet' function on TikTok, or forwarding an email. This also applies when you share material that was first published before the law on digital imprints was in force. However, if you share material that has already been published with a correct imprint and you do not materially alter the material, then you do not need to include a new imprint with your own details. The original imprint will suffice. In this guidance we refer to this as the 'sharing exemption'. Materially altering the material includes: changing it in such a way as to change the meaning of the material removing the imprint (if it

originally appeared as a part of the material) sharing it in such a way that the imprint ceases to be accessible from the material (if it originally appeared somewhere directly accessible from the material) If you share digital material that has already been published, but you materially alter that material, and it still requires an imprint in its new form then you must include your own imprint, even if the original material had an imprint. If you do not, you may be committing an offence. When material is republished, the duty to include an imprint falls on the person republishing the material (and anyone else on whose behalf they are republishing it). The duty does not fall on the promoter of the original material which is now being republished. The promoter of the original material only has a duty to make sure that it is possible for the original material to be shared without losing either: the imprint (if it is included as part of the material) access to the imprint (if it is included somewhere directly accessible from the material) In all cases, but especially if a promoter encourages the sharing of their material, it is good practice to include the imprint somewhere where it will be most easily retained if the material is shared. If the post contains an image or video, this will usually be in the content of the image or video itself. If you are a member of the public sharing material, you will usually not need to include an imprint. This is because if you are not a relevant entity, and you are not publishing on behalf of one, you do not need to include an imprint with any organic material. Examples of sharing material The following tables show different examples of 'chains' by which material is shared. Each table begins with the same piece of digital material, but in each table it is then republished in a number of different ways. Chain of sharing organic material where the imprint is included as a part of the material: Example Does it require a new imprint? Why? What they did A political party tweets an image criticising a rival party's election manifesto Yes. It is election material and promoted by a party. The party includes their imprint in the image itself. The image is retweeted by one of the party's MPs. No. It is election material and has been shared by an elected office-holder, but it is exempt under the sharing exemption. It has been shared without being materially altered and the party's original imprint is still a part of the material. The MP does not include their own imprint. A future candidate retweets their colleague's retweet. No. The sharing exemption still applies – the material is not materially altered and the original party imprint is still a part of the material, so no further imprint is required. The future candidate does not include their own imprint. Chain of sharing organic material where the imprint is originally in the material but is removed during the republication. Example Does it require a new imprint? Why? What they did A political party tweets an image criticising a rival party's election manifesto Yes. It is election material and promoted by a party. The party includes their imprint in the image itself. A registered non-party campaigner screenshots the image and turns it into a Facebook post. They crop the image so that the imprint no longer appears. Yes. By removing the imprint, they have materially altered the material. This means the sharing exemption does not apply. Because it is election material, and they are a registered campaigner, it requires the campaigner's imprint under the rules for organic material. The registered campaigner does not include an imprint, and so commits an offence. A candidate shared the altered image using the 'Share' button . Yes. The sharing exemption does not apply, because the campaigner in the previous example did not include an imprint. The candidate must include their own imprint. It is reasonably practicable to include it in the post, so the candidate includes it above the image. A member of the public shares the same altered image using the 'Share'

button . No. Because it is not a paid advert, the imprint rules for organic material only apply to relevant entities. Members of the public who are not a relevant entity, and are not publishing on behalf of one, do not need to include an imprint on organic material, regardless of whether they are publishing it originally or sharing it. No imprint is required, so the member of the public does not include one. Chain of sharing organic material where the imprint is included somewhere directly accessible from the material: Example Does it require a new imprint? Why? What they did A political party tweets an image criticising a rival party's election manifesto. Yes. It is election material and promoted by a party. The party includes their imprint in the image itself. An MP from a rival party republishes the original image using the 'Quote Tweet' function . They add a lengthy comment which is critical of the material and the party which originally tweeted the image. Yes. The MP has shared the material but turned it into election material intended to influence voters to vote against the original party. Because the meaning has been changed, the material has been materially altered. This means that the sharing exemption does not apply. The MP's tweet is a new piece of material which requires an imprint in its own right. In this case, because the MP has used up a lot of the character limit with their comment, it is not reasonably practicable to include the imprint as a part of the tweet. The MP therefore adds their own imprint underneath their name in their Twitter bio. This is directly accessible from the tweet because the tweet contains a hyperlink to the bio internal to the platform's functionality. A future candidate retweets the MP's tweet. No. The future candidate's tweet still contains a hyperlink with a direct link to the MP's Twitter bio. The imprint is therefore still accessible from the shared material. The future candidate does not include their own imprint. An elected mayor screenshots the future candidate's retweet and includes it as part of a TikTok video. Yes. Because of the way the image has been republished, there is no longer a hyperlink to the MP's profile, where the original imprint appears. The imprint is no longer accessible from the mayor's republished material, so the exemption does not apply. The future candidate therefore includes their own imprint at the start of the video. A candidate shares the mayor's video by using the stitch feature on TikTok. A section from the end of the mayor's video appears at the start of the candidate's video. Yes. Because the section of the earlier video that is included does not contain the mayor's imprint, the material has been materially altered. The sharing exemption does not apply. The candidate therefore includes an imprint in their video. Examples where organic material is republished and turned into a paid advert: Example Does it require a new imprint? Why? What they did A political party tweets an image criticising a rival party's election manifesto. Yes. It is election material and done by a party. The party includes their imprint in the image itself. A campaigner pays Facebook to 'boost' the party's post, thereby turning it into a paid advert. No. This is now a paid advert, and it is political material. However, the imprint is a part of the original post and is retained. The material has not been materially altered. The sharing exemption applies and the campaigner does not need to include their own imprint. The campaigner does not include an imprint. A member of the public creates and publishes a meme criticising a political party and some of their elected office-holders. They do not pay for it to be published as an advert. No. If material is not published as a paid advert, then an imprint is only required if it is published by or on behalf of a relevant entity. A member of the public is neither one of the relevant entities, nor publishing on behalf of one, and so does not need to display an imprint on organic material. The member of the public does not include an imprint. The campaigner pays Facebook to 'boost' the meme, thereby turning it into a paid advert.

Yes. The original meme did not require an imprint because it was not a paid advert and was not posted by a political entity. However, by 'boosting' the post, the campaigner has turned it into a paid advert, and it is now political material. Since the original post did not contain an imprint, the campaigner must include their own details in the advert. The campaigner includes their imprint in the 'disclaimer' section of the advert.

Offences and defences

If digital material which requires an imprint is published without one, then both the promoter of the material anyone else on whose behalf the material is published may commit an offence under section 48(1) of the Elections Act. It is a defence for a person charged with this offence to prove any of the following: that the failure to comply was due to circumstances beyond their control, and that they took all reasonable steps, and exercised all due diligence, to ensure they did comply.

that they complied with this guidance that in the case of the republication of material (see section Sharing and republishing): the material had previously been published it had not been materially altered when it was republished they reasonably believed that the original material required an imprint under section 41 and complied with the requirements of that section

Responsibilities for enforcement of the regime

The Elections Act provides for enforcement of the digital imprints regime by way of an offence under section 48(1) where an imprint is not included when required.. Whether it is the police or the Electoral Commission that is initially responsible depends on the purpose of the material in question, as set out in section 50. Where there is uncertainty in a particular case as to which body is responsible for enforcement, this will be resolved between the enforcement bodies on a case by case basis.

Political material (paid adverts) and election material (organic material)

The police will enforce material which relates to: a particular candidate a particular future candidate a particular elected office-holder

The Electoral Commission will enforce material which relates to: political parties categories of parties, candidates, future candidates and/or elected office-holders including categories based on: their support for or against particular policies their holding particular opinions any other reason

Recall petition material

This will be enforced by the police, both for paid adverts and organic material. Material relating to referendums

Any digital material, both for paid adverts and organic material, will be enforced by the Electoral Commission if it both:

- relates to a referendum held under Part 7 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (is a PPERA referendum)
- is published during the referendum period

Any other material relating to a referendum will be enforced by the police. This material will all be paid adverts, and includes any paid advert which either:

- relates to a referendum which is not a PPERA referendum
- relates to a referendum which is a PPERA referendum, but which is published before the referendum period

Approach to enforcement

The police and the Electoral Commission will seek to enforce the offence under section 48(1) consistently, but the differing nature of roles and powers means that specific actions may vary. Both the police and the Electoral Commission will enforce effectively, proportionately, and fairly. Specifically:

- Consider enforcement action only where there are reasonable grounds to suspect an offence under section 48(1) of the Act
- Take enforcement action only where it is proportionate to do so
- Take the facts of each situation into account
- Enforce only where it is in the public interest to do so in the context of organisational priorities and resources. Whether or not a matter is in the public interest and justifies the use of resources in this way will depend on a number of factors. These factors may be different and/or differently weighted depending on the circumstances. Some of the factors that are likely to be considered, though this is not an exhaustive list, are set out below:

Whether there

was intent, rather than inadvertence or oversight Whether the required imprint is partially included or entirely absent The impact of the material -including but not limited to the extent and geographical spread of distribution of the material and how many people potentially may have seen it and been influenced by it Where the Commission opens an investigation, it will normally inform the subject of the investigation as soon as possible after the investigation is opened, unless doing so would frustrate the investigation. The Commission will provide details of the matters under investigation and ensure that the subject has the opportunity to respond to them. The police, in conducting criminal investigations, may proceed in a different way. Both the police and the Commission recognise that it is important to conclude investigations as quickly as possible. This is both in the public interest and in the interests of justice for those involved. However, the first priority is always to conduct a fair and thorough investigation, and this will take priority over speed where the two conflict. Use of powers The Elections Act creates two new powers in relation to enforcement of the regime. Use of powers under Schedule 12 to the Elections Act 2022 – obtaining information The police and the Commission have powers under Schedule 12 to the Act to obtain two different types of information. There is a power to give notice in writing to any person requiring the person to provide information identified in the notice, which is reasonably required for: the purposes of determining whether digital material has been published without an imprint where one was required or to enable the police or the Commission to make contact with the promoter of the material or any other person on behalf of whom the material has been published The police and the Commission also have a power to give notice in writing to any person requiring the person to provide it with electronic material identified in the notice, which is reasonably required for the purposes of determining whether electronic material has been published without an imprint where one was required. In both cases the police may choose to use this power as an alternative to existing powers to obtain information. The Commission may exercise that power where it is proportionate and in the public interest to do so. Neither the police nor the Commission will do so where that information is easily accessible by other means. Any information obtained under such a notice may not then be used as evidence in any enforcement action against the person who provides the information to the Commission. Compliance with notices Where either of these powers are exercised by either the police or the Commission, a deadline for compliance will be set which must be complied with. The deadline will be proportionate, taking account of the facts of the specific situation, including the urgency of obtaining the information. Where such a notice is not complied with, the police or the Commission may seek a court order requiring the information. Use of powers under section 51 of the Elections Act 2022 – taking down material The Commission has a power under section 51 of the Act to require that any material be removed or access to it disabled after the Commission has determined an offence has been committed under section 48(1) in relation to that material and imposed any sanction, or served a Stop Notice, or agreed an Enforcement Undertaking under its powers in Schedule 19C to the Political Parties Elections and Referendums Act 2000. In deciding whether to exercise its power under section 51 of the Act, the Commission will consider whether to do so: is proportionate and in the public interest is in accordance with its enforcement objectives will assist in maintaining or improving transparency. It will not generally exercise that power where, for example, the material has already been removed; the material has been amended to make it compliant; or for any other reason it is not proportionate or in the public interest to require it to be removed. A similar power is available to a

court under section 49(2) of the Act, following a conviction for an offence under section 48(1). There is no equivalent power available to the police because this power can only be used after an offence has been found, either by a court or the Commission. It is a criminal offence for any person who receives a notice to take down material to fail to comply with it without a reasonable excuse. Advice and guidance An area of difference between the roles and remits of the police and the Electoral Commission is in terms of providing guidance. The police may choose to provide words of advice rather than pursue criminal prosecution in some cases. The Electoral Commission however has a legal duty to take reasonable steps to secure compliance with the law, under which it provides support, advice and guidance. The Commission may use advice and guidance proactively in order to secure compliance and to give those the Commission regulates a clear understanding of their regulatory requirements, as an alternative to enforcement action. Before opening any investigation the Commission will consider whether it is proportionate to do so, and whether the use of advice and guidance is more appropriate. The Commission will consider all of the facts of each individual case, but some examples of relevant factors are: New or inexperienced campaigners who may be unfamiliar with the requirements Where an isolated incident occurs with an otherwise compliant campaigner Where matters were rectified quickly by the campaigner What happens after an investigation The police, where there is evidence of an offence, may refer the matter to the relevant public prosecutor (the Crown Prosecution Service in England and Wales, the Crown Office/Procurator Fiscal in Scotland, and the Public Prosecution Service in Northern Ireland), who will decide whether to launch a criminal prosecution. Where the Electoral Commission is satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that an offence has been committed, the Commission may decide to impose a civil sanction using its powers under Schedule 19C to the Political Parties Elections and Referendums Act 2000. The Commission will generally sanction where it considers it appropriate to do so and when it is proportionate and in the public interest. If the Commission seeks to impose a sanction, it will follow the statutory process set out in Schedule 19C to the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. This involves the serving of a notice proposing a sanction, and a period of time for the person who is the subject of the notice to make representations. When making representations, recipients can put forward any information they consider relevant. In particular, if they have not already done so, the recipient may want to put forward any defence to the offence. They may wish to comment on the reasons for the Commission proposing a sanction, including the facts on which the decision is based. Representations may be made on the application of the factors the Commission has taken into account when determining the type and size of a sanction. Finally, the recipient may want to comment on the ability of the person concerned to pay a financial penalty and/or the cost to the person concerned of any non-financial requirement that might be imposed. Where possible, representations or objections should be accompanied by supporting evidence. Any representations or objections will be considered by a senior officer of the Commission who was not involved in the decision to issue the notice proposing a sanction. This includes determining if the Commission remains satisfied that an offence took place and, if so, that the proposed sanction is reasonable and appropriate. If, as a result, the Commission is no longer satisfied that an offence or contravention occurred, the matter will be closed and the outcome notified to the recipient. Otherwise, the senior officer will decide whether to issue a notice imposing a sanction, either reflecting the initial decision or changing it. Where any sanction is imposed, the subject of that sanction has a

right of appeal to the county court in England and Wales, a county court in Northern Ireland, or the sheriff in Scotland. Key terms Candidate A candidate is a candidate at an election for a relevant elective office, including a person who is included in a list of candidates submitted in connection with such an election. Digital material In the Elections Act 2022, digital material is referred to as 'electronic material'. Digital material is material in electronic form which consists of or includes: text, moving or still images, or speech or music. It does not include material that is received by a person in the form of a telephone call (e.g. to a landline telephone number) or material that is received via a text message using SMS to a telephone number. Elected office-holder An elected office-holder is someone who holds a relevant elective office. An elected office-holder is to be treated as holding a relevant elective office during any period when— the person has been elected as, or declared to be returned as, the holder of the office, but their term of office has not yet begun Election material Election material is material that can reasonably be regarded as promoting or procuring electoral success at one or more relevant elections for: one or more political parties a candidate or future candidate political parties, candidates, or future candidates that are linked by their support for or opposition to particular policies, or by holding particular opinions other categories of parties, candidates or future candidates that are not based on policies or opinions – for example, candidates or future candidates who went to a state school, or independent candidates (who do not stand for a political party) any combination of the above Future candidate A person is a future candidate at an election for a relevant elective office if— the person has been declared, whether by the person or by someone on their behalf, to be a candidate at the election (and the declaration has not been withdrawn), the election is the next scheduled election for the office, and the notice of the election has not been published or, in the case of an election for the office of member of the House of Commons, the writ for the election has not been issued. Organic material Organic material is any material which is not a paid advert. That is, material where neither the promoter of the material, nor the person on behalf of whom the material is published, has paid for the material to be published as an advertisement. Paid advert A paid advert is material where the promoter of the material, or the person on behalf of whom the material is published, has paid for the material to be published as an advertisement. For the purposes of the definitions of 'paid advert' and 'organic material', payments are not limited to just money. They can also include benefits in kind. They do not include payments that are part of the background costs of creating, setting up, operating or maintaining the material. They are limited to payments specifically to the service provider or platform hosting the adverts for the publication of those adverts. Political material Political material is material whose sole or primary purpose can reasonably be regarded as intended to influence the public, or any section of the public, to give support to or withhold support from: one or more political parties a particular candidate or a particular future candidate (in their capacity as such) a particular elected office-holder (in their capacity as such) political parties, candidates, future candidates or elected office-holders (in their capacity as such) that are linked by their support for or opposition to particular policies, or by holding particular opinions other categories of parties, candidates, future candidates or elected office-holders (in their capacity as such) that are not based on policies or opinions – for example, candidates or future candidates who went to a state school, or MPs who have had a job outside of politics the holding of a referendum, or a particular outcome of a referendum any combination of the above Promoter The promoter

is the person causing the material to be published. Publish To publish is to make available to the public at large or any section of the public. Recall petition A recall petition is a mechanism under the Recall of MPs Act 2015 by which a sitting MP may be “recalled” by their constituents during the lifetime of a parliament, potentially resulting in a by-election. Recall petition material Recall petition material is material that promotes or procures the success or failure of a recall petition. Recall petition campaigner A recall petition campaigner is a person who is an accredited campaigner within the meaning of the Recall of MPs Act 2015 in relation to a recall petition. Referendums (paid adverts): A paid advert constitutes political material if its sole or primary purpose can reasonably be regarded as intended to influence the public, or any section of the public, to give support to or withhold support from any referendum, which includes but is not limited to, the following: Key terms2 Council tax increase referendum A referendum held under The Local Authorities (Conduct of Referendums) (Council Tax Increases) (England) Regulations 2012 Local authority governance referendum A referendum held under the section 9MB and 9MC of the Local Government Act 2000. Local government referendum A referendum held under the Local Authorities (Referendums)(Petitions)(England) Regulations 2011 or the Local Authorities (Referendums) (Petitions and Directions) (Wales) Regulations 2001. Local poll A local poll (a form of referendum) held under section 116 of the Local Government Act 2003. Neighbourhood Planning referendum A referendum held under the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012 (as amended). Parish poll A parish poll (a form of referendum) held under section 150 and Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972. PPERA referendum A referendum held under Part 7 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, including a UK-wide referendum a referendum held in one or more of England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland But not including a Senedd referendum. Senedd referendum A referendum held under section 64 of the Government of Wales Act 2006. Key terms 3 By contrast, organic material constitutes referendum material only if the material wholly or mainly relates to a PPERA referendum. Referendum material (organic material) Referendum material is material that wholly or mainly relates to a referendum under Part 7 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, and is published during the referendum period for that referendum. Referendum period The period before a PPERA referendum during which certain restrictions are in place, under section 102 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 Registered non-party campaigner A registered non-party campaigner is a campaigner recognised by the Electoral Commission under Part 6 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. In the legislation, registered non-party campaigners are referred to as ‘recognised third parties’. Registered party A registered party is a political party registered by the Electoral Commission under Part 2 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. Registered referendum campaigner A registered referendum campaigner is an individual or organisation who is a permitted participant within the meaning of Part 7 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, in relation to a referendum to which that Part applies. In the legislation, registered referendum campaigners are referred to as ‘permitted participants’. Relevant election “Relevant election” means any election listed in section 45(9) of the Elections Act 2022, as amended from time to time, including: UK Parliamentary general elections Scottish Parliamentary elections Senedd elections Northern Ireland Assembly elections Police and Crime Commissioner elections Local elections, including mayoral elections, Greater London Authority elections and parish, town and community elections Relevant elective office “Relevant elective office” means any office listed in section 37(1)

of the Elections Act 2022, as amended from time to time, including those defined there as a “relevant Scottish elective office”. This includes: A member of the House of Commons A member of the Scottish Parliament A member of the Senedd A member of the Northern Ireland Assembly A Police and Crime Commissioner An elected mayor A member of the London Assembly A councillor A member of the City of London Corporation

Relevant entity A relevant entity is one of the types of individual or organisation who may be required to include an imprint on organic material. The relevant entities are: a registered party a registered non-party campaigner a candidate or future candidate an elected office-holder a registered referendum campaigner a registered recall petition campaigner

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Report: Digital campaigning - increasing transparency for voters Introducing digital imprints Claims made in online political ads Overview We want every UK voter to know who is paying to target them online during elections and referendums. The amount of money spent on digital advertising is increasing with every election. But electoral law was written long before campaigning went digital. We're working with the UK's governments, other regulators and social media companies to make sure campaigning online is transparent and truthful. The new requirements for campaigners to include digital imprints on campaign material online is a positive step, but more needs to be done. Changes we want to see Voters need social media companies to have online databases of political ads. These should provide meaningful transparency and should follow the UK's rules for elections and referendums. We want the UK, Scottish and Welsh governments to change the law so that we have: better rules about how spending on digital election ads is reported to us, so that we can make sure campaigners follow the rules bigger fines, if campaigners break the rules stronger powers so we've got the right tools to regulate new ways of campaigning, like on social media channels or using online payment systems for campaign donations What's happening now From November 2023, campaigners will be required to include imprints on their digital political campaign material. This means that many types of digital material such as social media adverts, tweets and posts, will require an imprint. This is the same requirement as for physical campaign material, like leaflets and letters. Digital imprint rules are already in place for some elections and referendums in Scotland.

Learn more about digital imprints Social media companies We meet with social media companies, including Meta, Google, Snap, Twitter and Tik Tok, to discuss how election advertising can be made more transparent on their platforms. We also use the ad libraries made available by some of the companies to monitor who campaigns online during elections. Report: the rise of digital campaigning In 2018, we wrote a report about the rise of digital campaigning in the UK. We made recommendations to government to improve transparency of digital campaigning and are currently reviewing our policies in this area. Content hub Transparency in digital campaigning: response to Cabinet Office technical consultation on digital imprints Response: Online Harms White Paper Read our response to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Online Harms White Paper Report: Digital campaigning - increasing transparency for voters Read our report about digital campaigning Response to the UK Government policy consultation: Protecting the Debate Read our response to the UK Government policy consultation from October 2018 Related content In depth: campaigning at the 2019 UK Parliamentary general election Take an in depth look at campaigning at the 2019 UK Parliamentary general election. Find out how candidates found running in the election, and how voters experienced campaigns. Transparent digital campaigning Find out about digital campaigning and the changes we want to see Political parties, campaigners and other groups have to report their finances to us. Find out about campaign spending, donations and loans and annual accounts. Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation

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Commissioners' Code of Conduct. Minutes (EC 127/22) The Board agreed as a matter arising from previous minutes, and in light of the recent article by the Chair published in the Daily Telegraph, that the longstanding Commission policy recommendations related to due diligence in reporting donations should be included in the list of Commission policy priorities, which had been considered and agreed at the Board's meeting in February. Resolved: That the minutes of the Board meeting on 22 June 2022 be agreed. Commission Board action tracker (EC 128/22) The Board requested that those actions that are not routinely reported in the minutes and that have subsequently been actioned be kept on record. Resolved: That the Board noted the progress against actions requested by the Board. Forward Plan of Board business 2022/23 (EC 129/22) The Board were updated on the preparations underway for the Belfast Board Day in October. It was noted that further updates would be made available as the programme was developed including confirmation of accommodation and travel. The Board were advised of a possible location and venue to host the February 2023 Board Day in the region but it was dependent on availability. Commissioners would be canvassed on alternative dates for the month of February 2023. Resolved: That the Board discussed and reviewed the Forward Plan of Board business for 2022/23, with pending topical items for scheduling. May 2022 elections (EC 130/22) The Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance introduced the report updating on progress with reporting on the May 2022 elections and setting out the findings of our statutory evaluation of the flexible voting pilots that took place in Wales for the Board's approval. Commissioners discussed the key themes highlighted in the paper, and confirmed the need to appropriately highlight areas of concern such as around the treatment of female candidates standing at the Northern Ireland Assembly elections. The Board agreed that the reports should aim to take a consistent approach across Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England wherever possible. The Board also supported highlighting issues relevant for future resilience of the electoral system, stressing the importance of the "six month rule" for implementation of changes to electoral law and taking opportunities to emphasise areas which are covered by existing Commission policy recommendations. Resolved: The Board thanked the teams who worked on the paper and agreed the conclusions of the Wales flexible voting pilot evaluation, which will be published by the statutory deadline. Resolved: That the Board confirmed that the key themes and areas for recommendations outlined in the report should be reflected in our reports on the May 2022 polls. Public awareness plans for scheduled elections in May 2023 (EC 131/22) The Director, Communications, Policy and Research introduced the report, advising of our responsibility to provide public information ahead of elections across England and Northern Ireland in May 2023, delivering voter registration campaigns, a campaign about understanding online political advertising in Northern Ireland, and voter fraud and other voter information communications. The Board noted that the agreement on the overall strategy and maximum budget for voter registration campaigns is reserved to the Board. The Board discussed ensuring good integration between this campaign and work to raise awareness of the introduction of voter ID in England, which is scheduled to take place at the same set of polls. The Board discussed how we could encompass and reach disenfranchised groups; the balance of spending between nations (including to ensure sufficient attention is given to England); consideration of the impact of the campaigns on outcomes (i.e. levels of participation as well as of registration); and understanding of barriers to registration. The Board noted an appetite to draw benefit from external expertise on behaviour change campaigning to support future discussion of the Commission's public awareness plans. Resolved: The Board welcomed

the report and agreed the plans and budget for the voter registration campaign.

Modernising voting (EC 132/22) The Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance introduced the report, and was joined by the Head of Policy, Head of Research and members of the team who provided input to the report, on progress with developing the evidence base and proposed next steps for this project. The Board noted that this phase of evidence-gathering had aimed to focus on the views of individuals and organisations across the electoral community, providing a wider perspective on the drivers for and benefits of changes to the system. The Board discussed that the focus should be on improving and securing the electoral system for the future rather than modernising in itself. It was agreed that a key objective should be to mitigate risks to the resilience of the system, in delivery of elections, registration systems and supply chains. It was discussed that transparency should be embedded in all aspects of this work to assure public confidence. The need for comprehensive electoral law reform should also continue to be highlighted. The Board discussed how this work aligns with other planned activity to support resilience in electoral services, such as in relation to coordination structures and the benefits they could bring. It was confirmed that the benefits of changes such as greater use of IT in the electoral system and postal voting should be explored. Experience of innovation in the UK and internationally during the COVID pandemic should also be drawn upon.

Resolved: That the Board considered the findings of the research and engagement and endorsed the proposed next steps for the project, in particular the first phase of further work (covering the next 12 months). A further update to the Board on progress with that work and to seek agreement on the subsequent phases of activity will be brought in January 2023.

Business planning for 2023/24 (EC 133/22) The Chief Executive introduced the report on the strategic approach to budgets for 2023/24. At the September Board meeting, Commissioners will be asked to agree the overall budgets prior to the submission of Estimates to the Scottish Parliament and Senedd at the end of that month. The Board noted that the business plans for 2023-24 would fit within the medium term financial plan agreed with the Speaker's Committee and would ensure alignment with the Corporate Plan objectives. The Board discussed that the business plans and budgets should be developed to meet the requirements of each of the three Parliaments, recognising the implications of recent inflationary pressures, including on pay. The Board further discussed ensuring the right pace and phasing of change, including on the role of digital technologies and allowing for the Elections Act delivery timetable as well as considering post-COVID requirements for office space.

Resolved: That the Board agreed the proposed approach contained within the report.

Elections Act update (Oral) The Board received an oral update on the Elections Act implementation, including the UK Government's planned schedule for the Strategy and Policy Statement consultation. It was noted that we are continuing with internal and external meetings to discuss ongoing delays to seeing secondary legislation and policy decisions impacting the design of the card. The Board noted that we were continuing to discuss our approach to preparing the new code of practice for non-party campaigners, and are having conversations with DLUHC regarding timings for presenting the code in order to finalise our internal working timetable. There was a good level of attendance from a range of parties and campaigners at Regulation roundtables on the new imprint and non-party campaigner rules, which provided us with invaluable insight. We will be meeting with DLUHC and the police to discuss enforcement of the Digital Imprint provisions this week. It was noted that pre-consultation work on the accessibility guidance has been completed, with input sought from a range of disability organisations, and we are now finalising a first draft of

the guidance ahead of the statutory consultation period. The Board was impressed with the efforts from the team so far to deliver key activities which will support the effective implementation of the changes in the Act. Resolved: That the Board noted the oral update. Chief Executive's update (Oral) The Board received an oral update on operations and matters arising. The Board noted that we laid our Annual Report and Accounts before the Senedd, the Scottish Parliament, and the UK Parliament, thanking those staff colleagues who had made last minute amendments before sending onto the printer to meet our deadline. It was discussed to also lodge the Annual Report and Accounts in the Northern Ireland Assembly. The Board was advised that the user testing of the new virtual desktop environment commenced this week, following initial testing by the IT Team. This will replace our current virtual desktop system, and once we are satisfied that it is fit for purpose, it will be rolled out to all staff.

The Chief Executive and General Counsel attended the Electoral Lawyers Forum last week outlining our priorities in the Corporate Plan. Resolved: That the Board noted the oral updates. Update from the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (Oral) The Board received an oral update on the work of the Committee at their meeting earlier in the week. The Board noted activities on the people strategy update, with an accompanying presentation to the report. This also included the work being done on the balance of responsibilities between HR and Managers. Further work included a brief presentation on an update on bullying and harassment, with discussions around our objectives, approach, further development and measuring impact. There was an update on EDI activities and a report on annual recruitment analysis. Resolved: That the Board noted the oral updates. Appointment of the Independent Adviser to the Commission Board on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) (Oral) The Board received an oral update following the recruitment campaign for an Independent Advisor to the Commission Board on EDI. The Board noted that the campaign closed with 26 applications received across a range of public and private sector areas. Interviews were held on Monday with 4 candidates. An offer has now been made to a strong candidate. Should the Board agree the appointment then the Commission Chair will have conversations regarding final terms and conditions with the candidate to join the Commission. Resolved: That the Board noted the oral update. Deep dive strategic session: Horizon scanning (EC 134/22) The Director, Communications, Policy and Research introduced the session on horizon scanning, joined by the Head of Policy and the Head of Research, along with an external speaker, Ruth Marshall, Head of Futures Capability at Government Office for Science. Ruth provided a presentation on the role of horizon scanning and futures work within government and gave some reflections on the development of the Commission's work in this area. The Board noted the work to date on identifying long term issues and challenges and undertaking desk research to understand and assess potential change in the external environment beyond the field of elections. Commissioners discussed the future policy and strategy environment, major cyber security threats, approach to electoral registration, levels of public engagement, and engaging with other communities on issues such as equalities. They noted the importance of understanding and considering the assumptions that may be built into specific parts of Futures work. The Board noted that forward thinking on horizon scanning would be focussed on informing the development of the next Corporate Plan 2025/2030, and the Commission's work programme for that period. The Board thanked staff colleagues who provided input into the report and for Ruth's presentation which gave the Board an insight into Futures work. Resolved: That the Board noted the report and presentation.

In depth: delivering the 2019 UK Parliamentary general election | Electoral Commission Search In depth: delivering the 2019 UK Parliamentary general election You are in the UK general elections section Home UK general elections On this page Electoral Registration Officers are under pressure: high volumes of applications at major electoral events Overseas electors again faced challenges when voting The timing of the election brought challenges for Returning Officers Voters continue to have positive views about how the election was run What next? First published: 21 April 2020 Last updated: 21 April 2020 Overview People were very satisfied with the processes of registering to vote and voting at the 2019 general election. They thought that they had enough information about the election, how to register, and how to cast their vote The number of registration applications made before the deadline was significantly higher than at the 2017 general election. 3.85 million people applied to register to vote. 660,000 applied on the last day to register Data from Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) shows that approximately one in three applications was a duplicate, submitted by someone who was already correctly registered. In some areas the data suggests that the proportion of duplicates was even higher The most frequently mentioned concern in feedback from overseas electors was about not receiving their postal vote in time to complete it and send it back More than a third of s who responded to our survey said that they or their teams were struggling with the demands of the role and the extra workload from unplanned electoral events in 2019 Electoral Registration Officers are under pressure: high volumes of applications at major electoral events Register to vote on a mobile Electoral Registration Officers are under pressure: high volumes of applications at major electoral events Public interest in major electoral events is increasingly driving electoral registration applications just before elections. An accessible online registration process means it is easy for people who want to make sure they can take part to submit an application, and to do so close to the deadline. EROs and their teams were under pressure to process large numbers of registration applications during the period before the deadline in November 2019. The number of applications made before the deadline was significantly higher than at the 2017 election. 2017 2019 2.9 million people applied between the Prime Minister's announcement of the election and the registration deadline 3.85 million people applied between MPs voting to approve the election and the registration deadline 612,000 people applied on deadline day 660,000 people applied on deadline day Duplicate applications A large number of duplicate applications added unnecessary pressure for EROs and their teams. EROs and duplicate applications Data from EROs shows that many applications were submitted by people who were already correctly registered: Approximately one in three applications received before the deadline was a duplicate In some areas the proportion of duplicate applications was even higher Only around half of all applications led to an addition to the register We received feedback from 160 EROs, Returning Officers (ROs) or s from across the UK. Nearly half (46%) of those who responded to our survey said that the volume of duplicate applications received during the election caused strain on resources and staff, who had to work significant additional hours to process them in time, alongside processing applications to vote by post and proxy. Feedback from s "The duplicate process is a nightmare throughout the year but during a high profile election it becomes a huge drain on resources." "Number of duplicate applications is unacceptable and creates additional enormous workload for no benefit to the register." Feedback from s EROS and postal votes Additionally, the electoral registration and postal voting application deadlines fell on the same day in Great Britain, after Parliament

changed the law. It passed the Early Parliamentary General Election Act 2019 in November, to make sure the registration deadline was the same across the UK. EROs and electoral administrators told us that they felt additional pressure at this election as they processed both types of application to the same deadline. As a result of these pressures, EROs and their teams found it hard to provide the level of resource needed to process applications. In some cases this meant that voters didn't receive the service they should be able to expect. For example: In Plymouth, the ERO had included 1,451 people in the electoral register who had not completed an individual registration application. They identified and resolved this problem before polling day, but it meant that there was confusion about whether some people were able to vote in the election. There was limited time for the people who were affected then to apply to register correctly before the deadline. The ERO did not fully meet our performance standards In Northern Ireland, the Electoral Office sent letters seeking required additional information from some people who had applied to vote, but some letters included an incorrect deadline for response. The Chief Electoral Officer confirmed that anyone who responded after this point, but before the actual deadline, would have had their registration processed correctly. It was also told us that the large number of registration and absent vote applications had an impact on their capacity to focus on running the election at a critical point. Feedback from an EROs need more support EROs need more support to help them continue to deliver the level of service that people should be able to expect before major electoral events. The UK Government should look at the funding model for future UK Parliamentary elections to ensure EROs can handle large numbers of registration applications. More fundamentally, it should also look at how the online register to vote service and electoral management software systems could be improved to reduce the number and impact of duplicate registration applications. The UK's governments should also explore reforms that would make it easier for people to register or update their details throughout the year, such as integrating applications into other public service contacts, or more automatic forms of registration. This could help reduce the need for people to make new applications immediately before an election. Overseas electors again faced challenges when voting Some British citizens living abroad found it difficult to make sure their votes were able to be counted. Overseas voters found it difficult to vote Votes being counted Overseas voter experience Just over 230,000 people were registered as overseas electors, making up 0.5% of the total UK electorate. Many overseas electors who chose to vote by post had a tight deadline to receive and return their postal ballot papers before polling day: ROs could only begin printing ballot papers after the deadline for nominating candidates on 14 November This left less than four weeks to print and issue postal ballot packs, and for overseas electors to receive, complete and return their ballot papers before polling day People who registered or applied for a postal vote close to the deadline had only two weeks to receive, complete and return their postal vote We received feedback after the election from more than 500 overseas voters. The most frequent problem they mentioned was not receiving their postal vote in time to complete it and send it back. Overseas electors were dependent on the speed of the postal service in

the country where they live. Quote from overseas voter "My overseas postal vote arrived the day before the election. This left no time to send it back, and so I was not able to vote despite my desire to." "The ballot arrived Saturday afternoon. I paid \$35 for express shipping to get it back to the UK as soon as possible but it was still unlikely to arrive in time (letters normally take around a week). I don't know why it arrived so late." "IT DOES NOT WORK. My post was sent too late to arrive for me to return it, will not reach the UK in time. I have no vote." "My postal vote did not arrive until 5 working days before the election, making it impossible for my vote to be counted." Views from overseas electors Experience of postal and proxy process Some overseas electors also told us that they did not know they could ask someone in the UK to vote on their behalf by post (known as a 'postal proxy'). This could have been more convenient for the proxy voter, rather than having to travel in person to a polling station that could be far from their own home. More than half (53%) of s who responded to our survey said that they had spent significant time dealing with queries from overseas voters who were experiencing issues with postal or proxy votes during the election. We also received large numbers of queries ahead of the election from people living overseas who wanted to know if, and how, they could vote. This was not the first time that we have seen evidence of these problems for overseas electors. We highlighted evidence in our statutory reports on the 2015 and 2017 UK general elections, as well as following the 2016 EU referendum and the 2019 European Parliament election. At the 2019 general election, the Cabinet Office and Royal Mail put in place a system for faster delivery of postal ballot packs to overseas electors. This does appear to have improved the experience for some electors, but there was still not enough time for overseas electors in some countries to return their votes in time for them to be counted. Overseas electors should be able to expect that their vote will be counted. The UK Government should consider innovative new approaches to voting for overseas electors, using evidence from other countries. This could include the ability to download and print postal ballot papers or vote at embassies and consulates. The UK Government plans to increase the number of British citizens living abroad who can register to vote, by removing the current time limit of 15 years since they were last registered to vote in the UK. As more voters will be affected by the issues identified with postal voting, it will be even more important to give overseas electors ways of voting that mean they can be confident their votes will be counted at future UK Parliamentary elections. The timing of the election brought challenges for Returning Officers The timing of the 2019 election was unusual. It was the first general election to be held in December since 1923, and polling day was less than two weeks before Christmas. This brought specific challenges for ROs and their teams. Polling station image Polling station sign Challenges of timing The election process also began while the scheduled annual electoral registration canvass was still being carried out across Great Britain. Electoral administration teams had to complete their legal responsibilities to process canvass forms returned from households and invite new residents to register to vote, at the same time as setting up the administration of the election. Feedback that we received from EROs, ROs or s from across the UK highlighted some common challenges that they faced: Staff working in elections teams faced significant pressure and worked long hours to complete the annual canvass and deliver the election at the same time Some electoral management software systems had problems running election processes alongside the annual canvass ROs found it harder to recruit temporary staff, including polling station and counting staff, for an election held just before Christmas Some venues that ROs normally use for polling

stations or for the count were already booked for seasonal events and were not available for this election. Larger volumes of post during the Christmas period saw reported delays in issuing and returning postal votes in some areas. More than a third (38%) of those who responded to our survey said that they or their teams had struggled with the demands of the role and the extra workload from unplanned electoral events in 2019. The early general election in December followed the May 2019 European Parliament elections across the UK which had remained scheduled in law, but had not been expected to take place. Scheduled local government elections also took place in many parts of England and across Northern Ireland in May. Feedback from an electoral administrator The pressure put on electoral administrators is untenable. This was our third all out election in a year, two of which were unscheduled. Our mental health is fragile at best. We are exhausted and completely fed up. Feedback from an Errors We saw evidence of printing errors on poll cards or postal ballot packs that caused confusion for electors in a small number of constituencies. Some ROs explained that they thought that the risk of printing errors was higher at this election because of the tight deadlines for checking proofs, combined with pressure on printer availability and capacity. In Waltham Forest, postal ballot packs were not initially sent to 1,470 postal voters because a data file was not sent to the printers. As soon as the problem was identified the postal votes were issued. Candidates and agents were told about this and information was put on the council's website. However, because some postal voters got their postal vote very close to polling day, they might not have been able to fill it in and send it back in time for it to be counted.

The RO did not fully meet our performance standards. These competing pressures and errors also speak to the challenges of delivering elections within an outdated and increasingly complex electoral law framework. We have already seen similar problems at elections held at other times of the year, particularly when different elections are combined and held on the same day. Feedback from an electoral administrator Very difficult to follow. Disparate and some of later legislation contradicts earlier legislation and not in-keeping with current times and technology. Feedback from an Modernising electoral law The Law Commissions of England, Wales and Scotland have now published the final report of their detailed review of electoral law. They have made recommendations to simplify and modernise the law that would help improve how elections are run. The UK's governments need to commit resources and time to reform electoral law, building on these comprehensive and well-supported recommendations.

Voters continue to have positive views about how the election was run. After each election we carry out research with the public to find out what they thought about taking part in the election. Our voter research Our research found that people were very satisfied with the process of registering to vote and voting at the 2019 UK general election: 78% of people were satisfied with the process of registering to vote. 93% of people who voted at the election were satisfied with the process of voting. More research from voters People also thought they had enough information about the election: 80% of people said that they knew a lot, or a fair amount, about the election. 81% of people said they found it easy to access information on what the election was for. 88% of people said it was easy to get both information on how to register to vote, and how to cast their vote. These are similar to positive levels of satisfaction that we have found at other recent UK-wide elections or referendums.

More than two in three people (69% of voters and non-voters) said they were either very or fairly confident the election was well-run (12% said they didn't know). This was similar to the level we found at the 2010 UK general election, but generally lower compared with other UK-wide elections or referendums in recent years, and ten

percentage points lower than the 2017 result (where 79% were confident). However, our 2019 survey cannot tell us whether public confidence is returning to levels seen in the past or the start of a more significant decline. A significant minority of people (18%) said that they were not confident the election was well-run. We asked these people to select reasons why they were not confident the election was well-run. The most common reasons related to concerns about campaigning or the media. Some people also selected concerns that related to the way the registration or voting process worked: 28% of those who were not confident the election was well-run said they thought that some people did not have the opportunity to vote or had the opportunity taken away 22% said they were not confident because the election was held at short notice 17% said they were not confident because they thought some people had difficulties registering to vote More than 7 out of 10 of all voters and non-voters (72%) said that they thought voting in general is safe from fraud and abuse. A very small proportion of people said they had direct or second-hand experience of electoral fraud at the election: 2% said that they knew someone who had committed electoral fraud. 1% said that they personally saw someone vote when they were not allowed to. Despite these low percentages, more than a third of people (38%) said they thought that some fraud had taken place at the election. This is consistent with evidence about allegations of electoral fraud at the election. Data from police forces shows that they recorded 156 cases of alleged electoral fraud relating to the election. Of these cases, just over half required no further action following initial inquiries by the police, and one sixth were locally resolved. One third of the reported cases remain under investigation. What next? What next? Take an in depth look at campaigning at this election Or, go back and read our overview 1. Our power to set and monitor performance standards for electoral services does not apply in Northern Ireland. We continue to be of the view that our performance standards framework should be extended to Northern Ireland and will further engage with the Chief Electoral Officer and the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) to progress this. ■

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2022 at item 4) Dates of future meetings First published: 8 April 2022 Last updated:
8 April 2022 Attendees and apologies Who was at the meeting Matt Edmonds, Scottish
Conservative and Unionist Party (Chair) Scott Martin, Scottish National Party Paul
Moat, Scottish Liberal Democrats John Hardy, Scottish Green Party James Kelly,
Scottish Labour Party Maria McCann, Scottish Government Iain Hockenhull, Scottish
Government James Newman, Scottish Government Gill Cruickshank, Scottish Government
Chris Highcock, Secretary, Electoral Management Board for Scotland Jim Doig, Scottish
Assessors Association (Vice Chair of Electoral Registration Committee and EMB Member
Hannah Standring, Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland Rachel Winham, Royal
Mail Scott Forsyth, Royal Mail Superintendent Darren Faulds, Police Scotland Sergeant
Gary Kelly, Police Scotland Katy Radford, Electoral Commission, Northern Ireland
Alasdair Morgan, Electoral Commissioner Andy O'Neill, Head of Electoral Commission,
Scotland Sarah Mackie, Manager, Electoral Commission, Scotland Martin McKeown, Senior
Adviser, Elections & s, Scotland Catherine Heggie, Partnerships & Information
Officer, Scotland Lindsey Hamilton, Business Support Officer, Scotland (Minutes)
Apologies Dame Susan Bruce, Electoral Commissioner; Pete Wildman, Scottish Assessors
Association (Chair of Electoral Registration Committee and EMB member) and Malcolm
Burr, Convener The Electoral Management Board for Scotland Welcome and introductions
Matt Edmonds welcomed those present and apologies were noted. Minutes of the last
meeting and matters arising The minutes of the last meeting held on 10 November 2021
were approved and there were no matters arising. Preparations for Scottish Council
elections 2022 Legislation Maria McCann (MMcC) reported all SSIs relevant to the 5
May elections had been laid although two were still to come into force. James Kelly
(JK) asked if consideration had been given to a Freepost mailer for candidates at
Scottish Council elections. (MMcC) said there was no objection in principle since the
funding for these elections was met by local government but would require legislation
and though not time to get this done for the upcoming elections, it could be
revisited for the future. Electoral Commission Guidance Martin McKeown (MMcK) said
the Electoral Commission had published their candidate and agents guidance for the
May polls. He had also written to all existing councillors in Scotland to highlight
the publication of the guidance and to point them, in particular, to some of the key
changes they needed to be aware of. A letter for prospective candidates to be used by
Returning Officers had also been issued. Events for ROs/EROs and Police Scotland
(MMcK) said arrangements for a joint event between the Electoral Commission and the
Electoral Management Board for Scotland were being finalised. This would be held on
27 January and was an opportunity for Returning Officers and Electoral Registration
Officers to discuss issues around the planning for the May polls. On 10 February,
there would be a briefing for Police Scotland divisional Single Points of Contact
(SPOCs). He introduced Superintendent Darren Faulds and Sergeant Gary Kelly, both of
Police Scotland to the Panel. EMB Update Chris Highcock (CH) said the EMB had issued
a range of directions to EROs and ROs which gave consistency in the key voter facing
elements of the election, such as the dates poll cards would be distributed, use of
same colour of ballot paper, official marks. SIENNA and the number of issues of
postal votes. The directions had been circulated to the Panel. He said all counts
would be under way by 9:30 am on Friday 6 May 2022, though boxes could be opened from

8:00 am onwards. There was a new approved scripts for the declaration so the same wording would be used by each Returning Officer. In regard to COVID, the same baseline measures as last year would be applied. There had been positive feedback from Public Health Scotland that (as far as they were aware) no case had been linked to any electoral event. Police Scotland Superintendent Darren Faulds (DF) said planning had commenced for the role Police Scotland would play in the forthcoming Scottish Council elections. The strategic intention was being developed; the approach would be fluid due to COVID and current threat assessment. Police Scotland would work with Returning Officers, the EMB and the Electoral Commission to ensure safe delivery of the event. Noting the recent death of an MP, he said security of candidates, count attendees, and supporters was paramount and though the threat was very low, there was potential for public disorder which would be monitored through local intelligence.

There would be a policing footprint on the day and candidate personal safety advice included in the candidate packs provided by Returning Officers to signpost what to look for and where to get more information. There was a request from Paul Moat that this information be distributed before nominations open. Scott Martin (SM) had previously been told he had to report potential electoral offences in person and asked, given the specialist nature of any likely offence, if direct telephone numbers could be provided to parties to enable faster reporting. (DF) explained they were tied by reporting guidelines from Crown Office, each case being assessed and prioritised but he would be happy to discuss further if (SM) wished. E-Counting Project James Newman (JN) said the system had been thoroughly tested and signed off by council colleagues and used at three recent by-elections. Reports indicated the system worked well and there were no issues. The next phase was around logistics, delivery and training. He said that wards would be counted in sequences with councils and Fujitsu was working on design and layout plans. There was a series of in person events planned for Aberdeen, Paisley and Edinburgh and there were online and e-learning materials too. Public awareness and partnership activity Catherine Heggie (CHe) outlined the two aims of the Electoral Commission's awareness campaign; encouraging people to register to vote ahead of the deadline, and ensuring that voters can cast their vote with confidence. The Commission's 'Got 5?' registration campaign would run across TV, radio, video on demand and other channels, and target under-registered groups. The Commission would be running 'Welcome to Your Vote' week with education partners to encourage schools and youth organisations to run political literacy sessions. New learning resources would be launched online and circulated as soon as possible. A voter information booklet (available in BSL, Easy read and various languages) would be sent to all households in the week beginning 28 March. There would be a video which explains voting using STV, which will be promoted through a paid digital advertising campaign. There would be a guide produced with RNIB Scotland and Sight Scotland to let blind and visually impaired voters know what to expect at the polling place. The Commission would also be running an awareness day on 10 March to encourage qualifying foreign citizens to register to vote. UK Elections Bill Hannah Standring (HS) confirmed that responsibility for this Bill had now been moved from Cabinet Office to the Department for Levelling Up. The Bill had completed its progress through the House of Commons (17 January) and had its First Reading in the house of Lords the following day. The Second Reading remained to be scheduled. The Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee of the Scottish Parliament had published its report on the Legislative Consent Memorandum (LCM) on the elections Bill which noted that the Scottish Government did not intend to lodge an LCM and the majority of the Committee considered that legislative consent

should not be provided to the provisions in the Bill. Updates (not related to Scottish Council elections 2022 at item 4) Scottish Government Nothing further to add. Scotland Office/Cabinet Office (HS) said the Dissolution of Parliaments Bill was coming up to Committee Stage in the Lords next week. Boundaries Scotland As there was no representative in attendance, a written update would be requested and circulated around the members. Boundary Commission for Scotland Isabel Drummond-Murray was not present but the Chair suggested and it was agreed that she be approached to provide a written update to circulate. Royal Mail Rachel Winham (RW) said they were well into planning, having made contact with all local authorities, checking response envelopes for postal votes. They were aware of the ever changing COVID situation and staffing issues and the need to work closely with local authorities. They would attend the EMB meeting on 24 January and would meet with Pete Wildman, Chris Highcock and Jim Doig on a weekly basis. Election mail would be made a priority and closely scrutinised.

Electoral Management Board for Scotland The UK Elections Bill had been noted earlier and the Panel informed that the EMB/SAA in relation to subsequent implementation of its provisions was inputting advice to civil service colleagues as part of an expert panel. Jim Doig (JD) said the refresh exercise for postal votes had just started.

EROs would be sending out a Household Notification Letter (HNL) towards the end of January though a couple would not be taking part due to funding issues. The SAA had agreed to undertake a TV advert similar to last year. (SM) asked if data was available on the update-action arising in different areas and asked if there would be a quantifiable way to show the effect of the HNL. (SMA) said inline registration made it easier to track but with GDPR, people could opt out of being tracked. (JD) said HNL more for awareness to let people know who is registered at that house, if HNL incorrect, should generate hits. (JD) should be able to track through the digital service. EROs had just finished the annual canvass (published 1 December) so should be up to date and accurate and therefore did not anticipate a large number of changes. Postal vote refresh of all authorities had commenced across Scotland in the week beginning 10 January. The Electoral Commission (MMCK) advised that the Commission intended to publish the returns for parties that spent over £250K at the Scottish Parliament election in early February. At the same time the Commission will publish data (in excel format) collected from candidates via the spending returns submitted to Returning Officers. The Performance Standards for Returning Officers were currently under review with the intention of consulting on revised standards in the coming months. In regard to Policy Development Grants, an Order had been laid in the UK Parliament on 17 January. The Order added Alba Party to the list of parties entitled to share the Grant and would come into effect on 6 February.

Parliamentarians would have until 25 February to pray against the Order. They would know for certain by 25 February that they could rely on the Order to calculate this year's grants. Finally he reminded the panel that the Electoral Commission's deadline for registering a new party, amending an existing party name or adding/amending an existing emblem to be included on ballot papers for the elections taking place on 5 May 2022 was by 5pm on Friday 21 January 2022. (SMA) said that Bob Posner, the Commission's Chief Executive would retire at the end of March and his replacement, Shaun McNally, would be in post at the beginning of April. There would be future opportunities to meet him at the PPP and in other forums. (SMA) said that in the last year, the Commission had undertaken work around public attitudes to the modernisation of the electoral system. Findings had shown people wanted some developments to modernise but did not want to lose the feeling of it being special and important. The Commission now intended to canvass opinion amongst stakeholders exploring what

modernisation of the electoral process could mean to them. The Commission would get in touch with parties to invite participation Dates of future meetings 2022 8 March*
16 May Pre-meeting 10:30am and meeting proper at 11am except for *8 March 2:30pm pre-meeting and 3pm meeting

Draft guidance for Returning Officers: Assistance with voting for persons with disabilities | Electoral Commission Search Draft guidance for Returning Officers: Assistance with voting for persons with disabilities You are in the Consultation on draft guidance for Returning Officers: Assistance with voting for persons with disabilities section Home Our consultations Consultation on draft guidance for Returning Officers: Assistance with voting for persons with disabilities On this page Summary How to use this guidance Ensuring that voting is accessible Understanding the barriers to voting for voters with disabilities Providing equipment at the polling station that enables or makes voting easier for voters with disabilities Making decisions about providing additional support and equipment for voters Ensuring those working to support the poll are aware of accessibility needs Raising awareness about the voting process and support available Communicating the voting process and support available Working with local networks and civil society organisations in your area Reviewing the election First published: 5 September 2022 Last updated: 5 September 2022 Summary Every person should be able to register and vote without facing barriers. This guidance provides information and advice on the actions you and your staff can take to help remove physical, psychological and information barriers at the polling station. It also aims to support you in identifying and providing equipment for polling stations which will help to make voting easier for voters with disabilities. It has been informed by feedback received from a range of civil society organisations who have shared the experiences of voting at polling stations of those they represent as well as highlighting practices and equipment that could help to improve their experience. How to use this guidance Throughout this guidance we use the word must to refer to a specific legal requirement and the word should for recommended practice. As Returning Officer (RO), you must have regard to the guidance on equipment to be provided in polling stations 1 as part of your wider duties to consider the needs of disabled voters at polling stations, make reasonable adjustments and provide equipment. Ensuring that voting is accessible Every voter should be able to vote independently and in secret. However, we know that those with a disability often report facing barriers including: not knowing about their voting rights not having the confidence to register or vote experiencing issues when they go to a polling station Having a disability means a person's physical or mental abilities are reduced in some way compared to most people. A person's disability can be as a result of a medical condition: for example, someone with arthritis in their hands may not be able to grip or carry things as well as some other people. But a disability does not have to be a diagnosed medical condition and can include physical and psychological impairments that can be both visible and invisible. For example, if a person is suffering from anxiety, they might have mental impairments - like difficulty concentrating - as well as physical impairments, such as extreme tiredness and difficulty sleeping. This guidance will help you to consider some of the known barriers to voting highlighted by those with disabilities, how you can ensure you and your staff are aware of them, and how you can identify what support and equipment to provide at polling stations to ensure that voting is as accessible as possible for everyone. There is a general framework of legal provisions which sit alongside specific provisions in electoral law to help to safeguard and improve the experience of voters with disabilities, which you will need to have regard to in identifying how to administer the voting process in your area. Equality Act 2010 In Great Britain, ROs have a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to anticipate the needs of people with disabilities and consider reasonable adjustments that may remove any substantial disadvantage. As RO, you are

required to ensure that all people with disabilities, are not offered a lower standard of service than other voters. To do this, you need to consider the needs of voters with disabilities and anticipate the types of reasonable adjustments that could be needed by voters with different types of disability. Northern Ireland Act 1998 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires all government bodies, which includes the Chief Electoral Officer to promote equality of opportunity for those with a disability and those without when carrying out its functions,. These duties apply in the construction of policies, policy implementation and the provision of services. Disability Discrimination Act 1995 In Northern Ireland, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 requires that public authorities, which includes the Chief Electoral Officer, make reasonable adjustments to remove any substantial disadvantage for people with disabilities. Representation of the People Act 1983 There are specific provisions contained in the RPA 1983 providing a duty to support accessibility of voting. Section 199B of the RPA 1983 You are required, where you consider it appropriate to do so, to ensure election notices are translated or provided in alternative formats. You may produce them in: Braille 1 In languages other than (or, in Wales, and Welsh) 2 Using graphical representations 3 In audio format 4 Using any other means of making information accessible 5 Schedule A1 RPA 1983 You must consider the accessibility of potential polling station when considering designating or reviewing a polling place. 6 The relevant authority must seek representations from those who have a particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability. 7 Our polling district review guidance contains more information about this duty. Elections Act 2022 The Elections Act 2022 introduced provisions to assist those with disabilities with voting at polling stations. The Act: creates a requirement for you to provide each polling station with such equipment as it is reasonable to provide for the purposes of enabling, or making it easier for, relevant persons to vote independently and in secret. Relevant persons are defined in the legislation as those who find it difficult or impossible to vote due to blindness, partial sight or another disability. requires you to have regard to the Commission's guidance on the equipment to provide at polling stations. 8 This guidance can be found in Providing equipment at the polling station that enables or makes voting easier for voters with disabilities extends the rules on who can act as a companion to include anyone who is over the age of 18. 9 These provisions apply to the following election types: UK Parliamentary elections Police and Crime Commissioner elections in England and Wales Local elections in England and Northern Ireland Mayoral elections in England GLA elections Assembly elections in Northern Ireland These requirements do not apply to elections to the Scottish Parliament or the Senedd, or to local elections in Scotland and Wales. However, the duties under the Equalities Act 2010 and the RPA 1983 which relate to ensuring voting is accessible to voters with disabilities do apply.

Understanding the barriers to voting for voters with disabilities People with disabilities face different types of barriers when they want to go to a polling station to vote. For example, some people do not have the confidence to go to the polling station, and some have physical obstacles to overcome in order to be able to vote. By identifying and understanding the physical, psychological and information barriers people may face, you will be better able to make arrangements to help people to vote. Some of the barriers and challenges faced include: Not understanding the voting process Written instructions not being available in plain or easy read format Not being aware that a companion can assist with voting Anxiety about: going to the polling station, especially if they've not been there before being able to get into

the polling station knowing what will happen there knowing what the process for voting is the possibility of lots of people being there at the same time the possibility that there will be lots of noise feeling rushed to make decisions quickly queueing previously having had a negative experience in the polling station Not being able to access the building/polling station For example, if there are steps or the layout inside is unsuitable for wheelchairs to access Being unable to read or understand instructions given due to: Visual impairments or blindness Hearing impairment or hearing loss Dyslexia Learning disabilities Not being able to communicate effectively with polling station staff Being unable to use the pen or pencil provided Being unable to wait in a queue Providing equipment at the polling station that enables or makes voting easier for voters with disabilities This section outlines the equipment that should always be provided at polling stations to help address the known barriers and ensure that voting is as accessible as possible for voters with disabilities. It also highlights further additional equipment that may be appropriate to provide if you identify or are made aware of specific needs of voters with disabilities. To help voters understand the voting process and how to mark their ballot paper you must provide: A notice inside and outside the polling station providing instructions on how to vote at the election 1 A notice in each polling booth providing information on how to mark the ballot paper at the election 2 You must consider whether it is appropriate to make these notices more accessible for a wider range of voters 3 by providing them in alternative languages and formats, e.g. in Braille, in languages other than or Welsh, in pictorial formats 4 or in audible form. 5 At least one large sample copy of the ballot paper must be displayed inside the polling station, 6 ideally in a well-lit location where voters can easily see it before being issued with their ballot paper. Large print sample ballot papers displayed in the station will assist voters who are partially sighted and also voters who would like some time to look at the ballot paper before entering the booth. An enlarged hand-held copy of the ballot paper. This can be given to voters who are partially sighted to take into the polling booth for reference when marking their ballot paper. Equipment to support voters to participate You have a duty to provide each polling station with such equipment as it is reasonable to provide for the purposes of enabling, or making it easier for, relevant persons to vote independently and in secret. 7 We have a duty to give guidance in relation to your duty to provide this equipment 8 and you must have regard to this guidance. 9 Through our work with civil society organisations and charities we have identified a range of equipment that can help to overcome the known barriers faced by people with disabilities. Many of these items are readily available at limited cost and can have a real and positive impact on the experience of voters in the polling station. The following equipment should, as a minimum, be provided in all polling stations to support voters with disabilities: Chair/seating – this provides a place to rest for voters who cannot stand for long periods and a seat for voters who would like to take some time to think before entering the polling booth Magnifiers – these increase the size of the text on a document providing support for voters who are visually impaired to vote independently Tactile voting device –this provides support for voters who are visually impaired to mark their vote on the ballot paper in the correct place. Polling booth at wheelchair level –helps to ensure that voters who use a wheelchair are able access a lower writing surface to ensure they can cast their vote in secret in a booth that is accessible Staff name badges – these help voters more easily identify that a person is a member of staff in the polling station and is someone they can approach for assistance Pencil grip – these can help voters with dexterity

impairments to more easily hold and use a pencil independently Ramps (for buildings with steps) – these support access to a polling station for voters who use a wheelchair or have difficulty using steps Temporary alerters or doorbells for any doors that are required to remain shut during the day (for example, fire doors) – these provide a way for voters to let polling station staff know that they need assistance to open the door so they can access the polling station Appropriate lighting – some polling station venues have good lighting but others may need additional lighting at the desk; to ensure that voters can clearly see the faces of staff, and in the polling booths; to support voters with visual impairments to be able to read and complete the ballot paper. Reserved parking spaces reserved for voters with disabilities (where parking is available at the venue) – this ensures that disabled voters can park as close as possible to the polling station You are not limited to providing only the equipment shown in the list above, and indeed should not reduce or remove any equipment that you have provided to support disabled voters at polling stations in your area at previous polls. There are other types of equipment that could support voters to participate, which could also be provided in polling stations. Examples of additional provision you could make include the following: Hearing induction loop – these provide support to voters with hearing loss to communicate in the polling station. Some buildings have an induction loop installed as standard, in which case you should make use of it, and where this is not one available then a portable hearing loop could be used. Audio devices – audio devices are pieces of equipment that reproduce, record or process sound. An audio device can be used together with the tactile voting device enabling blind and partially sighted voters to listen to candidate lists and then mark their ballot paper independently. Information available in easy read format – Easy read refers to the presentation of text in an accessible, easy to understand format. It is often useful for people with learning disabilities, and may also be beneficial for people with other conditions affecting how they process information. Making decisions about providing additional support and equipment for voters As RO you may receive requests for additional support or equipment to be provided, beyond that which you are already planning to put in place. For example, you may be informed by a voter with a particular type of disability that they remain at a substantial disadvantage (i.e. a disadvantage that is more than minor or trivial) despite your adjustments, as they have specialist or additional needs. In such instances, you should consider the request and decide if it is reasonable to provide additional support and/or equipment to remove the substantial disadvantage the voter has identified and brought to your attention. Each request should be considered on its merits and with a view to continuing to support the right of every voter to be able to cast their vote. When making your decision, there are a range of factors you should take into account, including: Will providing the additional support or equipment that has been requested enable or make voting easier for voters with a range of disabilities? How easy or practical is it to provide the additional support or supply the equipment requested? For example: Is the equipment readily available for purchase? Are the cost implications reasonable? Are there any more cost-effective or readily available alternatives? Is the equipment single-use or can it be used for future polls? Is the requested equipment portable and able to be transferred to another polling station if required (for example, due to a last minute polling station change)? Are there any training implications to consider in order for staff to provide the required support or to support the use of the equipment? You are not required to record or grant a request from every individual voter with a disability who contacts you, but you

should keep a clear audit trail of your decision making process. Retention of information when contacted by a voter with disabilities for additional support or equipment Where you are contacted by a voter with a disability asking for additional support or equipment, you may receive sensitive special category data about that individual and their specific needs. You will be considered the data controller for this sensitive data and it is your responsibility to ensure that you manage it in line with data protection requirements, and ensure that the individual is aware of how their data will be managed. You should take advice from your Data Protection Officer about what to do with the data once processed and whether you need to update any privacy notices relating to the processing. More information on managing special category data can be found in our guidance on data protection. Ensuring those working to support the poll are aware of accessibility needs To help ensure that all voters are provided with equal access to voting and receive a high quality of customer care it is important that all of those who work to deliver the election or provide information to voters are aware of the needs of those with disabilities. You should provide accessibility awareness training for all staff who interact with voters, including staff who support electoral services, to help improve their understanding of the needs of those with disabilities and the importance of clear communication. Working with external partners, we have developed resources that could help your staff to understand barriers to voting and experiences of voters with disabilities at the polling station including: RNIB video which shares the experiences of voting in the polling station for those with sight loss Mencap videos which share the experiences of Charlotte and Harry of voting in a polling station with a learning disability You can take advice from your Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) officer or HR department on other accessibility awareness training that you could access. Staff should also be made aware of the resources we have available on our website and YouTube channel to assist votes with particular disabilities to help with understanding about voting and what to expect at the polling station. For more information and updates about our resources we create you can subscribe to Roll Call our voter registration newsletter and your guide to supporting voter registration and participation. In addition to all of this you could think about sourcing or developing evergreen resources that are not election specific and so can be used year round over multiple years in partnership with civil society organisations that advocate for and support their stakeholders on issues surrounding the accessibility of voting. Training for polling station staff to support accessibility It is also vital that your training for polling station staff addresses the importance of being aware of accessibility needs of voters at the polling station and what steps they should take to support them. Our resources for training polling station staff include accessibility awareness information throughout them. The actions and behaviours that polling station staff demonstrate are key to making voters' experience in the polling station a positive one. Simple things like offering assistance and listening to voters' questions can make a real difference. In addition to general awareness raising of accessibility needs, it is important that your training for polling station staff covers: the barriers faced by voters with disabilities at the polling station and how polling station staff can help reduce them awareness that not all disabilities are visible the importance of considering the needs of the person, not a specific disability awareness that some voters may have more than one disability – for example, a visual impairment and dementia the importance of clear communication about the voting process the importance of clearly communicating that assistance is available if required awareness of the equipment provided at the polling station to

enable and make easier voting in the polling station for voters with disabilities, and how to use it awareness that a companion assisting a voter can be anyone over the age of 18 In our core guidance for Returning Officers for each type of election , we link to resources for training polling station staff which contain information on accessibility which you should highlight when briefing polling station staff. Raising awareness about the voting process and support available This section of the guidance covers the actions you can take to raise awareness of the voting process and the support that is available for voters. It is important that you have a clear communications strategy to help tackle the barriers some voters face, as well as to ensure voters are aware of the support available to enable them to vote confidently. This is equally important for by-elections or unscheduled polls, which may take place at short notice, as for scheduled elections. You should update your public awareness strategy by identifying how and when you will: Identify and communicate with relevant partners and disability organisations to explore opportunities to work together to raise awareness Promote and communicate information to voters with disabilities about the process of voting at a polling station and the support and equipment available Ask for feedback on the support and equipment provided – for example, by proactively inviting comment via your website or social media Communicating the voting process and support available There are a range of ways that you can provide and promote information about the voting process and support available to voters. This can help to overcome some of the known barriers for voters with disabilities and can make a real difference to helping them participate with confidence. You may hold contact details for residents who are disabled. Having access to these details provides you with an opportunity to communicate directly with residents with disabilities about accessibility at polling stations. Providing information on the location of polling stations Feedback from organisations representing people with disabilities is that some voters find it difficult to access information on polling station locations. We provide, in partnership with Democracy Club, a postcode look-up tool on our website . To increase the visibility of this information, you should promote the postcode search tool as widely as possible. You could embed the tool on your own website, using the widget we've made available, or add a link to our website. You could also share the link with existing internal networks or external organisations you are working with and encourage them to share it with their stakeholders. Additionally, you could include the link on the notice of situation of polling stations. Should you need any further information or support in using the search tool, please visit Democracy Club's website . Providing advance information on voting at the polling station To help overcome concerns and anxiety about what voting at the polling station will be like, you could provide a dedicated page on your website that contains accessible content to help voters who want to know more about voting at the polling station. This could include: information about the assistance and support available in the polling station including: That a companion is able to assist a voter That a Presiding Officer is able to help a voter The types of equipment that will be available at the polling stations information about what to expect when voting at the polling station including: Links to videos about voting in BSL Easy guides to voting videos by Mencap When the station is likely to be busy and when it is likely to be quiet Availability of quiet space Including additional information on poll cards and making the information accessible Although the content that must be included on poll cards is prescribed in legislation, you may also add further information that you think is appropriate. 1 The only exception to this is for Northern Ireland local elections where the poll card is prescribed exactly and makes

no allowance for any other information to be included. 2 Other changes to the process as a result of the Election Act will introduce additional information that needs to be communicated to voters in advance of the poll. This will mean for relevant elections the poll card will need to become a letter to enable the relevant information to be included. This change of format of the poll card will provide a good opportunity for you to include additional information to voters about their polling station and the accessibility of the voting process . You could include a link to an accessible web page or provide a QR code on the poll card letter that takes the voter directly to a web page that provides information about the voting process or the equipment that will be available. As some voters find the information provided on the poll card inaccessible, you should also think about how you can make the information contained on the poll card more accessible by additionally publishing it in an alternative way. For example, you could put the poll card information on your website in an accessible format, compatible with screen readers. You could also make easy-read or large print versions available on request, and publicise this via the poll card itself and on your website. If you hold email addresses for voters, you could also email them the information - ensuring it is emailed in an accessible format. Sending these additional communications could also provide an opportunity to raise awareness about what will happen on polling day, what to expect in the polling station and the equipment that will be available. Providing accessible sample ballot papers Some voters may find it useful to look at the ballot paper in advance of going to the polling station to help them to prepare for the process of voting. You could provide sample ballot papers on your website to support this, and ensure that any you do provide are accessible to electors who use screen readers. Providing information to political parties, candidates and agents about accessible voting at polling stations You should include information in the briefings you provide for candidates and agents about the support and equipment available at polling stations. Candidates and agents may know individual voters who require support or specific equipment and can help ensure that they are aware of the support that is available for them and how they can access it. Working with local networks and civil society organisations in your area You may have existing relationships with networks of disability groups and civil society organisations. If you do not have these relationships, you may need to work with others who do, for example: Social care providers Equalities officers Communications teams Housing officers Partnership/Community Engagement officers County Voluntary Councils/People First Groups (Wales) Establishing relationships with disability groups and civil society organisations that are active in your local area can be beneficial as they can advise you on specific steps you can take to improve the accessibility of voting at polling stations in certain locations. They can also provide advice on the types and methods of communication you should use to promote the equipment and support available at polling stations as well as information on elections more generally. These local organisations may also have access to specialist equipment which may benefit voters locally with particular disabilities and needs which you could borrow or hire. Reviewing the election After each election you should evaluate the equipment and support provided in polling stations and how you communicated with voters on their needs and what they could expect. You should invite feedback from voters and accessibility groups on their experience of voting in polling stations, about what worked well and what didn't, to help inform what you do to support voters with disabilities at future polls. We have a statutory duty to report at UK Parliamentary elections, Parliamentary by-elections, PCC elections, PCC by-election and NI Assembly elections. We will ask for feedback on the steps you have

taken to assist voters with disabilities by providing equipment in the polling station to inform our reports. Mechanisms you could use to gather feedback include: Providing an easy read survey at the polling station about the voting experience Inviting voters and partnership organisations to attend focus groups to discuss their experiences of voting in the polling station Inviting polling station staff to discuss their experience working in a polling station where specific equipment was provided, how they dealt with any difficult situations on the day, and their feedback on the training they received Reviewing any feedback provided in reports returned by Presiding Officers and polling station inspectors Monitoring the use of the equipment you provide in polling stations by asking polling station staff to keep a record in the polling station log book or via post poll surveys or feedback. To ensure you get a wide range of external feedback you should consider providing a range of options. A good way of finding out the most appropriate approach to reaching specific groups of voters would be to ask the partnership organisations you work with what would work best for the voters they support.

1. Rule 29 (10) Sch1 RPA 1983 ■ Back to content at footnote 1

1. Section 199B(2)(a) RPA 1983 ■ Back to content at footnote 1

2. Section 199B(2)(b) RPA 1983 ■ Back to content at footnote 2

3. Section 199B(2)(c) RPA 1983 ■ Back to content at footnote 3

4. Section 199B(3)RPA 1983 ■ Back to content at footnote 4

5. Section 199B(2)(d) RPA 1983 ■ Back to content at footnote 5

6. s.18B(4(c)) SchA1, RPA 1983 ■ Back to content at footnote 6

7. s.4(1) Sch.A1 RPA 1983 ■ Back to content at footnote 7

8. Rule 29(3A)(b) Sch1, RPA 1983 ■ Back to content at footnote 8

9. Rule 39(2)(b)(i), Sch 1, RPA 1983 ■ Back to content at footnote 9

Sch 1, rule 29(4) RPA 1983; Rule 26(4) Sch.5 Electoral Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1962 – prescribed notice ■ Back to content at footnote 1

Sch 1, rule 29(5) RPA 1983; Rule 26(4) Sch.5 Electoral Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1962 – prescribed notice ■ Back to content at footnote 2

S 199B(2) of the RPA 1983; s.199B RPA 1983 applies to NI in accordance with s.2 Electoral Administration Act 2006 (Commencement No.7) Order 2008 ■ Back to content at footnote 3

S 199B (2) of the RPA 1983; s.199B RPA 1983 applies to NI in accordance with s.2 Electoral Administration Act 2006 (Commencement No.7) Order 2008 ■ Back to content at footnote 4

S 199B (3) of the RPA 1983; s.199B RPA 1983 applies to NI in accordance with s.2 Electoral Administration Act 2006 (Commencement No.7) Order 2008 ■ Back to content at footnote 5

S 199B (3) of the RPA 1983; s.199B RPA 1983 applies to NI in accordance with s.2 Electoral Administration Act 2006 (Commencement No.7) Order 2008 ■ Back to content at footnote 6

Sch 1, rule 29(3A)(a) RPA 1983; Rule 26(3A(a)) Sch.5 Electoral Law Act (NI) 1962 ■ Back to content at footnote 7

Rule 29(3A)(b) Sch.1 RPA 1983 (as amended by s.9 Elections Act 2022). ■ Back to content at footnote 8

Section 9 (8), Elections Act 2022 ■ Back to content at footnote 9

Section 9 (10), Elections Act 2022 ■ Back to content at footnote 10

Sch 1, Rule 28(3)(e) RPA 1983 ■ Back to content at footnote 11

Rule 25(3) Sch.5 Electoral Law Act (NI) 1962 ■ Back to content at footnote 12

You are in the View donations and loans section [Home](#) [Donations and loans](#) [View donations and loans](#) On this page Data in this section Public funds received by political parties Table: Public funds received by political parties broken down by type Chart: Public funds received by political parties broken down by type First published: 16 July 2019 Last updated: 16 May 2023 Summary box Political parties have to report donations that they accept and provide information on who these donations come from, including donations which are publicly funded. We publish all of the information we receive on Political Finance Online . The rules for publishing this information are different in Northern Ireland. Legislation doesn't allow us to publish any information about donations and loans from before 1 July 2017. Data in this section Table: Public funds received by political parties broken down by type Chart: Public funds received by political parties broken down by type Public funds received by political parties broken This table shows public funds received by political parties, this is broken down to individual donors. You can view data from Great Britain or Northern Ireland or combine the information. Information is searchable from each quarter from 2001 onwards. Table: Public funds received by political parties broken down by type Chart: Public funds received by political parties broken down by type Related content Registers of unincorporated associations Download and view the registers of unincorporated associations Donations accepted View data about donations accepted by parties and campaigners Donations reported late View data about donations reported late by parties Register to vote All you need to register to vote is 5 minutes and your National Insurance number.

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accounts You are in the section Home First published: 30 May 2019 Last updated: 30 July 2019 Overview Political parties have to send us their annual accounts. Political parties' accounting units with income or spending over £25,000 a year also have to send us their annual accounts. We publish this information so you can see political parties' income and what they're spending. All of the information about political parties' and accounting units' annual accounts are on our finance database . Related content Campaign spending: Candidates Find out about how candidates spend money on election campaigns View donations and loans Campaign spending: Political parties and non-party campaigners Find out about campaign spending for political parties and non-party campaigners Political Finance Online Find out how political parties are spending their money, and the donations they're receiving on Political Finance Online

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meeting Apologies and introductions Declarations of interest Minutes of the previous

Board Meeting May 2021 elections reporting Corporate Plan 2022/23 – 2026/27:

strategic direction Performance report quarter four 2020/21 Review of the annual

report and accounts 2020/21 Update from Committee Chairs Commission Board action

tracker Forward plan of Board business First published: 14 October 2021 Last updated:

4 February 2022 Meeting summary Date: Wednesday 19 May 2021 Time: 9.30am to 1pm

Location: By video conference Date of next scheduled meeting: Wednesday 23 June 2021

Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Pullinger, Chair Sue Bruce Rob

Vincent Alex Attwood Sarah Chambers Elan Closs Stephens Stephen Gilbert Alasdair

Morgan Joan Walley In attendance: Bob Posner, Chief Executive Craig Westwood,

Director, Communications, Policy and Research Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation

Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Kieran Rix, Director,

Finance and Corporate Services Binnie Goh, General Counsel Zena Khan, Senior Advisor,

Governance Hannah Kavanagh, Legal Officer (all items) Rhidian Thomas, Head of

Electoral Commission, Wales (item 4) Andy O'Neill, Head of Electoral Commission,

Scotland (item 4) Phil Thompson, Head of Research and Evaluation (item 4 and briefing

session) Tom Hawthorn, Head of Policy (item 4 and briefing session) David Bailey,

Head of Strategic Performance and Planning (items 4 and 5) Tim Crowley. Head of

Digital Communications and Learning (item 5 Niki Nixon, Head of External

Communications (item 5) Tracey Blackman, Head of Finance and (item 7) Mark Williams,

Policy Manager (briefing session) Apologies and introductions No apologies were

received. The Chair welcomed all to the meeting advising the Board on activities

undertaken whilst in post so far and thanked staff for the inductions and briefings

he had received. Declarations of interest There were no new declarations of interest.

Minutes of the previous Board Meeting (EC 35/21) Resolved: That the minutes of the

Commission Board meeting on 21 April 2021 be approved with minor amends to item 11.

May 2021 elections reporting (Oral) The Board received a presentation to consider the

initial perspectives on how the elections were delivered in relation to the

objectives for well-run elections during the Covid-19 pandemic. These conclusions

would be tested against the evidence base the Commission is currently developing,

with an update on the emerging conclusions and a discussion on any recommendations to

be included in our reporting scheduled for the July Board meeting. The Board also

received feedback from Head of Electoral Commission, Wales and Head of Electoral

Commission, Scotland on the planning process, campaigning, voters and administration

in those areas. The Board noted updates from Commissioner for Wales and Commissioner

for Scotland, reporting overall satisfaction and well organised polling stations. The

Board noted the presentation and looked forward to receiving a report on the emerging

evidence base and recommendations at the July Board. Resolved: That the Board noted

the presentation and welcomed planned discussions to explore solutions to address

challenges of supplier capacity in the electoral administration, as well as learning

from experience to promote best practice to drive standards upwards. Corporate Plan

2022/23 – 2026/27: strategic direction ((EC 36/21) The Board received a report

providing the Board with an opportunity to review the proposed strategic direction

for the Corporate Plan 2022/23 – 2026/27. It was noted that the general strategic

direction for the plan was endorsed by the Board in October 2020, but with the

passage of time and events it was opportune to ensure it remained appropriate. The

Board asked questions and made suggestions on the drafting of the Plan. They

encouraged greater consideration of what the electoral system might look like in the future and the Commission's role in bringing that about. The Board asked that the Commission's work in public education and research be considered broadly. Working in closer partnership with stakeholders and reaching out to under-represented groups was encouraged. There was consideration of future trends in addressing climate change objectives and the rise in carbon neutral election tools. The Board discussed ensuring the Corporate Plan was accessible and recognised the different situation in each of the nations of the UK. Resolved: That the strategic direction for the development of the Corporate Plan 2022/23 – 2026/27 take into account how the electoral system needs to adapt to future challenges. Performance report quarter four 2020/21 (EC 37/21) The Board received a report providing performance information for the quarter to end of March, as well as information for the year end. For quarter four, all the goals were rated green overall but, as indicated within the goals and other sections of the report, some indicators, operational plan actions, projects and risks beneath these were not green. That Board noted that, in several indicators in Goals 2 and 4, the indicator was red in part due to the target being set at 100% where this could not reasonably be expected. The relevant Directors reported that review of the performance indicators for 2021/22 had identified this and more feasible, but still stretching, targets were being set. The Board asked for more narrative information to bring out why deadlines had been missed and the importance of meeting Audit and Risk Committee deadlines. Resolved: The Board noted performance for the fourth quarter and for the year as a whole (subject to finalisation as part of the annual report and accounts). Review of the annual report and accounts 2020/21 (EC 38/21) The Board received a draft of the Commission's Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21 following inputs provided at the April Board meeting on the performance review and key messages. The Board noted that the current draft had received further input from the Chair, Executive Team, Heads and other relevant staff. The Board discussed and provided input on scope and presentation along with getting the detail and balance right. The Board noted that feedback would be incorporated to finalise the content and then brought back to the June Board following a review at the Audit and Risk Committee meeting also scheduled in June. Resolved: That the final report be brought back to the June Board meeting. Update from Committee Chairs Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo) (Oral) The Board received an oral update from the Chair of Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo) of the meeting held on 30 March 2021. The Board noted strategic and policy decision updates on activity following receipt of the bullying and harassment report and, progress with actions arising from the pay benchmarking exercise. The Board also noted information and standing item updates on progress with the people strategy report, post Covid-19 ways of working, Race at Work Charter Taskforce and other Equality, Diversity and Inclusion activity, as well as exit payment updates and the Committee's annual report to the Commission Board and effectiveness review. Resolved: That the Board noted the updates on operations and matters arising. Audit and Risk Committee (Oral) The Board received an oral update from the Chair of Audit and Risk Committee of the meeting held on 18 May 2021. The Board noted strategic and policy decision updates from the National Audit Office, internal audit reports on Covid-19 lessons learnt, quality assurance and procurement, an annual review of the anti-bribery, anti-fraud and whistleblowing policies. The Board also noted information and standing items on audit recommendations, annual reviews of information risk management, accounting policies and committee terms of reference. The Board noted that should Board members wish to attend a future Audit and Risk Committee meeting as observers, to contact the Audit

and Risk Chair or Board Secretary. Resolved: That the Board noted the updates. Commission Board action tracker (EC 39/21) The Board received the Commission Board action tracker noting deadlines and ownership to be included. Resolved: That the Commission Board action tracker be noted. Forward plan of Board business (EC 40/21) Commissioners discussed items of business for future meetings. These would be reflected in the Forward plan of Board business at the June meeting. Resolved: That the Forward plan of Board business be noted. At this point the Board concluded their business and this was followed by an informal briefing session on: UK Government Electoral Integrity Bill The Board received a presentation on the provisions expected to be contained in the Electoral Integrity Bill, led by Director, Communications, Policy and Research. The Board discussed a number of the provisions covered in the presentation, to support the Commission's preparatory work for the Bill's introduction and providing advice to parliamentarians.

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Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21 | Electoral Commission Search

Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21 You are in the Our plans and priorities section Home Our plans and priorities In this section Performance analysis 2020/21: Goal one Performance analysis 2020/21: Goal two Performance analysis 2020/21: Goal three Performance analysis 2020/21: Goal four Looking ahead to 2020/21 and using our resources to support the delivery of our goals Overview This section provides an overview of the Electoral Commission, our purpose, our performance during the last year and the key risks to achieving our goals. We have included summary financial information within the performance report. This is consistent with the financial statements, where more detail is available. The Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) established the Electoral Commission. We are independent of government and political parties and directly accountable to the UK, Scottish and Welsh Parliaments. We have prepared our 2020/21 Annual Report and Accounts in accordance with an accounts direction, set out on page 120, issued by HM Treasury under paragraph 17 (2) of Schedule 1 PPERA. We have prepared the powers and sanctions report on page 44 in accordance with paragraph 15 Schedule 19(b) and paragraph 27 Schedule 19(c) PPERA. Foreword As for many other organisations and public bodies, the Commission's 2020/21 year was dominated by mitigating the impact Covid-19 pandemic. Our over-arching priority was to ensure we responded effectively and efficiently to this challenge, continuing the delivery of the Commission's statutory functions and supporting the increased needs of our stakeholders. The polls scheduled for May 2020 were postponed for a year, a decision the Commission supported, to allow local authorities to focus on front line public services and to mitigate risks to voters and campaigners. This meant, however, that the polls scheduled for May 2021, covering the whole of Great Britain, would be one of the most complex sets of polls in recent years. The Commission quickly refocused its efforts and over the course of the year provided extensive guidance, support and leadership to the electoral community. We worked closely with electoral administrators, the UK's governments, public health authorities, parties and campaigners. We supporting detailed planning and preparations for a Covid-safe democratic process, including the development of new legislation, and undertook extensive communications activity with the public to ensure that all eligible voters who wished to participate in the elections had the information they needed to do so. Our aim was to support well-run elections in which voters were able to participate in the polls safely and confidently, and campaigners and parties were able to put their case to the electorate. The polls took place outside this reporting period, and to the credit of everyone involved were delivered efficiently and effectively. We will be reporting on the undertaking of the polls in due course, so that important lessons can be captured and learnt, not least about delivering elections during a pandemic. Looking beyond preparations for these challenging elections, we also continued to press ahead on delivering against our corporate plan and to improve the core services for which we are responsible. For the electoral administrator community, this year also saw the implementation of improved rules for the electoral registration canvass in Great Britain, on which we provided guidance, support and challenge, alongside preparations for a canvass of electors in Northern Ireland. Alongside fulfilling our statutory regulatory responsibilities – including providing transparency through the publication of political financial data, maintaining the register of political parties, and enforcing the political finance rules – we continued to develop and extend the way we support parties and campaigners to comply. We also continued to respond to the impact of digital campaigning, working with campaigners and governments on intended changes to the regime, and with

providers of digital advertising to encourage greater transparency. During the year we worked closely and constructively with the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Senedd (as well as the Speaker's Committee of the UK Parliament) to lay the foundations for new direct accountability to them from April 2021. Our focus is on building strong, transparent and cooperative relationships to ensure that we deliver priorities for each legislature, continuing to share good practice. We also as one of our core functions provided detailed, evidence-based advice to officials and parliamentarians on the development and passage of new legislation. Our work to support voter confidence also continued. Alongside our ongoing voter registration campaign activity, we launched a new campaign to increase voter understanding of the rules already in place to regulate digital campaigning, and a first suite of education and learning materials to increase political literacy. During 2020, the Commission adapted how it operated in the wider context of the pandemic and worked diligently to deliver its responsibilities and duties, with impartiality, integrity and independence. We invested in our staff, technology, the working environment and working practices and systems to ensure that we continue to deliver value for money for the voter and evolve our services in line with changing expectations, putting quality centre stage and placing a renewed focus on equality, diversity and inclusion. At a time when public finances are under severe pressure, we delivered the work programme, and accommodated additional pressures such as supporting a remote workforce, within our approved annual budget. Looking forward to the 2021/22 year, it will be a year of continued focus on providing support to our key stakeholders, as well as managing other developments and change. The Commission will continue to work constructively with all concerned – governments, parliaments, parties and campaigners, electoral administrators and other interested groups – to maintain confidence and trust in elections, including making preparations for the delivery of those scheduled for May 2022. We welcome a new Chair and two Commissioners, providing refreshed strength in our strategic direction and governance. And our service to the UK electorate will continue to be underpinned by providing value for money; maintaining the organisation as well-run, with engaged, skilled staff and the technology required to support effective ways of working. We thank Sir John Holmes who has completed his four-year term of office as Chair, leading the Commission through an exceptionally busy period of electoral events. The Commission's statutory responsibilities place it in a unique position in the sector. In some areas the Commission's role is to directly deliver functions. In other areas we provide oversight, guidance, support and – where required – enforcement. On some matters we have a role in convening or informing debate. Each aspect of our role makes a significant contribution to well-run elections and to achieving tangible improvements to the system for voters, campaigners and administrators. Our role The Electoral Commission is the independent body which oversees elections and regulates political finance in the United Kingdom. . Our vision and goals Our vision is to be a world-class public sector organisation – innovative, delivering great value and getting right what matters most to voters and legislators. In 2020/21 we worked towards achieving four goals: To enable the continued delivery of free and fair elections and referendums, focusing on the needs of electors and addressing the changing environment to ensure every vote remains secure and accessible To ensure an increasingly trusted and transparent system of regulation in political finance, overseeing compliance, promoting understanding amongst those regulated and proactively pursuing breaches To be an independent and respected centre of expertise, using knowledge and insight to further the transparency, fairness and efficiency of

our democratic system, and help adapt it to the modern, digital age To provide value for money, making best use of our resources and expertise to deliver services that are attuned to what matters most to voters. This goal underpins and supports all of our work We will continue to focus on delivering these goals in 2021/22. Our role across the UK We deliver for voters across all parts of the UK, with Electoral Commission offices in Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh and London. We work closely with the UK and devolved governments and, from April 2021, have new accountabilities to the Scottish Parliament and the Senedd. Our 2020/21 year at a glance April – June 2020 We set up a Crisis Management Team to coordinate our response, and expanded our videoconferencing facilities to ensure we could all communicate with each other and with stakeholders. We launched a new online tool for the public to see and analyse candidate spending returns from the 2019 UK general election We responded to the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC) enquiry on the Fixed Term Parliament Act The Lords Committee on Democracy and Digital Technologies published its report, advocating many of the Commission's long-standing policy proposals. Internally we launched the Commission's People Strategy. The Commission gave evidence to the Committee on Standards in Public Life, after it launched a new review into electoral regulation. July – September 2020 We carried out a survey to check on the wellbeing of our staff Our campaign targeted at newly enfranchised voters, with a series of adverts across social media, radio and print. We completed our first research into public attitudes to voting in the context of Covid 19, to inform preparations for the 2021 elections We became advisors to the Wales Elections Planning Group established by the First Minister to establish a consensus on legislation needed to ensure elections are well-run in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic We carried out an internal review to learn lessons from our response to the initial stages of the pandemic We published updated core guidance for electoral administrators and candidates and agents to support them with preparing for and delivering the May 2021 elections October – December 2020 We published our Welsh language standards annual monitoring report We submitted the first financial Estimate to the Llywydd's Committee and the Scottish Parliament, as part of establishing our new accountabilities to devolved parliaments We published the first part of supplementary guidance to support electoral administrators with managing the COVID-specific impacts on the polls We launched a new set of resources for young people in Scotland and Wales to educate young people in Wales about their vote and the democratic process. Worked with the UK, Scottish and Welsh governments and parliaments on their respective legislation to prepare for holding elections during the pandemic. We submitted written evidence to the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Select Committee of the House of Commons and gave oral evidence given to the new Llywydd Committee of the Senedd After a four-year term of office as Chair, Sir John Holmes left the Commission. John Pullinger CB began his term of office in May 2021 January – March 2021 We organised pre-election seminar for Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers in Scotland with the Electoral Management Board for Scotland We launched a public consultation on a draft Disability Action Plan in line with statutory equality duties in Northern Ireland We formed our Race at Work Charter task force to extend our work to improve diversity and equality Work started to update our London offices to improve our ways of working We marked 'Welcome to your Vote' awareness week in Scotland and Wales by hosting virtual events and sharing resources for engage newly enfranchised voters We co-organised the annual Electoral Fraud Reduction and Prevention National Seminar in collaboration with the National Police Chiefs' Council We published a report on public attitudes towards the

transparency of political party and campaigner finance in Northern Ireland. We agreed a Statement of Financial Principles across Scotland, Wales and Westminster setting out the new financial relationship between us and the three legislatures; Senedd Cymru, Scottish Parliament and UK Parliament. Our year in numbers Used £20.4m of resources, including £1.3m capital spend Invested 56% of our resource expenditure on staff costs (£10.7m) Achieved 72% employee engagement score Answered 4,463 public enquiries – a 569% decrease on last year due to no electoral events this year Responded to 153 Freedom of Information requests Published 1,186 routine financial returns from parties and campaigners Notified 58% of the 134 party registration applications of their outcome within 30 days Completed 54 investigations, 94% of them within 180 days Published 888 annual statement of accounts for political parties and accounting units Published 100% of our guidance products on time with no substantial errors Responded to 2,130 requests for advice from local authorities – 99.39% within 3 days Collected £69k of civil sanctions in our role as a regulator performance analysis Jump to: Goal one Goal two Goal three Goal four Looking ahead to 2021/22 and using our resources to support the delivery of our goals Download our full annual report and accounts Annual report and accounts 2020/21

Report: 23 June 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union |
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delivery of future referendums and other polls Recommendations for the regulation of
campaigners at future referendums Download our full report First published: 13 June
2019 Last updated: 29 July 2022 About the referendum On 23 June 2016 a referendum was
held across the United Kingdom and Gibraltar about whether the UK should remain a
member of the European Union or leave the European Union. This report looks
specifically at the administration of the referendum, including the experience of
voters and campaigners, the management and delivery of the poll, the regulation of
campaigners at the referendum and the provision of information for voters. We will
publish further reports relating to the referendum, including a report on the
analysis of campaigners' spending and donations at the referendum and a report
detailing the costs of the administration of the referendum in full, in 2017.

Separate reports evaluating our public awareness campaign at the EU referendum,
summarising our public opinion research following the referendum, and analysing
feedback on the role of the Chief Counting Officer and the Commission supporting
Counting Officers and campaigners at the referendum have also been published on our
website at the same time as this report. Our role The Electoral Commission has
specific responsibilities for the administration and regulation of referendums held
under the framework of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000
(PPERA). The June 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union was
conducted under the PPERA framework, and the Commission was therefore responsible
for: commenting on the intelligibility of the referendum question proposed by the UK
Government registering organisations or individuals who wanted to campaign in the
referendum (known as 'permitted participants') monitoring spending on referendum
campaigning, in line with the referendum spending limits imposed by PPERA considering
appointing organisations as the lead campaigners or 'designated organisations' for
each referendum outcome ensuring that designated organisations (if appointed) had
access to certain assistance reporting on referendum campaign spending reporting on
the administration of the referendum The Chair of the Commission was the Chief
Counting Officer (CCO). She was responsible for the conduct of the referendum and for
ensuring the accuracy of the overall result. Her duties included certifying and
declaring the total number of ballots counted and the total number of votes cast in
favour of each answer to the question in the referendum. The Electoral Commission's
key objectives for referendums are that: They should be well run and produce results
that are accepted; and There should be integrity and transparency of campaign funding
and expenditure. Registration and turnout and the result of the referendum A total of
46,500,001 people were registered to vote in the referendum and 33,577,342 votes were
cast, representing a turnout of 72.2%. Except for the Scottish Independence
Referendum in September 2014, this was the highest turnout since the 1992 UK
Parliamentary general election (UKPGE). The outcome of the referendum was: 16,141,241
people (48.1% of all voters) voted to remain a member of the European Union
17,410,742 people (51.9% of all voters) voted to leave the European Union There were
25,359 rejected ballot papers. More than 8.5 million postal votes were issued for the

referendum. This represents 18.4% of the UK electorate, the highest proportion since the introduction of postal voting on demand in Great Britain in 2001. Almost 26.3 million votes were cast in person at polling stations. As in previous years, turnout was higher among postal voters than in- person voters: 87.6% compared to 69.2%. Postal votes made up 21.7% of the total votes cast, slightly more than at the 2015 UKPGE when they made up 20.5%. The experience of voters and campaigners Evidence from our public opinion research with voters shows that they had a positive view of the EU referendum process, with 77% being very or fairly confident that the referendum was well run. People were also satisfied with the process of registering to vote (87% said they were generally satisfied). People remain highly satisfied with the procedures for voting in the referendum, whether in person at a polling station (97%) or by post (99%). People also said that they had enough information to participate in the referendum, with 85% saying that it was very or fairly easy to access information about how to cast their vote, with a similar proportion (82%) saying the same in relation to what the referendum was for. The majority felt that they had enough information to make an informed decision on how to vote in it (62% agreed, compared with 28% who disagreed). Despite this, we received more than 1,000 complaints from the public about the content of campaign material. Our public opinion research asked whether respondents thought that the conduct of the referendum campaigns was fair and balanced. Just over half of respondents (52%) disagreed with this statement with 34% disagreeing strongly. By comparison 34% agreed with the statement that the conduct of the campaigns was fair and balanced – only 12% agreed strongly. The main reasons given for thinking that the conduct of the campaign was not fair and balanced were because they believed it was one-sided/unbalanced/biased/partial (31%) and the information was inaccurate and misleading (31%). People were less likely to agree that the spending and funding of political parties, candidates and other campaigning organisations is open and transparent – 44% either disagreed or tended to disagree. On the other hand, people were more likely to agree that the authorities would take appropriate actions if political parties or campaigners are caught breaking the rules (61% agreed, compared with 23% who disagreed). However, it should be noted that this survey was conducted shortly after the referendum and therefore before reports of referendum campaigners' spending are due to be submitted and published by the Commission. Legislation for the referendum A number of changes and improvements were made to the regulatory controls for the EU referendum. These were included in the specific referendum legislation and associated Regulations rather than an updated version of the standard PPERA rules. To provide additional clarity the UK Government should establish a clear standard legal framework for the conduct and regulation of future referendums. This should include making necessary amendments to PPERA now, together with a generic Order for the conduct of referendums. These measures would remove ambiguity over the detailed rules for the conduct of referendums each time one of these polls is called. We reiterate our support for the Law Commissions' recommendations that primary legislation governing electoral registers, entitlement to absent voting, core polling rules and electoral offences should be expressed to extend to national referendums where appropriate, and that secondary legislation should set out the detailed conduct rules governing national referendums (mirroring that governing elections, save for necessary modifications). Management and delivery of the referendum The European Union Referendum Act 2015 provided that the CCO could appoint a Regional Counting Officer for each of the eleven electoral regions in Great Britain used for European Parliamentary elections, comprising nine regions in England and Scotland and Wales. Gibraltar was included in the South West electoral region.

The Act provided that Northern Ireland was a single voting area for which the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland was the Counting Officer. This regional management structure was used to manage the EU referendum in the 382 counting areas. In order to provide greater clarity and ensure better alignment with arrangements in the rest of the UK, we recommend that Northern Ireland should be designated as an electoral region for future UK-wide referendums. It is expected that the outcome of the referendum will mean that the UK will no longer hold elections to the European Parliament, and that this regional structure will therefore no longer have a statutory basis. Given that the structure in place for this referendum worked so effectively to deliver a significant national poll, there would be a risk introduced to the delivery of any future national referendum, potentially with a shorter time period in which to prepare for it, if this structure or something similar (potentially non-statutory) were not to be retained. We are satisfied that the Chair of the Electoral Commission was the most appropriate person to act as the Chief Counting Officer for this referendum. This will be reviewed by the Commission before each UK-wide referendum to be held under PPERA in future. We commissioned two academics to carry out a separate, independent evaluation of the role of the CCO and the Electoral Commission and their approach to the management of the poll, which has been published on our website. Feedback from RCOs and COs was very positive about the role of the CCO and the Electoral Commission in the management and delivery of the referendum. For referendums which take place only in Scotland or Wales, we recognise that the Chair of the Electoral Commission may not be the most appropriate person to act as the Chief Counting Officer. For example, the Convener of the Electoral Management Board for Scotland was the Chief Counting Officer for the 2014 Scottish independence referendum. For referendums which take place only in Northern Ireland, PPERA specifies that the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland would be the Chief Counting Officer. There were a number of administrative issues which affected a proportionately small number of voters at the EU referendum. The technical problems experienced by the Government's voter registration website from 10.15pm on Tuesday 7 June were not resolved until around the time of the deadline for registering to vote in the referendum at midnight. This led to the decision to extend the deadline for registration until midnight on Thursday 9 June. The Government should publish the independent assessment of what happened as quickly as possible to ensure that the website is able to cope with stress caused by significantly high traffic in advance of future polls. Additionally, introducing the ability for electors to check online whether they are correctly registered before submitting their application would assist the situation by reducing the number of duplicate applications. The current electoral timetable, with the voter registration deadline set as it is, continues to present particular challenges in terms of ensuring the timely delivery and return of overseas postal votes, which of course will vary between countries. The UK Government's proposed Votes for Life Bill (which will scrap the current 15 year time limit on the voting rights of British citizens living overseas for UK parliamentary elections) is likely to increase the pressure on the postal voting timetable, which is already more compressed compared to a referendum. It highlights the need for the UK Government to work with the Commission and others to identify changes to improve access to the voting process for overseas electors. Any changes requiring legislation should be included in the Votes for Life Bill to ensure a coordinated approach. Other issues related to the receipt of poll cards and postal votes by ineligible electors; and concerns about the use of pencils to mark ballot papers. Regulating campaigners at the referendum s at the EU referendum were subject to the PPERA regulatory

framework which places limitations on spending by campaigners and provides transparency about sources of funding. Some of the PPERA controls were expanded and updated through the EU Referendum Act. We advised the UK Government and Parliament on developing some of these improvements. As for previous PPERA referendums, these changes were included in the specific referendum legislation and associated Regulations rather than updating the standard PPERA rules. We recommend that the changes should be incorporated into PPERA where appropriate, so that they apply for all future referendums. This referendum saw the highest number of registered campaigners compared to previous referendums held in the UK, including established organisations and political parties, as well as newly-established campaigners. Before and during the referendum period, we identified and monitored campaigns, and provided outreach, advice and training to ensure campaigners knew how to comply with the rules. We made particular efforts to work closely with campaigners to prevent noncompliance, including proactively regulating potential breaches of the rules in 'real time' during the referendum campaign. We also published details of campaigners' donations to allow scrutiny by voters and the media right up to the poll, and will be publishing the campaigners' spending returns in due course. In this report, we have considered the immediate regulatory issues arising from the referendum and feedback received from campaigners. We will issue a further report in spring 2017 focusing on the spending and donation returns that campaigners are required to submit to us before the statutory deadlines in September and December 2016. That report will also include information on the use of our investigatory and sanctioning powers at the referendum. The Commission has a statutory responsibility to appoint lead campaigners for each side of a UK-wide referendum, if suitable applicants are forthcoming. The designation process for the EU referendum was unprecedented in terms of there being high profile, well-funded, competent applicants competing for the same outcome. It was therefore the first time that the statutory test of 'representing to the great extent' was put to the test with competing applications. In this report, we particularly note the current lack of clear and meaningful controls on the activities of governments and other publicly funded bodies (not least the lack of any sanctions for breaches). These deficiencies have the potential to undermine voters' trust in the integrity of referendum controls and, in the most serious cases, undermine confidence in referendum results. We therefore recommend that the legal restrictions known as section 125 should be re-visited and that the enforcement of the s125 restrictions should be clarified. There should be greater consistency between the expectations placed on public bodies and those set out for campaigners during a referendum period.

Recommendations for future referendum legislation

Recommendation 1: The UK Government should establish a clear standard legal framework for the conduct and regulation of future referendums. We recommend that important changes which have been applied to the legal framework for recent referendums (including in particular the role of Regional Counting Officers, the requirement for referendum campaigners to report donations during the pre-poll period and rules for campaigners working together) should be incorporated in PPERA to ensure that they will apply for all future referendums. The UK Government should introduce legislation to make these amendments to PPERA now, rather than waiting until legislation is required for another future referendum. We also recommend that the UK Government should use the powers provided to the Secretary of State in Section 129 of PPERA to make an Order providing the detailed conduct rules for the administration of any future referendum poll. The UK Government should introduce this legislation now, rather than waiting until legislation is required for another future referendum. We reiterate our support

for the Law Commissions' recommendations that primary legislation governing electoral registers, entitlement to absent voting, core polling rules and electoral offences should be expressed to extend to national referendums where appropriate, and that secondary legislation should set out the detailed conduct rules governing national referendums (mirroring that governing elections, save for necessary modifications).

Recommendation 2: Referendum legislation should be clear at least six months before it is required to be implemented or complied with. The UK Government should manage the development and approval of legislation for future referendums (including any secondary legislation containing detailed rules for the administration of the referendum poll and regulatory controls) so that it is clear at least six months before it is required to be implemented or complied with by campaigners or electoral administrators. This means that: Legislation for the regulation of referendum campaigners should be clear at least six months before the start of the regulated referendum period. Legislation relating to the conduct of a referendum poll should be clear at least six months before polling day. Recommendation 3: Referendums should not normally be held on the same day as other significant or scheduled polls. We have previously recommended that any proposals to hold a referendum poll on the same day as the poll for other electoral events should be considered on a case-by-case basis. While this remains our view, we believe that the starting assumption for Governments and legislatures should be that referendums are not normally held on the same day as other significant or scheduled polls. In particular, referendums on significant constitutional questions, where political parties and other campaigners are likely to be working more closely together, should never be held on the same day as other scheduled polls. UK legislatures scrutinising proposals to hold any future referendum on the same day as other significant or scheduled polls should ensure they are satisfied that voters and campaigners will be able to participate fully in both the referendum and the other polls, and that electoral administrators can deliver both sets of polls. Recommendations for providing information for voters at future referendums

Recommendation 4: Any Government considering providing funding directly to EROs for public awareness ahead of a future referendum or scheduled polls should consult EROs and the Electoral Commission in sufficient time to ensure that effective plans for local and national activities can be developed and implemented. Where any Government plans to give grants to EROs for public awareness work to encourage electoral registration ahead of future polls, it should publish its proposals and consult EROs and the Electoral Commission on its proposals at least six months in advance of polling day. Not only does this allow reasonable time to plan advertising and to organise the logistics of amending and supplying advertising material to take place, but it means that better value-for-money can be achieved when local authorities book advertising space. Booking advertising space at short notice not only results in a cost premium, but means that availability – particularly with regards to outdoor advertising – can be extremely limited. Short or non-existent lead times can result in advertising which is both more expensive and less effective.

Recommendation 5: Governments should make use of all available owned channels to promote voter registration ahead of any major poll. Ahead of the EU referendum, the UK Government mobilised its departments and associated organisations to make use of each and every available communications channel, platform, media space and real estate to drive voter registration ahead of the deadline. This provided the campaign with unprecedented visual coverage across the country and reached millions of people for no capital expenditure. Now that it is clear what can be achieved, this should become standard practice for any Government ahead of each scheduled electoral event.

Recommendations for the management and delivery of future referendums and other polls

Recommendation 6: Northern Ireland should be designated as an electoral region for future UK-wide referendums, with the Chief Electoral Officer appointed as a Regional Counting Officer For future UK-wide referendums, Northern Ireland should be designated as a referendum region with the Chief Electoral Officer appointed as Regional Counting Officer responsible for coordinating the delivery of the poll in line with the other eleven electoral regions in the UK. Voting areas within Northern Ireland should be specified in referendum legislation, in the same way as for other electoral regions elsewhere in the UK. The UK Government should ensure that legislation for any future UK-wide referendum (including legislation amending PPERA, as recommended above in Recommendation 1 of this report) designates Northern Ireland as an electoral region with the Chief Electoral Officer appointed as a Regional Counting Officer. Recommendation 7: The capacity of the UK Government's online voter registration website should be tested to ensure it can cope with significant volumes of applications close to the deadline ahead of future scheduled polls The UK Government should publish, as quickly as possible, the results of the independent review and investigation into what caused the online voter registration website to fail close to the registration deadline, and outline what measures have been put in place since to ensure that the website is able to cope with significantly high volumes of traffic. The review, and the Government's plans for ensuring that the website does not fail in similar circumstances, should be published no later than 4 November 2016, six months before the next set of scheduled polls in May 2017.

Recommendation 8: Electors should be able to check online whether they are correctly registered to vote Providing a way for electors to check their registration status at the beginning of the online registration application process would reduce the action required by voters to keep their register entry up to date, and would also reduce the impact on EROs of processing duplicate applications. The UK Government should develop an online service to allow people to check whether they are already correctly registered to vote before they complete a new application to register. Any such service would need to carefully manage and protect voters' personal information.

Recommendation 9: Access to the voting process should be improved for overseas electors We will continue to work with the UK Government and Returning Officers or Counting Officers to identify practical steps which could be taken to improve access to the voting process for overseas electors at the next scheduled poll where they are entitled to vote, including: Ensuring that all Returning Officers or Counting Officers include the correct postage on postal ballot packs for overseas electors, so that they can be delivered to voters and returned as quickly as possible before polling day, including increasing the funding provided by the UK Government to Returning Officers or Counting Officers for this purpose to allow them to use the Royal Mail International Business Response Service. Explaining the practical implications of different voting methods (such as postal voting or appointing a proxy) for overseas electors, particularly if they are making an application during the last month before polling day, including on the www.gov.uk/register-to-vote website. We will work with the UK Government and Returning Officers to develop workable and effective proposals, which could be included in the proposed Votes for Life Bill if legislation is required, to make it easier for overseas electors to cast their votes in time to be counted at elections. We will also continue our work with the Electoral Coordination and Advisory Board to consider how technology might be introduced into a wider range of election activity. Recommendations for the regulation of campaigners at future referendums Recommendation 10: Those eligible to

register as a referendum campaigner should be the same as those eligible to register as non-party campaigners at elections We recommend that the list of individuals and bodies eligible to register as a referendum campaigner is extended to mirror the list of eligible non-party campaigners under PPERA. Recommendation 11: The responsible person should be required to sign the application to register as a referendum campaigner, and be barred from being the responsible person for any other registered referendum campaigner at the same time We recommend that the person named as the responsible person should be required to sign the application for registration as a referendum campaigner and that the same person should not be able to be the responsible person for more than one registered referendum campaigner. Recommendation 12: The Commission should be able to reject applications to register certain referendum campaign group names from unincorporated associations We recommend that the Commission should be able to reject an application for registration as a referendum campaigner from an unincorporated association whose name, in the Commission's view, is: obscene or offensive or which, if published, would be likely to amount to the commission of an offence; or the same or similar to that of an already registered referendum campaigner, registered political party or recognised third party. Recommendation 13: Unincorporated associations should be required to provide details of their membership as part of their application to register as a referendum campaigner We recommend that the registration requirements for unincorporated associations that register as a referendum campaigner should mirror the registration requirements for unincorporated associations that register as a recognised third party at elections. Recommendation 14: Designation of lead campaigners should take place before the start of the referendum period; alternatively the referendum period should be extended We recommend that, where the legislative timetable allows, the designation of lead campaigners should take place shortly before, rather than during the first six weeks of, the referendum period and that the deadline for applications should be set at 12pm (noon) on the closing day of the application period. However, if circumstances mean that the legislative timetable is such that predesignation is not possible, then our 2011 recommendation to extend the length of the referendum period to at least 16 weeks should be adopted. This would go some way to giving designated lead campaign groups more time to plan and use the benefits available. Recommendation 15: The UK Government should consult on options for redrafting section 125 PPERA to clarify the nature, scope and enforcement of the restrictions Section 125 of PPERA should be significantly redrafted to clarify the nature and scope of the restriction on activities by Governments and other publicly funded bodies during the referendum period. It should be clear which activities are restricted, and whether there are any specific exemptions; it should be clear when the restrictions apply; and it should be clear who is responsible for enforcing the restrictions, and what the penalties would be for any breach of the restrictions. The UK Government should consult on options for redrafting section 125 of PPERA, with a view to introducing amending legislation as soon as practicable, sufficiently ahead of any specific legislation for a future referendum. Download our full report 2016 EU referendum report We have also published reports about: an independent survey of electoral administrators (PDF) an independent survey of registered campaigners (PDF) feedback on the international observers' scheme run by the Electoral Commission (PDF) Related content Testing the EU referendum question Find out about our testing of the EU referendum question Results and turnout at the EU referendum View the results and turnout at the EU referendum Report: The regulation of campaigners at the referendum on the UK's membership of the European

Union held on 23 June 2016 Read our report about the regulation of campaigners at the 2016 EU referendum Campaign spending at the EU referendum View data about campaign spending at the EU referendum.

Upcoming elections | Electoral Commission Search Upcoming elections You are in the section Home In this section Objectives for well-run elections in the current public health context Types of elections There are different types of elections which take place across the UK. These elections may be: nationwide, such as the UK Parliamentary general election in a devolved nation, such as the Scottish Parliamentary, Senedd, and Northern Ireland Assembly elections local, such as local council elections Elections in your area Enter your postcode to find out if there's an upcoming election where you live. Enter a postcode Submit Postcode Related content Register to vote All you need to register to vote is 5 minutes and your National Insurance number. Which elections you can vote in Learn more about which elections you can vote in. Types of elections about the types of elections in the UK. Voting in person Voting in person on polling day? Learn more about what to expect when you go to the polling station.

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European Union Referendum May 2015 polls – Post-election report Common Data Standard for Electoral Registers Individual Electoral Registration (IER) Progress Commission

Update Report Meeting dates for 2016 Electoral Commission updates Date of the next meeting Actions First published: 1 September 2015 Last updated: 2 September 2019 Who

was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Conservative Party: Andrew Stedman, Compliance Manager (AS) Labour: Margaret Lynch, Compliance Manager (ML) Liberal

Democrats (Chair): Darren Briddock (DB) Jake Holland (JH) Plaid Cymru: Emyr Williams, Plaid Cymru (EW) Scottish National Party: Scott Martin, Scottish National Party (SM)

Electoral Commission: Alex Robertson, Director of Communication (AR) Tom Hawthorn, Head of Electoral Policy (TH) Louise Edwards, Head of Monitoring and Reporting, Party and Election Finance (LE) Karim Aziz, Senior Communications Officer (KA) Minutes, and

actions of the meeting and matters arising (ECPPP 02/06/2015) The minutes from 02/06/2015 were agreed with no clarifications sought or noted. There were no other

matters arising from the minutes. DB highlighted the action point that the Commission needs to continue to look into improving logo and party descriptions. European Union

Referendum AR informed the PPP that the Electoral Commission had given its statutory

advice to Parliament on the proposed EU referendum question. AR said that following its question assessment process, the Commission has recommended that the question

that was currently in the European Union Referendum Bill 2015-16 should be amended to: 'Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?' with responses being 'Remain a member of the European Union' /

'Leave the European Union'. ML noted that Bill does not include the regulated period dates and asked what the Commission's view of this was. TH responded that the Bill as it currently stands would apply the standard 10-week referendum period as specified

in PPERA, but that the Bill also includes powers for the Government to change the length of the period by regulations. After the Scottish independence referendum the

Commission recommended that, at future referendums, either the designation of lead campaigners could take place before the 10-week referendum period, or the referendum period could be extended to 16 weeks including the designation process. The

Commission would be issuing a briefing before Report and Third reading stages of the

Bill in the House of Commons. May 2015 polls – Post-election report There were no comments from the PPP regarding the recommendations made by the Commission in its May 2015 polls post-election report. TH stressed that the Commission was currently

focused on getting the UK and Scottish governments to ensure regulations for the 2016 polls are in place in good time. Common Data Standard for Electoral Registers AS started by saying that the principle of receiving electoral registration details in a

standard format is the long-established view of the political parties and that members of the PPP have jointly developed a standardised 'Political Party

Electoral Register format' spreadsheet. AS said that they were meeting with Cabinet Office officials later to discuss their proposal for a common data standard for

electoral registers. DB added that the proposal was drafted taking into account the views of smaller political parties and independents. TH said that in principal this

was a proposal that the Commission could support and that it would be important to involve the electoral management software providers in discussions. AR added that it's important that the expert panel of electoral administrators are also involved.

Action: Commission to confirm a 'point person' that will feedback on the PPP

proposal. Individual Electoral Registration (IER) Progress AR explained that the Government has made an Order that will bring forward the end to the transition to IER to December 2015. ML asked if there had been any anecdotal reports from local authorities regarding how their annual canvass activities were getting new people added to the registers. TH said that anecdotal feedback from a recent working group meeting with a very small number of electoral administrators suggested that return levels were not as high as they would have expected at this stage in the canvass, but that this was not yet a significant concern. Commission Update Report ML asked why the Commission had decided to do a review of its Enforcement Policy now. LE confirmed that it had been five years since the Commission received new enforcement powers and that now seemed a sensible time to conduct a review. The PPP wanted confirmation that a user-testing session of PEF Online would focus on users experiences of using the 'back-end' of the website. SM asked for more details of the PEF Online redevelopment and said that the existing system for submission of reports was not fit for the purpose. SM said that the Commission did not recognise this when it considered issues under its enforcement policy. AR confirmed that a previous email received by members of the PPP related to providing feedback on the Electoral Commission's main website.

Action: LE to confirm dates for when PEF Online user-testing will take place and suggest that the person organising the user-testing talks to PPP members in advance to ensure the session focuses on the right issues. On staffing, AR confirmed that the Commission's new Chief Executive will be starting in the second week of October. LE said that the Commission's introductory guidance on campaigning at May 2016 would be published in early October with the full guidance suite published in December. AS and ML commented that there generally seems to be less consultation by the Commission with political parties about work that affects them. AS added that the consultation about guidance appeared to only be about issues the Commission was interested in, rather than what might be of concern to parties. The panel felt it would be helpful to see an organisational chart for Party and Election Finance (PEF). Action: LE to provide PEF organisational chart. Meeting dates for 2016 The PPP confirmed that they were happy with proposed meeting dates for 2016. Electoral Commission updates TH informed the PPP that the Commission has launched a consultation on its approach to EU referendum directions and the timing of the count. Action: KA to send the consultations to the PPP. TH also informed the PPP that the Commission had submitted evidence to Lord Hodgson's Third Party Campaigning Review and provided hard copies at the meeting, and that the Commission will submit evidence to Sir Eric Pickles review of electoral fraud in the UK. Date of the next meeting The date of the next meeting is 1 December 2015 – Conservative Party to Chair Actions Action Owner Status Commission to confirm 'point person' to feedback on PPP proposal for a common data standard for electoral registers TH This person will be Tom Hawthorn, Head of Policy

Commission to confirm dates for when PEF Online user testing will take place LE We will be in touch on this shortly after the May 2016 elections Commission to send PEF organisational chart LE This was sent ahead of the December PPP Commission to send its consultation on EU referendum directions and the timing of the count TH KA emailed PPP on 1 September Related content Party registration decisions View our decisions on political party names, descriptions and emblems View current applications View the political party names, descriptions and emblems which we are currently considering as part of our assessment process Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Registers of unincorporated associations Download and view the registers of unincorporated associations

Performance analysis 2021/22: Goal one | Electoral Commission Search

Performance analysis 2021/22: Goal one You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 On this page Key achievements Performance measures Our activities during the year First published: 1 August 2022 Last updated: 1 August 2022 Goal one To enable the continued delivery of free and fair elections and referendums, focusing on the needs of electors and addressing the changing environment to ensure every vote remains secure and accessible. This goal captures our role in overseeing the delivery of elections across all parts of the UK and focuses on three areas: delivering well-run electoral events, maximising and modernising electoral registration, and tackling electoral fraud. Key achievements To help deliver well-run electoral events we: provided advice to Returning Officers, electoral administrators, candidates and agents to support the effective delivery of the May 2021 elections across Great Britain reported on the administration of the May 2021 elections in England, Scotland and Wales were consulted by the UK, Scottish and Welsh governments on draft legislation ahead of the May 2022 elections published guidance and resources, and provided support to electoral administrators, candidates and agents, in preparation for the scheduled elections across the UK in May 2022 deployed – both directly and through local authorities and other partner organisations – an extensive range of new voter information materials relating to Covid-safe elections, to support voter confidence worked with the National Police Chiefs Council, Crown Prosecution Service and College of Policing to provide new guidance for candidates and campaigners on recognising and reporting intimidation worked with organisations supporting people with a disability to raise awareness of how to take part in elections and what support they can expect to receive launched a new system for processing applications for accreditation for electoral observers To help maximise and modernise electoral registration, we: ran mass-media voter registration campaigns across Great Britain, to raise awareness of the need to register and to provide information on how to participate supported Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) in Great Britain with delivery of the annual canvass, including through the provision of guidance and advice worked closely with the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland to support the electoral registration canvass reported on the 2021 electoral registration canvass in Northern Ireland, recommending reforms to modernise the registration process To help tackle electoral fraud, we: worked with the police and local authorities to support the development of integrity plans to help prevent electoral fraud published updated data on alleged cases of electoral fraud reported during 2021, and new data on a small number of cases reported during 2022 worked with partners to run a campaign to raise awareness of electoral fraud, ahead of the May 2021 elections delivered, with the National Police Chiefs Council, our annual conference for police elections Single Points of Contact as an online event worked with the City of London Police Economic Crime Academy to host and contribute content to four training courses for police officers Performance measures Measure Performance We publish 100% of guidance products relating to electoral registration on time with no substantive errors 100 % Achieved We provide accurate advice to Returning Officers (ROs) and EROs within three working days of receipt of the request. (Target 100%) 99.5 % Achieved Additions to electoral registers during our public awareness campaigns meet or exceed our targets (Target 640,000. Achieved 660,000) 104 % Achieved Our activities during the year Delivering well-run electoral events The complex set of elections in May 2021 taking place in Great Britain were well-run, with high levels of public confidence in and satisfaction with the administration of the polls. We supported electoral

administrators to deliver the elections with comprehensive written guidance and through our advice service. We also undertook campaigns and provided resources to help ensure voters understood how to participate with confidence, particularly taking account of the public health context. Our voter registration campaign activity supported the delivery of over 600,000 additions to electoral registers, through the use of mass advertising, partnership work and media coverage generation. We supported the 2021 electoral registration canvass in Northern Ireland, the first since 2013 and which resulted in the largest ever register in NI. This included running a campaign to raise awareness of the canvass and encourage people to respond. We also supported the annual canvass in Great Britain, providing guidance and using our performance standards to support and challenge the work of Electoral Registration Officers. We have undertaken preparations to support the May 2022 elections taking place across the UK. We have published guidance and resources for those running the polls and standing for election, working closely with a range of stakeholders from across the electoral community. We were consulted on draft legislation from the UK, Scottish and Welsh governments, and reflected the changes in our guidance and messaging. Report navigation links Previous Next Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 Performance analysis 2021/22: Goal two

You are in the Our research section Home Our research Currently reading: of 4 - Show page contents On this page Summary Impact on voters Impact on administration Background Summary The pilots were well run by Returning Officers. There were no notable issues on the advance voting days or on Thursday 5 May and voters were satisfied with their experience of voting. However, the results indicate that the opportunity to vote in-person ahead of polling day does not, on its own, boost turnout significantly. This is not unexpected; we know that people's motivation to vote or not to vote is driven by several factors and is not solely linked to convenience or choice of method. While the turnout of early voters was low, the option was welcomed by those that used it and it does offer an additional choice for voters. We cannot judge, from the evidence of the pilots, what impact advance voting, if introduced, would have on turnout over time. The experience of the pilots provides some useful information on how advance voting could work in practice. For example, the use of electronic registers was successful, allowing the register for any area within the local authority to be accessed via a single device.

However, the small number of pilots and the selection of locations in which they were tested means there is still work to do to develop any future policy and to understand how it could be implemented. Proposed changes to voting processes should be designed to deliver a likely benefit to voters, maintain the security and integrity of the system, and be realistically deliverable by electoral administrators. Our evaluation has identified several specific areas that need to be addressed if a further roll out of advance voting is considered:

- Location and number of venues – The selection of venues would be crucial to any implementation of advance voting and has the potential to cause concern to voters and candidates. Any plans for further use of advance voting should carefully consider how to select the right number of venues to offer a consistent and useful option to voters while being realistically deliverable by Returning Officers. Returning Officers should also have some flexibility to reflect the circumstances of their areas. For example, larger geographical authorities or areas with less accessible transport links are likely to need more sites. Increasing the number of venues would require an assessment of how they would be staffed. For example, it is clear from the Bridgend pilot that the requirement to staff around 20 advance voting locations over several days was extremely challenging.
- Number and choice of advance voting days – there is no clear evidence from the pilots of different days being more popular with voters (the low number of votes cast makes it difficult to draw a clear conclusion). There is, however, some evidence that the choice of days can have an impact on the administration of the poll, depending on how they interact with the existing preparations for a Thursday polling day. The challenges presented are not at all insurmountable but may require additional electoral administrator staff capacity to address them, depending on the days chosen.

Costs – Given the low turnout among early voters, it is important that any future changes are informed by an assessment of the costs and benefits of wider implementation, including the use of electronic registers to support advance voting, which was the largest area of additional costs in the pilots. This should include an assessment of any development costs that would not be needed again and whether economies of scale could be realised. The costs of the pilots cannot in themselves be taken as a clear indication of the likely costs of any future roll out of advance voting.

Resilient electoral services – we know that many elections teams already face increasing challenges in delivering well run polls within existing core staffing and budgets. It is therefore important that existing capacity is considered if any roll

out is planned. There is the potential for specific policy decisions (more days, more venues) and the circumstances of polls (combination, greater turnout) to put more or less pressure on elections' teams. Raising public awareness – any wider roll out should be supported by additional, more coordinated and centrally-funded public awareness activity. This would underpin ongoing local awareness raising activities (such as were undertaken at these pilots). Time to plan for changes – changes concerning the running of elections should be agreed and in place six months before the poll to allow for adequate implementation by electoral administrators and so voters can be informed about what they need to do. Planning for any future roll out of advance voting should ensure that at least that minimum period is available.

Impact on voters Few voters chose to vote early A small number of voters chose to cast their vote at the advance voting polling stations. The three pilots with a single advance centre had similar results, with 0.2 – 0.3% of registered polling station voters casting a vote on the advance days. In Bridgend, where a number of usual polling stations were open, the proportion was slightly higher at 1.5%. The level of turnout is broadly in line with the previous tests of advance voting carried out in the early 2000s. In the final set of pilots in 2007, the proportions ranged from 0.5 – 7.0%. These earlier results are not directly comparable as the specific approaches being piloted varied. For example, of the five pilots in 2007 only one had two days of advance voting; the other four had between four and nine days. Most also had more than one voting centre and several were not piloting advance voting for the first time. It is difficult to draw conclusions from the small number of pilots in May 2022. The data could suggest that a larger number of polling stations are more likely to attract voters than single, central venues. However, other factors could be driving the difference, including the local elections themselves and how competitive voters perceived them to be. We can also draw no conclusion on any impact from the days chosen for voting. Caerphilly and Torfaen's advance voting days were on Saturday and Sunday and they saw similar results to Blaenau Gwent where voting was on Tuesday and Wednesday. Area Number of advance voters Advance turnout Election day turnout
Blaenau Gwent 68 0.2% 24.5% Bridgend 1,374 1.5% 27.5% Caerphilly 187 0.2% 28.9%
Torfaen 162 0.3% 23.8% Overall, the results indicate that the opportunity to vote in-person ahead of polling day does not, on its own, boost turnout significantly. This is not unexpected as we know that people's motivation to vote is driven by a range of factors, not solely linked to convenience or choice of method. We surveyed a sample of those who chose to vote early across the four pilot areas immediately after they had voted: 75% told us that they would have voted at the elections even if there was no advance voting option. 97% of these early voters said that they always or sometimes vote at local elections – suggesting that early voters were the already engaged, regular voters at local elections. When we asked a representative sample of eligible electors in the pilot areas about whether the ability to vote over multiple days would affect their likelihood to vote: across the four areas between 27 and 37% said that it would make them more likely but around two-thirds said it would make no difference or that they were not sure. In order to test whether any changes in turnout in the pilot areas were linked to the advance voting option, we identified four control areas – local authorities with standard local elections and similar demographics and past turnout to the pilot areas (see Background section for full details). All of the pilot and control areas recorded a drop in turnout between 2017 and 2022 strongly suggesting that these differences are unrelated to the piloting activity and reinforce the point that the method of casting votes is far from the sole driver associated with turnout. Overall turnout in Wales was down compared to

the last local elections in 2017 – from 42% to 39%. Area 2022 Change from 2017

Blaenau Gwent	32.5%	-7.5%	Neath Port Talbot	38.3%	-4.0%	Bridgend	36.2%	-3.7%	Rhondda				
Cynon Taff	35.5%	-4.4%	Caerphilly	32.9%	-3.4%	Flintshire	35.7%	-2.8%	Torfaen	31.3%			
-6.2%	Wrexham	36.7%	-3.3%	Wales	39%	-3%	The low levels of advance turnout in the pilots should also be considered against the take up of electoral changes in the past. In 2001, at the first UK general election after postal voting on demand was introduced, 3.9% of the electorate were issued with a postal vote. This was a small increase on the 2.1% from 1997 when the rules were different. However, by 2019, 17.2% of the electorate were issued with a postal vote and it is now an important route by which a large proportion of the electorate choose to vote. We cannot judge, from the evidence of the pilots, what impact on turnout advance voting, if introduced, would have over time. Some pupils were able to vote at school The Bridgend pilot also saw a polling station opened for one day (Tuesday 3 May) in a local school. This was only for pupils at that school, who were registered to vote, to cast an early vote.						

Advance turnout was higher at the school than the pilot average. Fourteen of the 76 pupils who were registered and eligible chose to cast a vote at the school polling station – 18% compared to the 1.5% of eligible polling station voters who voted early. As with the wider population, those who chose to vote early were satisfied with the experience. We asked pupils, who did not vote at all at the elections, why they had chosen not to. One third said it was because they did not know enough about how to vote and a fifth said they were not registered. Others also cited a lack of information about the election as a whole and about the specific candidates. More awareness of the pilots may not have led to higher advance turnout Returning Officers faced two significant challenges in raising awareness of the opportunity to vote in-person before polling day: a low level of engagement with the local elections; and the need to target campaigns and not mislead people in neighbouring authorities (or in Bridgend's case, in the non-piloting wards). Details of the practical challenges of the latter are set out below and would be much less of an issue in the event of a wider roll out. However, at polls which attract less public interest it will be an inherent challenge to effectively raise awareness of changes to the method of voting. We carried out representative surveys of the eligible voting population across the pilot and control areas. One survey was carried out in February/March 2022, to provide baseline data, with a second completed after polling day on 5 May. In this research we asked if people thought they would be able to vote in person over multiple days (Yes/No/Don't know). There were changes in claimed awareness between our initial survey and our survey after polling day but the pattern is not clear cut. The proportion of people who said you could not vote in person over multiple days increased in both the pilot and control authorities. The increases were smaller in the pilot areas suggesting some effect from the public awareness campaigns. Torfaen was the only pilot area where the proportion who correctly thought voting over multiple days was an option increased between February/March and May. All pilot areas had a higher level of awareness of the option to vote early than the Wales average (shown on the chart as a blue line – 14%). All of the control areas had lower than average levels of awareness. Figure 1 Public awareness of the advance voting pilot Separately we asked those in the pilot areas if they were aware that they could vote in person before the usual polling day on 5 May. Claimed awareness ranged from 22 – 30% with the rest either saying they were not aware or were not sure. We also asked people who said they voted on Thursday 5 May why they chose not to vote early. Nearly half (46%) said it was because they did not know they could (30% said they preferred to vote on the 'usual day'). The 46% of polling day voters who said they did not vote

early because they did not know they could is a good indication of the low levels of awareness of the pilot. However, it is a less strong predictor of alternative behaviour – we should not assume that all or many of that 46% would have voted early if they were aware of the pilot. This is supported by evidence from the 2007 pilots. In that case awareness was higher: half of survey respondents across the piloting areas said they were aware of the advance voting option. But levels of turnout were very similar (with the exception of one area) to the 2022 pilots. It is important to maximise the public's awareness of changes such as these, but it is also unlikely that greater levels of awareness in this case would have resulted in very significant jumps in either advance turnout or overall turnout. People had a range of reasons for choosing to vote early. In interviews outside the advance voting centres, we asked early voters to select, from a list of options, the main reason they had chosen to vote early: 45% said it was because they were going to be busy on Thursday 5 May, 14% said it was 'more convenient' and 10% said it was because they lived near to an advance opening polling station. In our separate online survey, those that claimed to have voted early were asked to pick the reason that best explained why. The table below shows the results for the combined pilot areas. Reasons for choosing to vote in advance I was interested to see how it worked 18% I was busy on Thursday 5th May / it was more convenient to vote on a different day 19% I live near the early voting centre 18% I was passing and saw the signs 27% Other 17% The level of voting was consistent throughout the advance voting days. Notable patterns in when people chose to vote would tell us about how any wider roll out of advance voting could work most effectively. However, the hour-by-hour analysis shows a largely even distribution of votes across the different opening hours of the pilots. There are no significant patterns except for consistently lower levels in the last hour of opening across all four pilots. There are no real differences between the weekend and weekday pilots.

Figure 2 Cumulative distribution of votes Early voters were positive about their experiences The majority of these voters had a positive experience when voting and welcomed the opportunity presented by the pilots. Nearly all (99%) of those we interviewed outside polling stations said they were satisfied with the experience of voting early. When asked to say why they were satisfied, the main reasons selected were that it was quick to vote (76%), easy to vote (64%) and convenient to vote (45%). Around three-quarters (77%) said they would be very likely to vote early again if there was an opportunity to do so and a further 15% said they would be quite likely. There was limited wider impact on public attitudes but perceptions were positive We also looked at the potential wider impact on public attitudes through our surveys in the pilot and control areas. Overall, given the small numbers of people who chose to vote in-person and early, there is limited scope for notable impacts on public opinion. However, this also means that the absence of a change in attitude does not mean that the option to vote early would not have an impact if more people were aware of it and/or used it. Positively, in all areas satisfaction with the process of voting increased between the initial survey and the follow up, but with no significant difference between pilot and control areas. Satisfaction was also high with 92 – 93% of voters saying they were satisfied with the process. We asked if people thought the option to vote in-person on multiple days would make voting more or less convenient . The results show a small difference between the pilot and control areas, with a larger proportion of respondents in the pilot areas saying it would make it more convenient. The pilot areas also all show an increase in perceived convenience between the two surveys (only one of the control areas show an increase). These differences are all small and we should be cautious in drawing conclusions. In

order to assess any impact on public perceptions of the security of the poll we asked people whether they thought the ability to vote across multiple days would make voting more or less secure. There were no significant differences between the pilot areas and control areas in our surveys. People were most likely to say they thought it would make no real difference (54% across Wales said this in our post-election survey and a further 10% said they did not know). Overall, when asked if voting at a polling station was safe from fraud and abuse the vast majority in both the pilot and control areas said that it was. The results were in line with the overall finding for Wales where 85% of people said it was safe (10% said don't know and 5% said it was unsafe).

Impact on administration Summary

The pilots were well run and there were no significant administrative issues on the advance voting days. The successful running was the result of effective preparation and planning by the Returning Officers and their teams. There are, however, lessons to be drawn from their experiences. Early confirmation of the scope of any change is important. The legislation allowing for the pilots was in place by March 2022. Returning Officers told us that, although there was no impact on the eventual running of the pilots, they would have preferred the details to be confirmed earlier. This would have avoided the need to carry out some preparations at risk. The practical impact in this case was offset by good communications between the pilot authorities and Welsh Government officials. This meant that there were no surprises in the legislation and that planning could continue before it was in place. However, this would be less manageable if the change applied to all local authorities across Wales.

Changes concerning the running of elections should be agreed and in place six months before the poll to allow for adequate implementation by electoral administrators. Planning for any future roll out of advance voting should ensure that at least that minimum period is available. The local public awareness campaigns used a wide range of channels to reach potential voters. Some of the challenges in engaging the public in this type of change are set out above, and campaigns run by the pilot authorities should be considered against those limitations.

Returning Officers and their teams told us that they used a range of approaches to inform people about the pilots, specifically:

- Social media – mainly Twitter, Facebook and Instagram posts
- Local radio adverts
- Household notification letters – these are letters sent out in February to confirm the registration details for each property in an area
- Local news articles and press releases
- There were also other methods including council websites, billboards, post campaigns and 'Promo' or 'Ad Vans', which could be positioned in higher profile spots in the area.

All of the pilots began their campaign in February in order to allow enough time to carry out a wide range of activities before the advance polling days. Information about the pilot was also featured on the poll cards in each area as required by the pilot legislation. In our public opinion survey after the election we asked everyone who said they were aware of the pilot where they had seen information about it. The most common sources were 'Council website' (29%), 'social media' (21%), 'leaflet/flyer from the council' (16%) and 'news website' (15%). When we asked people who had chosen to vote early where they found out about the pilot, the main answer was the poll card (38%). A fifth of voters (19%) were made aware by a leaflet or newsletter from the local authority and 15% said they found out from their friends and family. We also asked people how easy it was to find information about different aspects of the election. The perceived ease of finding information on the advance voting option (41%) was lower than other aspects such as information on parties/candidates (59%) and information on what the election was about (64%). The evidence suggests that some channels were more effective than others at reaching people. However, we cannot draw

conclusions as the overall level of awareness was low and engagement with the pilots was primarily from more regular voters. If this change is rolled out nationally it is likely that all of the channels used in the pilots would be important to spread awareness with different sections of the public. However, they should be supported by larger, national activity. A national campaign can use higher impact measures (such as TV), with consistent messaging across all local authorities and greater reach among the population as a whole. This would help to increase the likelihood of cut-through for the campaign messages beyond existing, regular voters. The use of electronic registers was important to the smooth running of the pilots. The pilots each worked with the supplier Modern Democracy, using their system which provides electronic registers in the polling station on tablet devices. This allows for people to be marked as having voted and for registers for any area within the local authority to be accessed via a single device. In the three pilots with a single advance voting centre, this avoided the need for large paper based copies of the full local authority register to be held in each centre and for individual voters to be quickly found on the register when they came to collect a ballot paper. This also allowed Returning Officers to efficiently manage one of the integrity challenges that comes with multiple polling days – the risk of double voting (an elector attempting to vote more than once). We are not aware of any issues with double voting in the pilots. Returning Officers and their teams felt that the pilot could potentially have been delivered without the IT elements. This was particularly the case for Bridgend where advance voting was happening in usual, individual polling stations. However, taking forward advance voting in one or more centralised locations per area without using electronic registers could put more pressure on Returning Officers and increase the risk of problems arising. The single-centre pilots reported that in the absence of the electronic registers it would have been a less good process for voters – and potentially very difficult for them to manage with higher turnout. It would have introduced challenges for administrators associated with the paper-heavy processes. This would have been a particular issue where advance voting is happening immediately before polling day as there would not be enough time to manage aspects of a fully paper-based process. For example, marked register data from advance voting centres would need to be transferred to the paper registers held in each ‘normal’ polling station. There is also the potential for other benefits to be realised from the use of electronic registers alongside supporting advanced voting including accuracy of records. The hardware and software solution used in the pilots was a success – there were no significant problems on any of the polling days and more minor issues were quickly resolved. However, there are some lessons to be drawn from the pilots: Time for development and set up : the pilots were arranged to tight timescales and this included the work needed to develop the electronic registers system for the circumstances of the pilot. Additional time in this case would have made the process more comfortable but also potentially allowed for a smoother ‘back-end’ process for administrators through better integration with their existing electoral management software (EMS) systems. The tight timings lead to a functional, but not optimal, solution to linking the two systems. There were also some issues in managing two different piloting requirements between the single-centre approach and that taken in Bridgend. The requirements were not the same and more time to understand the differences would have helped to avoid some of the issues that needed to be dealt with during set up. Training and support : for a pilot, bespoke training is often put in place that may not be sustainable or needed in the event of a wider roll out. In this case many administrators felt that more training than necessary was provided for

polling staff. Many polling station staff have existing full or part-time jobs. Asking them to attend training during work hours could therefore be unworkable for some. Some pilots also felt that there was an overly cautious approach to other set up work, such as operational testing. While they acknowledged it was much better to have too much than too little, they clearly felt that it could be scaled back in the event of a roll out. The selection of venues was based on several considerations. For the three pilots using a single location, which was not usually a polling station, there were several factors considered when choosing the venue:

- Location: Returning Officers wanted venues which were central to the area, not just geographically but also in terms of transport links. A reasonable level of usual footfall was also recognised as a benefit, as was a venue which was already recognisable to people or where people may need to go to for a reason other than voting. Easy parking was also sought for those travelling from further afield.
- : the venues needed to be fully accessible
- Security: the Returning Officer needed to be confident in either being able to store ballot boxes securely within the venue itself (the council offices in Torfaen and Caerphilly) or to be able to transport them safely and securely to another site between each polling day (Blaenau Gwent moved the boxes from the Learning Zone to the nearby council offices).
- Space: each centre needed to have sufficient space to set up a number of polling station desks and to manage the flow of voters effectively. The space required varied by the size of local authority (and therefore the likely number of voters) but also by the approach taken by Returning Officers. For example, Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent opted to use two desks in their centre while Caerphilly used six desks. The number and location of venues used in each area should be carefully considered. The factors above make choosing suitable venues more challenging than selecting locations for standard polling stations as they limit the Returning Officers' choices. In the pilots it was relatively easy to find a single venue in an area, but it could become more challenging to find a greater number. There is no evidence from these pilots that the use of a single location in the local authority area significantly deterred voters who lived further away or had less easy access to the advance voting centre. However, this may be because of the low overall numbers of votes being cast early. In Blaenau Gwent, for example, the number of early votes across the different wards varied from one to eight. This is not enough variation to show a pattern. The advance voting option also mostly attracted engaged, regular voters whose tolerance for making longer or more complicated journeys will be greater than the average. In addition, the pilot local authorities are relatively small, geographically, compared to many areas in Wales. If advance voting was being rolled out widely there would need to be consideration of how many venues were needed in each area and their locations, taking account of overall size and transport connections. This should also take account of anticipated turnout as a single venue can cope with low levels of well-distributed turnout but may struggle with much higher turnout including concentrations at specific times of day. No complaints or negative feedback were received by Returning Officers about the locations of the centres in the pilots. We also received no comments on this aspect in our survey of candidates. However, there is potential for any future choice of venue to cause concerns among political parties and candidates. In any roll out, Returning Officers would need to ensure that they engage with local parties and candidates about the location(s). This process could be modelled on the existing approach to reviewing polling districts and polling places where the Returning Officers is required to follow a transparent process which involves proactively seeking views, publishing representations received and being clear on how decisions

were reached. Access to usual polling stations was also a challenge in Bridgend. Bridgend aimed to use their regular polling stations in the low turnout wards selected for the pilot. However, in several cases this was not straightforward as access was needed for three days rather than the usual one. Schools in particular, which often need to close during polling, were reluctant to shut for three days. The two school locations which usually house polling stations could not be used at these elections and temporary portable buildings were put in place instead. This added work for the elections team as these venues then need to be set up to ensure they are accessible, etc. If the approach taken in Bridgend was to be used more widely and particularly if it was used across an entire local authority then there could be challenges in finding polling stations. The days of the week chosen for advance voting could have an impact on ease of administration. The two approaches, of voting at the weekend before the poll and on the weekdays immediately ahead of polling day, were delivered without any significant issues. However, some of the administrators involved said that advance voting on the Tuesday and Wednesday before a Thursday election brought some additional pressures. Firstly, it largely removes contingency time for dealing with issues arising on the advance voting days ahead of a Thursday polling day. As above, in the event of issues with the electronic marking of registers, it would have been difficult to fall back to the full paper process for the Thursday. Secondly, polling on the Tuesday and Wednesday has more overlap with some of the usual activities that administrators need to complete ahead of a Thursday election. This puts additional pressure on core elections teams which are already under strain and are often relatively small, with limited capacity to absorb new demands on their time. The teams in the pilots managed this issue well but that was partly achieved by notable overtime for core staff. This was particularly the case for the Bridgend pilot where managing the opening of over 20 polling stations across three days required significant extra work. In considering the use of advance voting in the future it would be crucial to ensure that core elections teams have the capacity and resilience to manage the additional requirements. Where teams are already under strain, any new demands on their time creates a risk to the running of the election. This should also take account of wider factors that could have an impact, such as more complicated polls. Additional polling staff and some further training was needed. Many more staff were required in Bridgend where more sites for advance voting were available. In the single advance voting centres the numbers required were largely determined by the overall approach to managing the flow of voters, e.g. Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen used two polling station desks and Caerphilly used six. This meant that overall numbers varied from six additional staff in Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen to 14 in Caerphilly and over 100 in Bridgend. The single-centre pilots reported no issues with finding appropriate staff. They also felt that the number of staff was sufficient to manage the work on the advance voting days. It was unsurprisingly more of a challenge for Bridgend. While they recruited enough staff for the advance stations it was not easy to do so, and they were sceptical that it would be possible to find sufficient staff if all of their polling stations had been open for three days. Many polling station staff have jobs, including in local government. They need to be released from those existing roles and the more days that are required, the more difficult that can be. Bridgend used two shifts to manage the staff workload with each covering a morning or afternoon on the advance voting days (one shift then also worked the full Thursday polling day). Their approach also took account of some detailed logistical challenges, for example the same workers would close a station on the Tuesday evening as opened the same station on the Wednesday.

morning (and the same for the Wednesday to Thursday transition). This aimed to minimise any issues around access to sites and/or equipment. Across all the pilots, as the job was very similar to a standard election, the approach to training was also close to that normally employed for polling staff. Some further training (separate from the IT training mentioned above) was made available to staff in the advance voting centres to address the specific pilot challenges (such as managing marked registers across the days, and the sealing of ballot boxes). In all cases the pilots told us that this was a manageable additional requirement. There were no issues with the integrity of the poll in pilot areas. There are several potential integrity challenges presented by managing voting over multiple days. These include, as set out above, ensuring ballot box security overnight and managing the risk of double voting risk. Returning Officers and their teams managed these risks well, working alongside local and force SPOCs. No concerns in relation to the integrity of the polls in the pilot areas have been raised with the Returning Officers, the police or by political parties and candidates.

Cost

The table below sets out the costs of the pilot scheme, broken down into the main categories of spend, as provided to Welsh Government by the pilot authorities. The data represents the costs they have incurred directly (such as in relation to some of the IT provision) or have provided to local authorities to fund aspects of the pilot. As with any pilot it is difficult to draw clear conclusions from these figures about the eventual cost of any wider roll out. This is for several reasons: Local authorities have taken varying approaches to how they have recorded costs (e.g. whether core team staff costs are included, which pieces of equipment are being charged for) Pilots will attract development costs that may not apply in the same way or at all for a roll out; The local authority areas involved are not representative of all areas; Some future costs may be missing from the pilot (e.g. national public awareness campaigns); There may be economies of scale to be realised nationally, despite the increase in costs that would follow from taking forward the policy in more areas.

Type of spend	Cost
Staffing	£54,046
Equipment	£25,297
Building hire, transport and storage	£13,600
Communications	£56,970
EMS	£268,000
Electronic registers*	£1,093,890
TOTAL	£1,511,803

* This includes the costs incurred directly by local authorities for ongoing use of software licences plus the additional cost borne directly by Welsh Government for pilot-specific activities. For the reasons set out above, the costs of the pilots cannot be taken as a clear indication of the likely costs of any future roll out of advance voting. However, particularly given the low turnout among early voters, it is important that any future changes are informed by an assessment of the costs and benefits of wider implementation, including the use of electronic registers to support advance voting, which was the largest area of additional costs in the pilots.

Background Pilot scheme

The Welsh Government established a framework for electoral modernisation in Wales in July 2021. These pilots were one of the first initiatives under that framework. Welsh Government worked with volunteer local authorities to shape the pilots and agree the specific approach each area would take. The legislation required for the pilots was published in March 2022.

Pilot Details

Blaenau Gwent Advance voting centre at Ebbw Vale Learning Zone Tuesday 3rd and Wednesday 4th May, 8am to 5pm

Bridgend 21 polling stations across seven electoral wards Tuesday 3rd and Wednesday 4th May, 8am to 5pm

Polling station in Cynffig Comprehensive School (pupils only) Tuesday 3rd May

Caerphilly Advance voting centre at Council offices Saturday 30th April and Sunday 1st May, 10am to 4pm

Torfaen Advance voting centre at Council offices Saturday 30th April and Sunday 1st May, 10am to 4pm

Local Returning Officers ran the processes in each area, and Welsh Government oversaw the pilot scheme as a whole

Our evaluation

The law says that we have to publish an independent evaluation of the pilot scheme within three months of the election, and there are specific questions that we have to consider: Whether the turnout of voters was higher than it would have been if the scheme had not applied Whether voters found the procedures provided for their assistance by the scheme easy to use Whether the procedures provided for by the scheme led to any increase in personation or other electoral offences or in any other malpractice in connection with elections Whether those procedures led to any increase in expenditure, or to any savings, by the authority We collected information from different sources to make sure that our evaluation of the scheme is thorough and robust. This included: Representative surveys asking people in each local area what they thought of the scheme – one carried out in February/March 2022 as a baseline measure and a second carried out after polling day in May 2022 ‘Exit interviews’ with early voters after they had cast their vote Data on turnout at the elections including the number of early voters and when they cast their vote Views and evidence from Returning Officers and electoral administrators who ran the pilots Information about how much it cost to run the pilot scheme Control areas In order to help assess whether any changes in things like turnout or public opinion can be linked to the pilots rather than other factors we identified a set of control areas. These are local authorities with similar demographics (age and ethnicity profile, unemployment, etc.) and similar levels of previous turnout but where no pilots are taking place.

This allows us to judge whether changes are only seen in the pilot areas or in both pilot and control. The table below shows the pilots and their matching control area.

Pilot Control Blaenau Gwent Neath Port Talbot Bridgend Rhondda Cynon Taff Caerphilly Flintshire Torfaen Wrexham Supporting evidence Winter tracker tables Post-poll tables (pilot specific) We worked with the research agency Strategic Research and Intelligence. They produced a report containing a summary of the findings from exit interviews carried out at the advance voting centres. If you would like to receive a copy of this PDF report by email, please send us a request. This report is available in . Opens in new window Request a PDF Previous evidence Between 2000 and 2007 there were a number of pilot schemes which provided opportunities for people to vote in person at advance voting facilities before polling day. The final round of pilots took place at the May 2007 local government elections in England. Five local authorities held pilot schemes providing advance voting facilities on various days before polling day, 3 May 2007. Our evaluation of all these previous pilot schemes found that use of advance voting facilities has been limited and mainly confined to those already predisposed to vote. Our evaluation of the 2007 pilots highlighted a number of findings which remain relevant for any consideration of advance voting and support our findings from the 2022 pilots in Wales. However, these pilots were not directly comparable to the more recent ones as the specific approaches varied. For example, only one pilot had two days of advance voting, the other four had between four and nine days. Most pilots also had more than one voting centre and several were not piloting for the first time. Turnout There was a limited impact on turnout. The percentage of voters casting ballots at advance voting centres ranged from 0.5% - 7%. In our surveys 74% of early voters said they would have voted anyway. There was no significant correlation between turnout levels and the different opening times of the voting centres. There was also no pattern in terms of a preferred day for advance voting: in two of the five pilots Wednesday was the most popular day. In the other three it was Monday, Thursday and Friday. Voter experience Feedback from local stakeholders and public opinion research conducted for the Commission in the pilot scheme areas suggests that electors generally welcomed the increased convenience of

advance voting. Those who voted early found the process easy to use. Management and cost The processes used to run the advance voting pilots were similar to those used at standard polls and presented limited additional challenge for Returning Officers.

The costs of the pilots varied depending on the nature of the specific pilot. For example, more voting centres and/or more voting days would attract a higher cost.

Security There were no allegations of personation or other electoral offences reported in relation to the pilots. Risks such as double voting and the storage of ballots were identified and well managed. Page history First published: 12 July 2022

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Results and turnout at the 2015 UK general election | Electoral Commission Search Results and turnout at the 2015 UK general election You are in the UK general elections section Home UK general elections First published: 11 July 2019 Last updated: 6 August 2019 Download You can download the: full dataset as an XLS results as an XLS full dataset as a CSV (zip file) results as a CSV (zip file) You can also download our full report , written by Colin Rallings and Michael Thrasher (Elections Centre, Plymouth University, Drake Circus, Plymouth, PL4 8AA). Summary The UK electorate at the 2015 general election was almost 46.4 million –the largest ever. The registers contained three-quarters of a million more names than in 2010 –an increase of 1.7%. More than a million people registered to vote in the period between the compilation of the ONS parliamentary electorate statistics based on the registers at 1st December 2014 and the general election in May. Nearly 30.7 million valid votes were cast, making the overall turnout across the UK 66.2%. This is one million more votes than in 2010, but only a 1.1 percentage point higher turnout. The ‘ballot box’ turnout which includes votes rejected at the count was 30.8 million or 66.4% of the registered electorate. Turnout rose in each country, but jumped particularly sharply in Scotland from 63.9% in 2010 to 71.1%. The number of ballot papers rejected at the count continues to be but a small fraction of the total cast (0.33%), though was a little greater than in either 2010 or 2005. There is evidence of the rejection rate being somewhat higher where voters are faced with an additional election, especially in cases where it operates under a different electoral system (e.g. in those areas with a coincident mayoral election). Almost 7.6 million postal votes were issued -16.4% of the entire electorate. This represented an increase of 1.1 percentage points and more than half a million more voters than in 2010. 85.8% of those with a postal ballot returned it. By way of contrast, only 63.2% of those electors required to vote ‘in person’ did so. The number of postal votes at the count was one in five of the total. In the North East region of England more than a third of all votes were cast by post. The proportion of postal votes rejected or otherwise not included in the count was 3.3%. It was less than in 2010 in every country of the UK. In about half the cases postal votes were rejected because a signature or date of birth (or both) were mismatched; in another quarter because the elector omitted to enclose either the ballot paper or the postal vote statement (or both). Almost 150,000 electors (0.3% of the total) appointed proxies. This was a small increase compared with 2010, concentrated especially in Scotland and Northern Ireland. The number of emergency proxy votes increased from fewer than 1,000 in 2010 to nearly 9,000 following a relaxation of the rules regarding eligibility. About three fifths of one percent of electors with a postal vote were granted a waiver to use their date of birth as their sole identifier. This is in line with levels seen at the 2014 European Parliament contests. Related content Report: How the May 2015 elections were run Read our report about how the May 2015 elections were run Report: Political finance regulation at the May 2015 UK general election Read our report about political finance regulation at the 2015 general election Report overview: 2019 UK Parliamentary general election Read our full report on the 2019 UK Parliamentary general election. Find out how it was run, voters' experience, candidates' experience, challenges faced, and how they'll be addressed Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run

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Performance analysis 2020/21: Goal four You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21 First published: 16 September 2021 Last updated: 21 October 2021 Goal four To provide value for money, making best use of our resources and expertise to deliver services that are attuned to what matters most to voters. This goal provides a focus to activities that support the organisation and ensure we have the appropriate skilled people, resources, technology, systems and governance. The aim is to deliver services that are efficient, effective and economical. Key achievements To support our organisation, we: implemented our new accountability arrangements with the Scottish Parliament and Senedd which come into effect 1 April 2021. reviewed and refreshed how we deliver legal services supported staff with the challenges of home working through the pandemic, while continuing to support our stakeholders and deliver on the organisation's priorities implemented our new People Strategy to support the best use of our resources commenced an internal consultation on our new Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy and approach set up a Race at Work Taskforce commissioned an external report on bullying and harassment in response to staff survey feedback and appointed a champion to lead our response implemented new IT systems including, a new e-procurement system, new unified communication systems (including telephone, upgraded video conferencing, instant messaging and a new planning performance system) renovated our working environment to support our new flexible ways of working set up a Quality Assurance initiative to help us continuously improve our processes Performance measures Measure Performance Learn practical lessons from current home and remote working practices and design future accommodation accordingly Ongoing 1 Deliver our Ways of Working project to deliver digitally enabled business change to reflect the expectations on a modern employer and ensure the core ICT offering can support those changes. Completed Stakeholder and staff satisfaction with IT tools Ongoing 2 Work with the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Senedd to implement our new accountability arrangements, including a new funding formula and business plans for Scotland and Wales Completed Implement our new People Strategy Ongoing Maintain high staff engagement scores in the annual staff survey and ensure indicators such as staff turnover are at appropriate levels Staff engagement score: 72% (Civil Service average: 62%) Staff turnover: 9.23% Identify options, costs and benefits of e-procurement and implement a new system accordingly Completed Monitor significant variances on all budgets and, where appropriate, reduce these variances over the five years of our Corporate Plan Completed Deliver a project to examine how well we manage customer enquiries across the whole range of the Commission's work Ongoing Supporting the organisation In common with all organisations, the Covid-19 pandemic has transformed the way we work and presented major challenges, including almost total home-working through the reporting year. Our aim throughout has been to support staff wellbeing while remaining focused on our important role to deliver for voters and to support our electoral stakeholders. We carried out an internal review of our initial response over the summer, followed by an internal audit at the end of the year. Both found that we had handled the situation well and had learnt lessons, in particular about formalising our structures for decision making in a crisis. We have invested significant effort in supporting and developing our people. Our People Strategy includes actions to facilitate a culture where employees are able to perform their roles more effectively. We started this work by reviewing our performance management and development processes. We invested more in learning and development and ensured staff were aware of the range

of options for development that are possible. We also continue with the roll out of our leadership and management development programme for all managers. We continued supporting staff groups that we set up to address particular areas, such as the staff engagement group, to ensure our employees have input into corporate policies and programmes. We also have groups dedicated to supporting staff with bullying and harassment, to supporting those with mental health issues and to promoting dignity and respect at work. We maintain strong links with our trade union, the Public and Commercial Services Union. We have made significant progress on equality, diversity and inclusion. We have set up a Race at Work Taskforce to ensure that the voices of our black, Asian and minority ethnic staff are heard and provide a force for change. We have prepared and will be consulting on a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy. We are reviewing and enhancing our Equality Impact Assessment process. We have continued to transform the way we work through significant investments in our digital infrastructure, to improve its resilience and support flexible working practices. The roll-out of new laptops to all staff will enable more efficient working practices and is nearly complete. We have also introduced a new unified communications system. This year has seen significant investment in our offices to ensure that we are ready for new and more flexible working practices post-pandemic. This has been completed on schedule despite the constraints of the pandemic. We have also made significant improvements to our business delivery systems. We have implemented a new project management framework and set up a Quality Assurance initiative to help us ensure continuous improvement. We have also set up a new performance management and tracking system to enhance our reporting mechanisms. We have also continued working with the National Cyber Security Centre to improve how we monitor our networks and platforms. We report to the Scottish Parliament and the Senedd for our policy work on devolved issues, from 1 April 2021 we will be formally accountable to them in the same way as we are to the UK Parliament and have agreed a Statement of Funding Principles. In addition to revised accountabilities, this will change the way funding is received £17.2m of budget will be from Consolidated Fund Administered by HM Treasury, £2.6m from Scottish Parliament Corporate Body and £1.8m from Welsh Consolidated Fund for 2021/22 Impact of Covid-19 The postponement of the elections saw our activity adapted on how it operated, this created opportunities to review working practices. We carried out a review of our response to the pandemic. This found that we had balanced the needs of supporting staff with continuing to deliver the organisation's priorities, and that the Commission had acted swiftly and effectively. A further audit was carried out by our internal auditors in early 2021 which confirmed these findings. We have made a number of changes to enhance further our response, notably in setting up a formal Gold/Silver command structure to support decision-making. The additional costs to the Commission to support staff whilst working at home totalled £85k. This could be broken down in to three areas: home working allowance to all staff members (£67k) courier services (£8k) – enable essential equipment from the offices to home addresses the purchase of additional equipment to enable people to work at home successfully (£10k). The additional costs have been absorbed due to underspends caused by the pandemic within the event budget across the Commission. Impact of EU exit There are no further European Parliamentary Elections due to be held in the UK, with the related elections legislation repealed. As a result of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018, changes were introduced to the rules for parties, candidates, non-party campaigners and regulated donees accepting donations and loans, and to the registration of non-party campaigners. These changes came into force on 31 December and required the guidance team to update

all of its guidance and resources in GB and NI. This amounted to approximately 70 guidance resources. There were no additional financial costs to complete this work.

report navigation links Previous Next Performance analysis: Goal three Looking ahead to 2020/21 and using our resources to support the delivery of our goals 1. The impact of covid-19 has meant that there has been an unexpectedly and significant change to our working practices over the past year. We have undertaken extensive consultation with staff during this period and are trailing new approaches to working time and location in the coming year ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. We have continued to roll out upgrades across infrastructure, devices and applications in this year, however implementation was delayed due to the impact of Covid-19. We shall evaluate in the coming year ■ Back to content at footnote 2

You are in the Our research section Home Our research On this page Our role in referendum questions Guidelines for assessing referendum questions Checklist Our approach to referendum questions Questions or feedback First published: 28 June 2019 Last updated: 4 September 2020 Overview of our role in referendum questions For referendums in the UK, we look at the way the proposed referendum question is worded to make sure it is easy for voters to understand. As part of our assessment, we carry out research with the public. Our role in referendum questions By law, we must comment on the intelligibility of UK, national and regional referendum questions, and some local government referendum questions. This is a requirement of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. In this context, we mean referendums where voters are asked to vote on a proposal that government has put forward. At this type of referendum, voters are given a ballot paper that contains the question or questions and at least two possible responses to choose from. How many responses voters can vote for depends on the voting system used at that referendum. We have developed these guidelines to: help us assess how intelligible a proposed question is help people draft intelligible referendum questions In this context, 'question' includes the question, the responses, and any statement that comes immediately before the question. Guidelines for assessing referendum questions A referendum question should present the options clearly, simply and neutrally. It should be: easy to understand to the point unambiguous It should avoid: encouraging voters to consider one response more favourably than another misleading voters Checklist We will use the following checklist to help us assess how intelligible a question is. Is the question written in plain language? That is, language that: uses short sentences (around 15 to 20 words) is simple, direct and concise uses familiar words, and avoid jargon or technical terms that would not be easily understood by most people Is the question written in neutral language, avoiding words that suggest a judgement or opinion, either explicitly or implicitly? Is the information contained in the question factual, describing the question and the options clearly and accurately? Does the question avoid assuming anything about voters' views? Our approach to referendum questions Assessing the intelligibility of referendum questions Questions or feedback If you have any questions or feedback about these guidelines, you can contact us.

Policy Development Grants Each year, we have £2 million from UK Parliament to allocate to political parties as a Policy Development Grant. The grant gives political parties the funds to develop policies to include in their election manifestos. The grant is only available to parties with at least two sitting members of the House of Commons, who have taken the oath of allegiance. We distribute the first £1 million of the grant equally between the eligible parties. We then use a formula to calculate how much of the remaining £1 million parties. The formula is based on the: proportion of the registered electorate where the party contests elections (England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland) share of the vote the party received in each part of the UK These are the electorate figures we used in this year's calculations: Part of the UK Electorate England 38,834,540 Wales 2,310,148 Scotland 4,012,887 Northern Ireland 1,371,934 When we have calculated how much each party can apply for, we invite them to submit their application. The application needs to include the policy development activities the party is planning for the year ahead. Parties will often include all of their policy development activities, even if the total cost is more than the amount they can apply for. If we approve the application, we give up to 75% of the grant in advance. At the end of the year, each party must submit an independent audit report confirming that the funds were spent on policy development. We then will either pay the party the full amount of the grant, or we will recover the grant we paid in advance if the party didn't spend it on policy development activities. If we recover any grants, it goes back to the government's consolidated fund. Other public funds Political parties can also receive funding from parliamentary bodies. This includes: Short Money, which the House of Commons pays to opposition parties Cranborne Money, which the House of Lords pays to the opposition and second largest opposition party in the House of Lords Financial Assistance, which the Scottish Parliament pays to opposition parties in the Scottish Parliament Financial Assistance, which the Northern Ireland Assembly pays to opposition parties in the Northern Ireland Assembly When we publish information We include information about the public funding political parties have received when we publish the donations four times a year. We also comment on public funding in our annual report . Related content Registers of unincorporated associations Download and view the registers of unincorporated associations Donations accepted View data about donations accepted by parties and campaigners Public funds View data about public funds received by parties Register to vote All you need to register to vote is 5 minutes and your National Insurance number.

Application: Accredited organisation | Electoral Commission Search

Application: Accredited organisation You are in the Apply to be an accredited organisation section Home Observing elections and referendums Apply to be an accredited organisation First published: 30 July 2019 Last updated: 2 November 2021

Apply to be an accredited organisation Apply to be an accredited organisation (new)

Organisation details Organisation name Organisation address: Building number or name Organisation address: First line Organisation address: Town or city Organisation address: Postcode Organisation address: Country If you live in the UK, please specify whether you live in England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland Organisation's primary contact details First name Last name Email address Phone number

Organisation's secondary contact details First name Last name Email address Phone number

Accreditation details Is this a new accreditation application? Yes, this is a new application No, this is a renewal Your accreditation will be valid for three years. Do you want to be accredited for a shorter period? Yes No Select the date you want your accreditation to be valid until. How do you want your observers to receive their observer badges? By post to the organisation address By post to a different address Alternative address: Street name Alternative address: Town or city

Alternative address: Postcode Alternative address: Country Observer details: Observer one Is the observer over the age of 16? Yes No You can't apply to be an electoral observer if you're under 16. First name Last name Confirm that the observer has: Read and agrees to the Code of Practice Not been convicted of an electoral offence in the last five years Read, understood and agrees to our Privacy Policy Click here to read the Code of Practice Click here to read our Privacy Policy Would you like to add another observer? Yes No Observer details: Observer two Is the observer over the age of 16? Yes No First name Last name Confirm that the observer has: Read and agree to the Code of Practice Not been convicted of an electoral offence in the last five years Read, understood and agrees to our Privacy Policy Click here to read the Code of Practice Click here to read our Privacy Policy Would you like to add another observer? Yes No Observer details: Observer three Is the observer over the age of 16? Yes No First name Last name Confirm that the observer has: Read and agree to the Code of Practice Not been convicted of an electoral offence in the last five years Read, understood and agrees to our Privacy Policy Click here to read the Code of Practice Click here to read our Privacy Policy Would you like to add another observer? Yes No Observer details: Observer four Is the observer over the age of 16? Yes No First name Last name Confirm that the observer has: Read and agree to the Code of Practice Not been convicted of an electoral offence in the last five years Read, understood and agrees to our Privacy Policy Click here to read the Code of Practice Click here to read our Privacy Policy Would you like to add another observer? Yes No Observer details: Observer five Is the observer over the age of 16? Yes No First name Last name Confirm that the observer has: Read and agree to the Code of Practice Not been convicted of an electoral offence in the last five years Read, understood and agrees to our Privacy Policy Click here to read the Code of Practice Click here to read our Privacy Policy Would you like to add another observer? Yes No Observer details: Observer six Is the observer over the age of 16? Yes No First name Last name Confirm that the observer has: Read and agree to the Code of Practice Not been convicted of an electoral offence in the last five years Read, understood and agrees to our Privacy Policy Click here to read the Code of Practice Click here to read our Privacy Policy Would you like to add another observer? Yes No Observer details: Observer seven Is the observer over the age of 16? Yes No First name Last name Confirm that the observer has: Read and agree to the Code of Practice Not been convicted of an

electoral offence in the last five years Read, understood and agrees to our Privacy Policy Click here to read the Code of Practice Click here to read our Privacy Policy Would you like to add another observer? Yes No Observer details: Observer eight Is the observer over the age of 16? Yes No First name Last name Confirm that the observer has: Read and agree to the Code of Practice Not been convicted of an electoral offence in the last five years Read, understood and agrees to our Privacy Policy Click here to read the Code of Practice Click here to read our Privacy Policy Would you like to add another observer? Yes No Observer details: Observer nine Is the observer over the age of 16? Yes No First name Last name Confirm that the observer has: Read and agree to the Code of Practice Not been convicted of an electoral offence in the last five years Read, understood and agrees to our Privacy Policy Click here to read the Code of Practice Click here to read our Privacy Policy Would you like to add another observer? Yes No Observer details: Observer ten Is the observer over the age of 16? Yes No First name Last name Confirm that the observer has: Read and agree to the Code of Practice Not been convicted of an electoral offence in the last five years Read, understood and agrees to our Privacy Policy Click here to read the Code of Practice Click here to read our Privacy Policy Declaration Confirm that: The information you have provided is accurate and true You have permission from the observers to submit information on their behalf Leave this field blank

Letter: Coronavirus and its impact on the May polls | Electoral Commission Search
Letter: Coronavirus and its impact on the May polls You are in the Key correspondence section Home Key correspondence First published: 12 March 2020 Last updated: 12 March 2020 Summary of the letter Date: 12 March 2020 To: Chloe Smith MP, Minister for the Constitution and Devolution CC Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office Address: Cabinet Office, 70 Whitehall, London, SW1A 2AS From: Bob Posner, Chief Executive Format: Sent by email Full letter Dear Minister, In light of the current and emerging situation around Covid-19 in the UK, I wanted to write to set out the Commission's concerns about the real risks to the successful delivery of the scheduled 7 May 2020 elections. We have been in close contact with a range of key stakeholders across the electoral community – including the Association of s, Solace, the Greater London Returning Officer, the Wales Electoral Coordination Board, and of course your officials – to assess the risks, and to identify and take forward appropriate mitigations to enable the delivery of the elections. While this work is continuing, it has already become clear that the risks are so significant as to raise serious concerns about the polls continuing to their current timetable. Although polling day is not until 7 May, preparations for the elections are already well underway and indeed publication of notice of election – which marks the start of the formal timetable – will take place later this month. This means that a decision now needs to be taken, by Government and as appropriate by Parliament, whether to proceed with the scheduled 7 May polls. So voters can cast their ballot, polling station venues need to be secured, set up, staffed and accessed; we already know that local authorities have concerns about their ability to ensure this, particularly at the same time as continuing to manage other key services in the current circumstances. It is also vital that voters are able to hear the positions of candidates, parties and campaigners before they cast their vote; however, many forms of campaigning may not be possible, leaving insufficient space for the arguments to be heard. We also anticipate that as a result of the direct and indirect impacts of Covid-19, there will be significant numbers of registered electors who in practice will not have opportunity to vote, or feel inclined to vote. While increased access to post and proxy voting may provide a partial solution for some electors, it would create further and additional pressures and risks in other parts of the system. Clearly any decisions to delay elections which are due is significant and would not normally be desirable; however, we are in unprecedented times. The risks to delivery that have been identified are such that we cannot be confident that voters will be able to participate in the polls safely and confidently, nor that campaigners and parties will be able to put their case to the electorate. We therefore call on the Government to take steps to provide early clarity to all those with an interest in the electoral process; and on the available information and position we recommend the Government now delay the 7 May polls until the autumn. In this context we are also mindful that the Chief Executives of local authorities and their staff across the country are necessarily focussed on the ongoing management of the impacts Covid-19 is having on their localities. Similar impacts could also be expected to affect the effective delivery of by-elections during the intervening period, and we would hope that this could also be addressed at the same time by providing that these could also be deferred. Looking further ahead, there may also be a potential impact on annual canvass activity across the UK, and this is something that it will be important for Government to return to with us in due course. The Commission stands ready to provide further advice and take or co-ordinate necessary actions, as may be of assistance to

the Government in this matter. Related content Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Register to vote All you need to register to vote is 5 minutes and your National Insurance number. Registers of unincorporated associations Download and view the registers of unincorporated associations Our Commissioners

Goal one Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal two Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal three Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal four Looking ahead to 2020/21 and using our resources to support the delivery of our goals Overview This section provides an overview of the Electoral Commission, our purpose, our performance during the last year and the key risks to achieving our goals. We have included summary financial information within the performance report. This is consistent with the financial statements, where more detail is available. The Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) established the Electoral Commission. We are independent of government and political parties and directly accountable to the UK Parliament through a committee chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons. We also report to the Scottish Parliament for functions related to its parliamentary and local government elections. Once the commencement provisions are enacted, we will also report to the Senedd for its parliamentary and local government elections. We have prepared our 2019-20 Annual Report and Accounts in accordance with an accounts direction, set out on page 108 issued by HM Treasury under paragraph 17(2) of Schedule 1 PPERA. We have prepared the powers and sanctions report on page 38 in accordance with paragraph 15 Schedule 19(b) and paragraph 27 Schedule 19(c) PPERA. Foreword Foreword For The Electoral Commission, 2019-20 has been a year characterised by a busy and shifting electoral timetable. In May, after supporting the delivery of local government elections in England and Northern Ireland, we responded quickly to the UK Government's decision to hold the European Parliamentary elections. In October, we mobilised to support an unscheduled UK Parliamentary general election on 12 December. In early 2020, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, we advised on and supported the UK Government postponing the May polls, recognising the impacts on voters, campaigners, and local authorities. Ahead of the 2019 polls, we provided support to all those taking part. We ran public awareness campaigns to ensure that everyone who was eligible could register and cast their vote; one in four people saw our general election campaign and electoral administrators added more than 1.2 million people to the registers. During November and December, we fielded nearly 9,000 enquiries from the public, while almost 1.3 million users visited our website; giving people the information they needed to vote with confidence. We supported a record number of non-party campaigners to participate in the elections, and published information on over £113 million of donations accepted by political parties in the UK in 2019, ensuring the public could see where parties got their funding. We worked closely with the National Police Chiefs' Council, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the College of Policing to produce guidance to help candidates run respectful campaigns and protect themselves from abuse. The electoral community rose to the challenge and, despite the uncertainty and tight timescales of the year's events, delivered well-run polls. Our public opinion research found that the majority of respondents had confidence in the way these polls ran (69% for the general election), though levels of confidence were lower than at previous such polls, and strains in the system are increasingly evident. As with all elections, we supported the work of electoral administrators - 99% of those who responded to our post-poll survey said they found our guidance and resources useful. In addition to the busy electoral timetable, we supported electoral administrators in two areas to hold recall petitions, each resulting in a subsequent by-election. We reported on the administration of these petitions and shared recommendations for future improvements

with the UK Government. We also supported preparations for important changes to the annual canvass in Great Britain, which will streamline the annual audit of electoral registers. We have developed guidance on the new process, so administrators understand their responsibilities, and created user-friendly forms for the public. We have worked closely with the Association of s, Scottish Assessors Association, Solace and officials from the UK's governments to ensure we all embed the changes successfully. We maintained the registers of political parties and campaigners, and oversaw the laws on political finance, publishing financial returns, administering policy development grants, providing guidance and advice, and taking regulatory actions. We have a strong track- record of success in the courts, but look to learn too from all outcomes. We also enabled or supported related bodies in their regulatory work, such as the police, CPS, Information Commissioner, Ofcom, Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority, and the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards. We also engaged with the main social media companies to encourage their role in transparency in political campaigning. We have continued to strengthen our relationships with, and fulfil our accountabilities to, the Scottish, Welsh and UK parliaments. This has included evaluating the voter ID pilots conducted in England; helping prepare for franchise changes in Wales and Scotland; and supporting significant electoral reform bills in the Scottish and Welsh parliaments. We worked with the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland on plans to deliver the full-scale canvass it is required to run every 10 years, which will now take place in 2021. We are seeing alignment between our recommendations and the initiatives and priorities of the UK's governments, such as the UK Government's commitments on defending democracy and the Scottish Parliament inclusion of many of our recommendations in its new referendums legislation. We will continue to encourage all governments to implement our recommendations, including reforms of the rules for digital campaigning and on electoral law more broadly, founded on the excellent recommendations made by the Law Commissions' final report on the subject. In 2019, we published major research into the accuracy and completeness of the electoral registers, as well as feasibility studies on options for modernising electoral registration, demonstrating the potential benefits of future reform in this area. We are also committed to making reforms of our own. In the last year, we continued reviewing all party descriptions included on the register, to help voters clearly identify candidates on the ballot paper. Working with the main political parties, we have made good progress on a new online tool that will make it easier for parties and campaigners to register with us and report financial information. In a system where most comply with the political finance rules, our preference is to help increase compliance rather than to take enforcement action afterwards. This new tool will play a role in helping those we regulate to achieve that. To underpin our work, we have improved our human resources, planning and digital technology functions. We have implemented new online planning, governance and procurement systems. We have also invested in staff engagement and development, resulting in staff turnover falling by 19 percentage points. As we look ahead to the coming year, a key concern remains the risks presented by archaic and complex electoral law. Combined with continued pressure on local authority resources and capacity, and an outdated registration system, it is increasing the strain on electoral administrators and failing to keep pace with technological advances. We stand ready to work with governments and other stakeholders to address these challenges. We look forward to continuing to work with the UK's governments to ensure their existing reform plans can be taken forward effectively. We are working closely with all governments on the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic for elections and

electoral processes, and talking to others, to see what lessons we can learn and what further changes might usefully be introduced for the future. Our role The Electoral Commission is the independent body which oversees election and regulates political finance in the United Kingdom. Our vision and goals Our vision is to be a world-class public sector organisation - innovative, delivering great value and getting right what matters most to voters and legislators. In 2019/20 we worked towards achieving four goals: To enable the continued delivery of free and fair elections and referendums, focusing on the need of electors and addressing the changing environment to ensure every vote remains secure and accessible. To ensure increasingly trusted and transparent systems of regulation in political finance, overseeing compliance, promoting understanding amongst those regulated and proactively pursuing breaches. To be an independent and respected centre of expertise, using knowledge and insight to further the transparency, fairness and efficiency of our democratic system, and help adapt it to the modern, digital age. To provide value for money, making best use of our resources and expertise to deliver services that are attuned to what matters most to voters. This goal underpins and supports all of our work. Our 2019-20 year at a glance April 2019 Appointed a new Chief Executive Completed a campaign encouraging people to register to vote ahead of local elections in England and Northern Ireland May Supported the delivery of local elections in England and Northern Ireland Ran a campaign encouraging people to register to vote before the European Parliamentary elections, and supported the delivery of the polls Provided written and oral evidence to the National Assembly for Wales on the Senedd and Elections (Wales) Bill; and gave oral evidence to the London Assembly on the Metropolitan Police's investigation into Vote Leave Supported the delivery of the recall petition in Brecon and Radnorshire June Published a report on the UK Government's proposals to amend the annual canvass Provided oral evidence to the UK Parliament on disinformation July Published our evaluation of the UK Government's 2019 voter ID pilots Launched our new website at electoralcommission.org.uk Published feasibility studies on modernising electoral registration Provided oral evidence to the UK Parliament on electoral law and on the rules for any future citizens' assembly or referendum August Provided written evidence to the Scottish Parliament on its Referendums Bill September Published new guidance for non-party campaigners Published findings from our research into the accuracy and completeness of the electoral registers in Great Britain and Northern Ireland Provided written evidence to the Scottish Parliament on the Scottish Elections (Franchise and Representation) Bill, and on its Referendums Bill Published a report on the ordering of candidates on ballot papers at Scottish council elections October Published reports on the May 2019 elections and on the recall petitions from Peterborough, and Brecon and Radnorshire constituencies Provided oral evidence to the Scottish Parliament on the Scottish Elections (Franchise and Representation) Bill Consulted on codes of practice on spending by candidates and political parties at Senedd elections November Provided written and oral evidence to the Scottish Parliament on the Scottish Elections (Reform) Bill Ran a voter registration campaign before the UK Parliamentary general election December Supported the delivery of the UK Parliamentary general election January 2020 Provided written and oral evidence to the National Assembly for Wales on the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill Launched a consultation on Electoral Registration Officer performance standards February Provided written evidence to the National Assembly for Wales on electoral systems and boundaries Provided written evidence to the House of Lords Select Committee on the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 March Provided written evidence to the House of Lords Select Committee on Democracy and Digital

Technologies Published electoral fraud data from 2019 Our year in numbers Used £20.2m of resources, including £879k capital spend Invested 47% of our expenditure on staff costs (£9.4m) Achieved 72% employee engagement score (65% in 2018) Answered 25,402 public enquiries – a 408% increase on last year Contributed to more than 1.9m additions to the electoral register following three campaigns Responded to 287 Freedom of Information requests Published 1,743 routine financial returns from parties and campaigners Notified 86% of the 159 party registration applications of their outcome within 30 days Published 769 annual statement of accounts for political parties and accounting units Registered 36 non-party campaigners in the month before the UK Completed 83 investigations, 84% of them within 180 days Imposed £90,580 of civil sanctions in our role as a regulator Published 100% of our guidance products on time Responded to 5,548 requests for advice from local authorities – 99.7% within 3 days Accredited 1,167 electoral observers – the highest number since we started the scheme in 2007 Performance analysis We measure our performance against the goals set out in our 2019-20 Business Plan. We have identified activities and corresponding performance measures that contribute towards delivering each goal. The Commission Board agrees our performance measures each year and receives a progress update every quarter. Jump to: Goal one Goal two Goal three Goal four Looking ahead to 2020/21 and using our resources to support the delivery of our goals Download our full annual report and accounts Annual report and accounts 2019/20 Related content Our spending about our spending estimates, reports and accounts Our plans and priorities Find out about what's important to us, and what we plan to achieve in the future How we make decisions Find out about our Board, committees and groups

Performance analysis 2020/21: Goal one | Electoral Commission Search

Performance analysis 2020/21: Goal one You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21 First published: 15 September 2021 Last updated: 21 October 2021 Goal 1 To enable the continued delivery of free and fair elections and referendums, focusing on the needs of electors and addressing the changing environment to ensure every vote remains secure and accessible. This goal captures our role in overseeing the delivery of elections across all parts of the UK and focuses on three areas: delivering well-run electoral events, maximising and modernising electoral registration, and tackling electoral fraud. Goal 1 To help deliver well-run electoral events we: published guidance and resources, and provided support to electoral administrators, candidates and agents for the scheduled elections in May 2021, including those postponed from May 2020; this included a range of supplementary guidance for administrators and candidates and agents to support the delivery of the polls in the context of the pandemic worked with stakeholders from across the electoral community to identify and publish a shared set of high-level objectives for delivering successful elections in the developing public health environment published a range of resources for local authorities to use to help share messages about the safe running of the polls and the voting options available worked with the National Police Chiefs Council, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the College of Policing to provide new guidance for candidates and campaigners on recognising and reporting intimidation worked with organisations supporting people with a disability to raise awareness of how to take part in elections and what support they can expect to receive launched a new system for processing applications for accreditation for electoral observers To help maximise and modernise electoral registration, we: supported Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) in Great Britain with delivery of the first annual canvass using the reformed process; including through the provision of guidance and advice, and the publication of supplementary guidance to support EROs with managing the canvass in the context of the pandemic published a response to our consultation on performance standards for EROs, and used the updated framework to inform our support and challenge work with EROs throughout the canvass worked closely with the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland on preparations for the electoral registration canvass, now expected to take place in 2021 To help tackle electoral fraud, we: worked with the police and local authorities to provide training and review integrity plans to help prevent electoral fraud published updated data on alleged cases of electoral fraud reported during 2019, and new data on a small number of cases reported during 2020 worked with partners to prepare a campaign to raise awareness of electoral fraud, ahead of the May 2021 elections delivered, with the National Police Chiefs Council, our annual conference for police elections Single Points of Contact as an online event worked with the City of London Police Economic Crime Academy to host and contribute content to four training courses for police officers Performance measures Measure Performance We publish 100% of guidance products relating to electoral registration on time with no substantive errors 96.7% Achieved 1 We provide accurate advice to Returning Officers (ROs) and EROs within three working days of receipt of the request. (Target 100%) 99.4% Achieved 2 Additions to electoral registers during our public awareness campaigns meet or exceed our targets (Target 0% - no campaign was held) 0% Achieved 3 Our activities during the year Delivering well-run electoral events Owing to the pandemic and the consequent decisions taken by the UK's governments, there were no electoral events in 2020/21 apart from local government by-elections in Scotland. The Commission therefore quickly focused in

2020/21 on supporting the electoral community to prepare for the elections scheduled – and rescheduled – for May 2021. To support administrators with preparing for and delivering polls in the context of Covid-19, we produced a suite of supplementary guidance and resources that reflected the specific requirements of managing the 2021 polls in a Covid-19 secure way. The supplementary guidance documents were designed to be read in conjunction with our suite of core guidance for Returning Officers and were developed in close consultation with the electoral community and public health bodies across Great Britain. We developed an extensive range of new voter information materials, to support public understanding of how to participate with confidence in the forthcoming elections in the changed context. These included resources focused on informing people about the voting options available to them, and encouraging forward planning, and resources communicating the safety measures that would be in place in polling stations. While used directly by the Commission, their primary purpose was to support local authorities and other stakeholders to provide accurate and timely information to their communities. Maximising and modernising electoral registration 2020 saw the first annual canvass in Great Britain run under a new reformed process allowing EROs to use national and local-level data to identify addresses where there is likely to have been a change in the people who are eligible to register to vote. This allows EROs to focus their resources in areas of greatest need. We see these reforms as an important step towards improving our electoral registration system and we intend to report on the running of the canvass, using data collected from EROs, in summer 2021. Our work to support the introduction of these reforms included providing extensive guidance and advice to help electoral administrators understand their new responsibilities, designing and delivering new voter registration forms, and ensuring our new performance standards for EROs are aligned with the new process. We also developed additional guidance to address the specific challenges of running a canvass in the context of the pandemic. Our scrutiny of proposals from the Northern Ireland Office and our continual dialogue with the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland on a full canvass of electors – originally planned for 2020 but now scheduled to take place in 2021 – have helped to ensure that preparations for the canvass have progressed well. Alongside the work undertaken by the Chief Electoral Officer, we will be running a new multimedia public awareness campaign across Northern Ireland to encourage the electorate to register during the canvass period. We have also committed to reporting on the conduct of the canvass, and plan to publish this in advance of the May 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election. Tackling electoral fraud We provided guidance and advice to support EROs, ROs and the police to deal with electoral fraud. For the fourth year in a row, we also worked with the City of London Police Economic Crime Academy to host and contribute content to four training courses for police officers. We jointly organised the 16th Annual National SPOC (single point of contact) seminar which took place virtually for the first time, working with our partners at the National Police Chiefs' Council. We also supported SPOC seminars in Scotland and Wales, and provided dedicated election briefings for new SPOCs. Throughout the year, police forces across the UK sent us data about allegations of electoral fraud that they received and investigated. Every year we report on the number, type, and outcome of these allegations, to understand what has happened and how cases are resolved. We provided updates on outcomes from cases reported in 2019, including from the UKPGE, and also published data on the small number cases reported during 2020. report navigation links Previous Next Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21 Performance analysis: Goal two 1. 326 of 337 guidance products were published on time; for those not published as planned, these reflected conscious decisions to re-

prioritise work in order to be able to provide guidance on Covid-secure elections more quickly ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. 2130 of 2143 requests for advice were responded to on time ■ Back to content at footnote 2 3. 2020 elections were postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, so no campaign was held ■ Back to content at footnote 3

Observing elections and referendums | Electoral Commission Search
Observing elections and referendums You are in the section Home In this section Apply to be an individual accredited observer Apply to be an accredited organisation Accredited Organisations: submission of additional names Electoral observer code of practice Registers of accredited electoral observers Guidance and feedback for observing elections What electoral observers do One of our roles is to authorise people and organisations to observe UK elections and relevant referendums. You need to apply to become an accredited electoral observer if you want to observe the: issue or receipt of postal ballot papers taking of the poll counting of the votes You can apply as an individual observer, or as an organisation. You need to be 16 or over to be an electoral observer. The deadline to apply to become an accredited observer for the Elections held on 04 May is 18 April. The deadline to apply to become an accredited observer for the Elections held on 18 May is 02 May.

Briefing: Our evaluation of voter ID pilots | Electoral Commission Search

Briefing: Our evaluation of voter ID pilots You are in the section Home On this page Briefing summary Read our briefing in full About the Electoral Commission First published: 1 May 2019 Last updated: 17 October 2019 Summary of the briefing Date: May 2019 For: MPs Full briefing This briefing has been prepared ahead of the pilot schemes trialling identification requirements for voters at polling stations, which are taking place in ten local authority areas at the May 2019 local elections.

Background As in 2018, the pilot schemes have been set up by the UK Government under Section 10 of the Representation of the People Act 2000. The RPA requires the Electoral Commission to evaluate and report on any pilot scheme. 2018 pilot scheme evaluation The key findings from our previous evaluation were: Overall, the voter identification requirements trialled in May 2018 worked well and the pilots provided useful initial evidence about how a voter identification requirement in Great Britain might work in practice. But they also highlighted areas where further work is needed to provide evidence which can address concerns and answer questions about the impact of identification requirements on voters. We recommended that the UK Government should encourage a wider range of local councils to run pilot schemes in May 2019 and that these should include a mix of rural and large urban areas, and areas with different demographic profiles. Our approach to evaluation We intend to collect and analyse a wide range of data and information. Public opinion surveys These will be our main route for assessing whether the ID requirement deterred or prevented people from voting on 2 May. The surveys will also provide measures of the extent to which the application of an ID requirement affected public attitudes to fraud and confidence in the system. We will be able to compare survey results for the pilot areas before and after the elections as well as between the pilots and other areas running polls without an ID requirement. Data from polling stations Data on the different ID used and the numbers unable to vote will be recorded directly by polling station staff on 2 May and collated and analysed by the Commission. feedback We have written to over 170 organisations and groups representing people who have additional accessibility requirements, and who could therefore be disproportionately affected by the pilot, asking for views and evidence. Data from police forces This will include data on any fraud allegations and cases in the pilot areas. it is of course not possible to know what would have occurred at these elections in the absence of the pilots and comparisons with reported levels of fraud at previous polls or in other areas is difficult due to differing circumstances across years. Review of ID security We will make an assessment of the different levels of assurance provided by the different types of ID trialled. Turnout and postal voting data We will look at previous comparable election turnout in the pilot areas to explore any differences relative to 2019. We will also collect detailed data on postal voting to assess any effect as a result of the pilots. Levels of turnout fluctuate year-on-year as a result of a range of factors, even between the same types of elections. Polling station staff survey All polling station staff in the pilot areas will be surveyed to gather information on their experience of administering the pilot. Interviews with Returning Officers and electoral administrators We will interview the key staff involved in the pilots soon after polling day to gather their views on the delivery of the pilot and any issues they encountered. Feedback from candidates We will provide a route for any candidate in the pilot areas to give us their views on the pilot scheme. Observers Commission staff will observe at polling stations in each pilot area. The Commission also accredits observers at UK elections and we will be highlighting to each of them how they should provide any feedback on the pilots. We

intend to publish our evaluation report in July 2019. About the Electoral Commission . The Commission was set up in 2000 and reports to the UK and Scottish Parliaments. To hear more or request a meeting contact our Public Affairs team at publicaffairsteam@electoralcommission.org.uk. Related content Briefing: Overseas Electors Bill Read our briefing for MPs from February 2018 Briefing: The Transparency of Donations and Loans etc. (Northern Ireland Political Parties) Order 2018 Read our briefing for MPs from February 2018 Proposals in the Queen's Speech Read our briefing for MPs from October 2019

2019 report: Accuracy and completeness of the 2018 electoral registers in Great Britain | Electoral Commission Search 2019 report: Accuracy and completeness of the 2018 electoral registers in Great Britain You are in the Accuracy and completeness of electoral registers section Home Our research Accuracy and completeness of electoral registers In this section National estimates of accuracy and completeness Completeness in Great Britain Accuracy in Great Britain Addressing the challenges of accuracy and completeness Background to this study Summary We run accuracy and completeness studies to measure the quality of the electoral registers, and assess how this changes in response to legislative developments and administrative and population changes. The results for Great Britain in December 2018 show that: Parliamentary registers were 85% complete and 89% accurate Local government registers were 83% complete and 89% accurate The findings lead to two main estimates: between 8.3 and 9.4 million people in Great Britain who were eligible to be on the local government registers were not correctly registered there were between 4.7 and 5.6 million inaccurate entries on the local government registers This is our first study since the 2015 assessment of the registers, following the transition to Individual Electoral Registration (IER). Since 2015 the levels of completeness have stayed at around the same level, with a not statistically significant decline of around 1 percentage point on the local government registers, while the accuracy has fallen by two percentage points. Age and mobility Our research confirms that age and mobility continue to be the strongest variables associated with lower levels of completeness. Plans to reform the annual canvass starting in 2020 are an important first step, enabling Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) to focus resources on households that have changed composition. Modernising electoral registration However, there is more that could and should be done to modernise registration processes in Great Britain to provide the best opportunity for ensuring that as many people as possible are correctly registered. Earlier this year we published the findings from a series of feasibility studies exploring how reforms , including automatic or more automated registration, could be delivered. The studies found that these changes are feasible from a technical and operational perspective and could be implemented without radically altering the structure of the electoral registration system in the UK. What we mean by accuracy and completeness The quality of the electoral registers is measured in two main ways: their accuracy and their completeness. By accuracy we mean that 'there are no false entries on the electoral registers'. It is the measure of the percentage of entries on the registers which relate to verified and eligible voters who are resident at that address. Inaccurate register entries may relate to entries which have become redundant (for example, due to home movement), which are ineligible and have been included unintentionally, or which are fraudulent. By completeness, we mean that 'every person who is entitled to have an entry on an electoral register is registered'. It refers to the percentage of eligible people who are registered at their current address. The proportion of eligible people who are not included on the register at their current address constitutes the rate of under-registration. Methodology Methodology The accuracy and completeness estimates presented in this report are based on a house-to-house survey of 5,079 addresses in Great Britain across 127 local authority areas. The majority of information was gathered from face-to-face interviews of 4,968 households, conducted by trained interviewers with the aim of gathering information from residents which could then be checked against the details held on the electoral registers. A small number of postal questionnaires were issued in order to attempt to reach those addresses where a face-to-face interview was not achieved; of these

111 were returned. The fieldwork and data analysis from the study was carried out by Ipsos MORI. This method is consistent with the approaches used for our 2014 and 2015 assessments of the registers. This approach has been validated through a separate study ('Electoral registration in 2011') using data from the 2011 Census. The results from that study were compared to those generated from previous house-to-house studies and found a high level of consistency between the results and methods. Therefore, we are confident in the estimates produced using the house-to-house survey approach. We also compare some specific findings to our study of the 2015 registers in order to provide a sense of how the quality of the registers has changed with time. Any estimate of accuracy and completeness represents a 'snapshot' at a particular moment in the lifecycle of the registers. We have generally taken this snapshot in the period immediately following the compilation and publication of the annual registers when, historically, the completeness of the registers was its highest. Our previous studies on the topic suggest that the completeness of the registers can decline by as much as up to one percentage point a month from the completion of the canvass. We would expect this effect to be less pronounced since the introduction of year-round registration and the introduction of online registration. In line with previous studies, the findings presented in this report are for the registers published in England, Wales and Scotland on 1 December 2018. We also present national estimates alongside the estimates for the whole of Great Britain. Quantifying accuracy and completeness Using the percentage figures produced from this research, it is possible to estimate the number of people who are not correctly registered, or who have inaccuracies in their register entries. However, it is important to be aware that these can only be estimates for several reasons. Firstly, both the accuracy and completeness estimates are subject, like any survey findings, to confidence intervals (+/- 1.1% and +/- 1.0% respectively). This is because the results are from a surveyed sample of the overall population. The confidence intervals denote the range around any survey statistic where the true population value is likely to lie. Secondly, related to completeness, it is not possible to determine with certainty the size of the population eligible to register to vote in Great Britain. Eligibility is determined by age and nationality. Mid-year estimate data from the Office for National Statistics, based on the 2011 census, offers the most accurate estimate of the size of the population. However, while annual estimates are made available which include data on age, they do not include information on nationality. Any attempts to calculate the absolute number of people not correctly registered at their current address is therefore based on an estimate of completeness and an estimate of the total eligible population. It can, therefore, only be an approximation and should be treated as such. The findings from this accuracy and completeness study lead to an estimate of between 8.3 and 9.4 million people in Great Britain eligible to be on the local government registers who were not correctly registered in December 2018. Our 2015 assessment estimated between 7.8 – 8.3 million. Although completeness has remained stable, over time the estimated number of incorrectly registered people in Great Britain appears to have increased. This is mostly because the population has grown by close to two per cent between 2015 and 2018. It is also partly because of slightly wider confidence intervals for the 2018 estimates due to a smaller sample size. A further point to note is that the range presented above does not mean that there should be an additional 8.3 – 9.4 million entries on the registers in total. Those not correctly registered may still be included on the registers but for instance at a previous address (an inaccurate entry). The estimates also allow for the total number of inaccurate entries on the December 2018 registers to be

approximated. In Great Britain it is likely that between 4.7 and 5.6 million entries on the local government registers are inaccurate. Our 2015 assessment estimated between 4.0 and 4.5 million. This estimate suggests the number of inaccurate entries has increased although, as with completeness, factors such as population growth and different confidence intervals play a role. There are currently fewer inaccurate entries than in 2014, which was the last study carried out before the introduction of individual electoral registration (IER). Related content Register to vote All you need to register to vote is 5 minutes and your National Insurance number. Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Our Commissioners Registers of unincorporated associations Download and view the registers of unincorporated associations

You are in the Our research section Home Our research Currently reading: of 3 - Show page contents On this page Background Key findings Conclusions Summary This report looks at how the canvass was run, what the register of electors looks like at the end of the canvass, and what lessons can be learned for the future. Across the summer and autumn of 2021, a full canvass of electors took place in Northern Ireland. A canvass must take place at least once every 10 years. During the canvass period, every eligible elector is required to apply to register to vote – even if they are already registered. The last canvass before this one was in 2013; the next is scheduled for 2030, and then in every tenth year following that. The canvass started on 1 July 2021 and ran until the revised electoral register was published by the Chief Electoral Officer on 1 December 2021. It contained a total of 1,368,091 entries, representing approximately 93% of the eligible electorate. It is a significant achievement that the electoral register is the largest ever recorded in Northern Ireland, with over 1.36 million people registered to vote. However the canvass in its current format is not an efficient tool for helping to maintain an accurate and complete electoral register - both for the Chief Electoral Officer and for electors. As such we recommend that the Government should reform the canvass and wider electoral registration process in Northern Ireland.

Background Across the summer and autumn of 2021, a full canvass of electors took place in Northern Ireland. A canvass must take place at least once every 10 years. During the canvass period, every eligible elector is required to apply to register to vote – even if they are already registered. The last canvass before this one was in 2013; the next is scheduled for 2030, and then in every tenth year following that. Across the summer and autumn of 2021, a full canvass of electors took place in Northern Ireland. The canvass was originally scheduled for 2020, but was delayed owing to the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. In 2006, the annual canvass in Northern Ireland was replaced with a process of continuous electoral registration. Under this system, registered electors only have to re-register if their personal details change – such as a change of name or address. Provisions were also included which required that a canvass must take place at least once every 10 years. During the canvass period, every eligible elector is required to apply to register to vote – even if they are already registered. The last canvass before this one was in 2013; the next is scheduled for 2030, and then in every tenth year following that. The Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland can also make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland that a canvass should take place sooner than the ten year threshold. The Chief Electoral Officer, supported by the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland (EONI), is responsible for managing the canvass. As part of the canvass, the EONI contacted every household, encouraging all eligible electors to respond to canvass by registering to vote.

Context Accuracy and completeness In 2018 we carried out an analysis of the accuracy and completeness of the electoral registers in Northern Ireland . That research showed that over one in four eligible voters in Northern Ireland were not correctly registered at their current address. The parliamentary register was 74% complete and 80% accurate The local government register was 73% complete and 80% accurate We highlighted in that report that the scheduled canvass would be a timely opportunity to improve the quality of the registers. Online electoral registration This was the first canvass carried out since the introduction of the online electoral registration system in Northern Ireland in 2018. Online registration provides an additional channel for people to respond to the canvass and

is a much easier and quicker process. However, paper applications continued to be available for anyone wishing to apply to register to vote this way. Retaining names on the electoral register The law allows the Chief Electoral Officer, in certain circumstances where there has been no response to the canvass or the response was incomplete, to retain entries on the electoral register. If the Chief Electoral Officer is satisfied that available data accurately places the person at the correct address, then their entry can be retained for a period of up to two years. Since the last canvass, the EONI has expanded its use of and the range of data sets for data matching. The EONI have access to a range of databases from agencies including the Business Services Organisation, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. This data is also used by the Chief Electoral Officer to verify information provided in applications to register to vote.

High Street Voucher Scheme

The 'High Street Scheme' was delivered by the Department for the Economy, as part of a series of Covid-19 recovery schemes. The scheme offered people in Northern Ireland a 'Spend Local' £100 prepaid MasterCard to spend in local businesses. The scheme was not connected to the canvass or registering to vote, but some Northern Ireland Executive Ministers linked eligibility for the scheme to being registered to vote. While being on the electoral register was not part of the eligibility criteria, the electoral register was one of a number of data sets used to check applications.

Delivering the canvass

The canvass of electors in Northern Ireland started on 1 July 2021 and ran until the revised electoral register was published by the Chief Electoral Officer on 1 December 2021. The EONI, led by the Chief Electoral Officer, is responsible for managing the canvass. The Electoral Commission supported the canvass by running a voter registration campaign. Ahead of the canvass opening, the EONI sent an information leaflet to all households in Northern Ireland, to raise awareness of the coming canvass. After the canvass opened on 1 July, the EONI contacted all households through another information leaflet encouraging people to register to vote online at the gov.uk/registertovote website . A number of mailshots continued through to September 2021 to raise awareness of the need to register during the canvass. Alongside this, in July, pre-populated registration forms were sent to Northern Ireland Housing Executive tenants and electors aged over 75, to support paper-based registrations. The EONI also set up registration support services in a number of local council areas to assist both online and paper applications. This included digital kiosks placed in council facilities and registration clinics where EONI staff were available to answer queries and assist in completing applications. For those people who did not respond to the household leaflets, the EONI sent personally addressed letters to all individuals from September. At the same time, canvassers visited households to encourage registration applications from non-responders and these visits continued throughout October. A further personally addressed letter was sent at the end of October to all remaining non-responders that EONI had identified as potential removals from the electoral register. Alongside this, the EONI worked with the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment, the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority and a range of education and voluntary sector organisations to encourage registration among traditionally under-registered groups.

Electoral Commission

In parallel to EONI's activities, we ran a multimedia voter registration campaign from 1 July to 23 October 2021 to support the canvass. Our campaign reminded everyone that the register was being updated and that they shouldn't ignore the canvass - even if they had been registered before. Our advertising ran on TV, billboards, video on demand (catch-up TV), radio, websites, press and social media. The digital aspects of our campaign were delivered in four

bursts, with the campaign reviewed and optimised using live data on response rates provided by the EONI. We also worked with a range of partners to target those groups we know are less likely to be registered and those who face additional barriers to registering. Key findings On 1 December 2021 the revised electoral register contained a total of 1,368,091 entries, representing approximately 93% of the eligible electorate. The constituency with the highest estimated registration rate was Foyle at 96.5% and the lowest was Belfast South at 76.4%. Levels of registration generally increase with age with under 20s having the lowest estimated levels of registration at only 57%, compared with 88% and over for all other age ranges. The new electoral register On 1 December 2021 the revised electoral register was published by the Chief Electoral Officer. It contained a total of 1,368,091 entries, representing approximately 93% of the eligible electorate. This calculation is made using the available estimate for the population aged 17 and over although it cannot account for other eligibility criteria, such as nationality. The calculation also assumes that, at the conclusion of the canvass, the register had a very high level of accuracy (nearly everyone on the register was registered at their correct, current address). This approach, used for the purposes of assessing levels of registration in this report, is therefore not a precise estimate of register completeness but it serves as a rough proxy for levels of registration in Northern Ireland at the conclusion of the canvass. At the conclusion of the canvass, 162,067 registered electors had not responded to any of the contacts from the Chief Electoral Officer. Non-response varied across constituencies with the lowest level (9.8%) in Lagan Valley and the highest (16.2%) in Belfast South. Of the total non-responders, 48,553 (30% of non-responders) were removed from the Northern Ireland register. These were entries where no response was received and no match could be found for the individuals in the other government administrative data sets available to the Chief Electoral Officer. The remaining 113,514 non-responding electors could be matched using available data sets and have been retained on the register, with further follow up contacts from the Electoral Office to try to encourage response before the end of the two-year period they can be retained for. Responding to the canvass The number of applications made to register to vote during the canvass varied substantially over time. As would be expected, variation in applications correlated with key events and activity that took place during the canvass. This included EONI communications to households, and announcements surrounding the 'Spend Local' £100 prepaid MasterCard. Applications also correlate with our advertising campaign which delivered significant reach across Northern Ireland, with the average adult having more than 12 opportunities to see or hear it. Figure 1: Number of applications to register to vote, 1 July 2021 to 13 October 2021 As figure 1 shows, there were over 215,000 online applications to register to vote during the first seven days of the canvass. During this time, EONI sent an information leaflet to all households encouraging them to register online, and the Electoral Commission's advertising campaign ran across TV, radio and online channels. Following this initial period of activity, online application figures declined, stabilising for the next three weeks at mostly below 10,000 daily applications. On 29 July there was a spike in applications, with over 51,000 applications made in one day, the largest daily figure for the canvass to that point. This rise in applications occurred on the same day the Economy Minister announced that the 'Spend Local' £100 prepaid MasterCard voucher scheme would launch in September and that applications would be checked against the electoral register. Over the next two weeks, almost half a million online applications to register to vote were made, more than the total number of online applications for the first four

weeks of the canvass. The sustained rise in applications from 29 July to 12 August correlates with significant media commentary surrounding the scheme, EONI contacting households for a third time with an information leaflet and the Electoral

Commission's advertising campaign running on TV, online and outdoor channels. From the end of August targeted mailshots and door-to-door canvassing of non-responders to the canvass resulted in a steady stream of applications to register with just over 225,000 applications made throughout September. Who is on the new electoral register Variations in registration The constituency with the highest estimated registration

rate was Foyle at 96.5% and the lowest was Belfast South at 76.4%. For local authority areas, the highest registration rate was Derry and Strabane (97.1%) and the lowest Belfast (86.7%). Figure 2: Percentage registration rate per constituency (17+)

Table: Percentage registration rate per constituency (17+) Table: Percentage registration rate per constituency (17+) Constituency Percentage Foyle 96.5% West Tyrone 96.3% Belfast West 96.2% South Down 95.7% Newry & Armagh 95.1% Strangford 94.8% South Antrim 94.7% North Down 94.5% Mid Ulster 94.0% Fer. & S. Tyrone 93.9% Lagan Valley 93.9% East Antrim 92.8% Belfast North 92.2% North Antrim 91.6% Upper Bann 91.6% Belfast East 90.8% East Londonberry 89.9% Belfast South 76.4% Key findings - part 2 The estimated registration rate at constituency and local authority level

masks some more significant variation at ward level. By ward, the percentage of the electorate estimated to be registered varies from approximately 31.1% in the Botanic ward in Belfast South to 108.4% in the Ballycolman ward in the West Tyrone constituency. There are 46 wards where the estimated registration rate is over 100% and this highlights the limitations of this method of calculating registration rates.

The population figures provided by the 2011 census are estimates and may over- or understate the true population from area to area. However, while the specific percentage registered figure should be treated with caution, the figures are useful in illustrating the overall range. Age profile Data held on electors' dates of birth allow for an analysis of the age profile of the registered electorate. As figure 3 shows, consistent with previous research, levels of registration generally increase with age. As with other analysis in this report, the use of estimated population figures means that some percentages are greater than 100%. Therefore the percentages should be treated with caution and are most useful for illustrating a trend, not establishing specific levels of registration. Figure 3: Percentage registration rate by age Table: Percentage registration rate by age Table: Percentage registration rate by age

Age Percentage 90+ 90% 85 to 89 98% 80 to 84 98% 75 to 79 102% 70 to 74 98% 65 to 69 101% 60 to 64 101% 55 to 59 96% 50 to 54 93% 45 to 49 91% 40 to 44 96% 35 to 39 94% 30 to 34 89% 25 to 29 88% 20 to 24 88% 17 to 19 57% Key findings - part 3 While

the trend is similar to previous findings it is worth noting that the estimated levels of registration are higher for many age bands than those seen after the 2013 canvass. For example, in 2013 the estimated registration rate only rose above 80% at age 30 and above. Similarly, registration levels of 90%+ were seen among the 50+ age groups in 2013 compared to 35+ in 2021. However, the estimated level of registration for the under 20s was higher in 2013 (64%) than we see in 2021 (57%). Retained and removed electors The number of retained electors, as a proportion of the 1 December electorate, also varied across constituencies. The largest proportions were retained in the Belfast West and Foyle constituencies with 11% and 10.8% retained. The

smallest proportions were in Lagan Valley and East Antrim with 6.2% and 6.5% retained respectively. At ward level, there were two wards where 20% of the December 2021 register were retained – Botanic ward in Belfast South and Ballysaggart in Fermanagh and South Tyrone. There was also variation in the proportions removed from the

register with the largest proportion removed in Belfast South (6.2% of the July 2021 register) and the smallest in Mid Ulster (2.6%). In five wards (three in Belfast South) more than 10% of the July 2021 register was removed when the December 2021 register was published. This likely reflects the higher population movement in these areas. The overall split between retained and removed non-responders was 70% to 30% but this was different for EU citizens where the split was 60% retained and 40% removed. The difference could likely be the result of less data being held on EU citizens some of whom may be only temporarily resident in Northern Ireland.

Conclusions It is a significant achievement that the electoral register is the largest ever recorded in Northern Ireland, with over 1.36 million people registered to vote. However the canvass in its current format is not an efficient tool for helping to maintain an accurate and complete electoral register - both for the Chief Electoral Officer and for electors. As such we recommend that the Government should reform the canvass and wider electoral registration process in Northern Ireland. **Lessons from the canvass** It is a significant achievement that the electoral register is the largest ever recorded in Northern Ireland, with over 1.36 million people registered to vote. While it may be assumed that levels of register accuracy and completeness will have improved, we are not currently able to outline the exact impact the canvass has had. We will carry out a full analysis of the registers at the end of this year and report on our findings in 2023. It is not possible to isolate the impact of specific public communications tactics on the response to the canvass. While EONI's communications with households and the Electoral Commission's advertising campaign will both have encouraged many people to register to vote, the 'Spend Local' scheme may have had the most significant impact. What is clear, however, is that the canvass in its current format is not an efficient tool for helping to maintain an accurate and complete electoral register - both for the Chief Electoral Officer and for electors. The Chief Electoral Officer has advised us that the total cost of the canvass was approximately £3.23m. The majority of these costs were driven by the fact that EONI was required to contact and receive a response from all eligible electors, even if they were registered before the canvass and their details had not changed. As we outlined in our assessment of the 2018 electoral registers, it seems likely that the current registration system continues to struggle with population movement in the period between each canvass. This is evident from the fact that many of the wards with the lowest registration rates are in areas with the most mobile populations, such as the Botanic ward in Belfast South, with an estimated registration rate of only 31.1%. The findings also show that age remains a significant factor in rates of registration, with under 20s having the lowest estimated levels of registration at only 57%. These trends are seen across much of our research across the UK, including our recent assessment of the 2018 electoral registers in Northern Ireland. As such we continue to recommend that there should be fundamental changes to modernise the registration system in Northern Ireland. There are a number of ways this may be achieved, including: making better use of data for more targeted canvass activity integrating electoral registration into other public service transactions automatic or automated registration Making better use of data for more targeted canvass activity The Chief Electoral Officer already has access to a number of good quality databases from agencies including the Business Services Organisation, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. Access to this data currently allows the Chief Electoral Officer to verify information provided in applications to register to vote, as well as to identify people whose personal details may have changed or who are not on the

electoral register. The Chief Electoral Officer has advised us that by comparing data from the BSO and DWP against the electoral register, a name and address match could be made with 85% of electors already on the register before the canvass commenced. This is largely consistent with results from the reformed data matching process that has been used for the annual canvass in Great Britain since 2020. For example, from July to September 2021, 75% of properties received a match where the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) was satisfied that there are no changes needed and had no reason to believe that there are any additional electors to be added. In Great Britain, in such circumstances, contact is made with the residents of the matched household inviting them to provide information about any changes to the people who are resident at that address. If there are no changes then no response is required. This allows EROs to target their canvass activity towards properties where the data suggests there may be a change to the information the EROs currently holds. If the data suggests there has been a change, a response is required and the EROs must make a minimum of three attempts to obtain a response. While there are some differences in legislative and administrative processes for electoral registration in Northern Ireland the data held by EONI could potentially be used in a similar way to that in Great Britain. For example, allowing the Chief Electoral Officer to carry out a pre-canvass match between the electoral register and the available datasets would be a simple but effective way to reform and improve the process. This would also enable more targeted canvass activity that could allow resources to be better used to reach under-registered groups. It could also transform the canvass process by ensuring eligible electors can be retained on the register without increasing the risk of inaccuracy. In doing so this would remove the requirement to re-register for the majority of electors who remain eligible and whose personal details have not changed. This would contribute to a more cost-effective canvass that delivers improved value for money. We therefore recommend that the Government should reform the canvass process in Northern Ireland. The use of data already plays a key role in the provision of services across the public and private sectors, to the benefit of the public and in the delivery of efficiencies. There is opportunity to explore – with the support of the Chief Electoral Officer, the Commission, data providers and the wider electoral community – how making better use of the existing data already available to help manage the register could improve the delivery of canvass.

Integrating electoral registration into other public service transactions

Integrating electoral registration into other public service transactions would make it easier for individuals to keep their registration details up to date and accurate when they change their name or address. It would help to address the challenge the current system has in dealing with population movement, as it would provide opportunities for those who have recently moved to complete an electoral registration application simultaneously as part of, or alongside, accessing other public services. Our findings from a series of feasibility studies , published in 2019, explored how electoral registration reforms could be delivered in practice. We examined the extent to which electoral registration applications could be made simultaneously as part of or alongside accessing other public services – for example, by allowing a person to apply to register to vote when making a driving licence or passport application. We found that this would increase the number of channels available to citizens and improve the accessibility of the process. Our studies highlighted for example that in Canada, most government forms feature an optional checkbox for eligible voters to share information with Elections Canada, while in the USA voter registration is integrated with driving licence application, renewal, and change of address

processes. Automatic or automated registration Alongside this we continue to recommend that the UK Government explores options for introducing automatic or automated registration. Automatic registration would see individuals added to the electoral register, or have their details updated, based on trusted data and without them being required to take any active steps. A system of automated registration would see reliable data providing the basis of an individual's electoral registration application, but would still require individuals to take some steps to complete the process. More automated and automatic forms of registration could be used to address the challenges of encouraging registration amongst those less likely to be correctly registered, such as the under 20s, the group identified in this report as the least likely to be registered. For example, EONI could be enabled to use available data from schools and colleges, alongside data from the Department for Work and Pensions, to automatically register young people when they are given their National Insurance number. Our feasibility studies concluded that both automated and automatic registration could be implemented in technical terms, without radically altering the structure of the current electoral registration system. Related content Modernising elections research This qualitative research looks at public attitudes to voting and the information available around elections. Electoral law is out of date. Find out where we want to see improvements Testing the EU referendum question Find out about our testing of the EU referendum question

You are in the section Home Introduction Everyone should be able to register and vote without facing barriers. They should be able to vote on their own and in secret. While there have been significant improvements, we know there is still more to be done to improve the voting experience for disabled people. Their voting rights are not always communicated in an accessible way, some do not have the support they need when registering to vote or voting and others face barriers when they go to a polling station or vote by post. Changes we want to see We're calling on the UK's governments, political parties and those who run elections to make voting more accessible for all. The UK's governments must: make changes to election forms so that they're easier to understand give disabled people more ways to vote Political parties must: make sure their information is easy to read and understand make sure they send their information in good time so everyone can read it publish accessible versions of manifestos at the same time as other versions People running elections must: make registering to vote and voting more accessible make helplines more accessible. It's not always clear what people need to do next support anyone who needs help to vote What's available now We make sure that everyone can register to vote and that they have a good experience of voting. We provide accessible information on registering to vote and voting, and easy read guides. We provide guidance for returning officers to use to make their polling stations accessible. about what's available now for those with access needs The Elections Act 2022 made changes to what help is available to people voting in a polling station. These changes will apply to UK parliamentary general elections, Northern Ireland Assembly and local elections, Police and Crime Commissioner elections in England and Wales, and local elections in England. about the changes in the UK Elections Act . Under the Elections Act 2022, we will have a duty to provide guidance to Returning Officers (ROs) on the requirement to provide reasonable equipment to assist disabled voters in polling stations. View our guidance Report on accessibility of elections In 2017, we published a report about the experiences of disabled people at the 2017 general election. This was in response to the UK government's call for evidence on how disabled people experience registering to vote and voting. Read the full report Related content Reforming electoral law Find out about electoral law and the changes we want to see A modern electoral register Find out about the changes we want to see to the electoral registration system in the UK Transparent digital campaigning Find out about digital campaigning and the changes we want to see Report: Elections for everyone Read our report about registering to vote and voting from the view of someone with a disability

Comment on an application You are in the section Home First published: 3 June 2019 Last updated: 9 March 2020 Overview of commenting on an application You can comment on a particular name, description or emblem as part of our assessment process. You must say whether the name, description or emblem does or does not meet the criteria for registration and the reasons why. When you make your comment, you need to consider the criteria for registration. If you do not refer to one or more of them in your comment, we will not consider it. Criteria for registering a party name, descriptions or emblems We cannot register a name, description or emblem which: is likely to mislead voters is the same as another registered name, description or emblem which is on the same register is the same as a name, description or emblem from a de-registered party which was on the same register and is protected voters might confuse with another party name, description or emblem that is already registered or protected is likely to contradict or hinder voting instructions or guidance given for voting is obscene or offensive contains certain prohibited words is or contains an acronym or abbreviation that is not well known or widely used and not spelt out links in any way to online material or refers to online content contains a reference to a person's name unless it is a person directly associated with your party has an emblem that contains text which cannot be read at the size emblems appear on ballot papers (2cm square) is longer than six words is not in Roman script (i.e. Latin alphabet) is likely to amount to an offence if published What we mean by mislead voters Mislead voters We look at whether a name, description or emblem might cause a voter to either vote in a way they did not intend (for example, for a party other than their preferred party) or to mark their ballot paper in a way which was not their intention. We will reject a name, description or emblem if we believe a voter might make a mistake on their ballot paper which would invalidate their vote, for example voting for too many candidates. What we mean by confuse Confuse We look at whether the name, description or emblem is visually the same, (for example the words 'stationary' or 'stationery', similar images of boats or design elements) or contextually the same (for example 'Party of the Oak' and 'The Oak Party'). What we mean by offensive Offensive We assess all applications on a case by case basis, but we are likely to reject a name, description or emblem on grounds of offensiveness if, in our opinion, it: contains offensive language or terminology links something generally accepted to be offensive with a particular group of people We take into account that parties must be able to express their political views and a voter must use a ballot paper in order to exercise their right to vote. We also consider the context and circumstances in which a name, description or emblem can be used. What we mean by prohibited words Prohibited words Applies to words in singular, plural and in other languages. 1. Her Majesty, His Majesty, King, Queen, Prince, Princess, Duke, Duchess, Royal, Royalty These words cannot be used on their own. You can use these in conjunction with the name of a place, institution or local government area. For example, you can use 'Royal Tunbridge Wells' but not 'Royal Forever Party'. 2. Britain, British, England, , National, Scotland, Scots, Scottish, United Kingdom, Wales, Welsh, Gibraltar, Gibraltarian, Combined region These words cannot be used on their own. You can use these with another word or expression other than the name or description of a party already registered in the relevant part of the UK. For example you cannot register 'One Big Party' if there was an already registered 'One Big Party'. 3. Independent, Official, Unofficial These words cannot be used on their own. You can use these if the word is used with another word or expression but not: an existing registered name or description or only with the word

'Party' (for example 'The Independent Party') or another of these words in this group. 4. Ratepayers, Residents, Tenants These words cannot be used on their own. You can use these in conjunction with the name of a local government or geographical area. For example, you can use 'Residents of York Party' but not 'Residents Action Group'. Submitting your feedback You can comment on one of our current applications . Our assessment process can have a quick completion time so you need to comment promptly. You can submit your comment by: email at partyreg@electoralcommission.org.uk our online feedback form post to Party Registration, The Electoral Commission, 3 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8YZ fax on 020 7271 0505 If you have made a comment, you can see the outcome of the application on Party registration decisions . Related content View current applications View the political party names, descriptions and emblems which we are currently considering as part of our assessment process Party registration decisions View our decisions on political party names, descriptions and emblems Party registration decisions View our decisions on political party names, descriptions and emblems View current applications View the political party names, descriptions and emblems which we are currently considering as part of our assessment process

Scottish Parliament Political Parties Panel meeting minutes: 9 November 2022 |
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Electoral Commission update AOCB First published: 10 March 2023 Last updated: 10
March 2023 About the meeting Wednesday 9 November 2022 (Hybrid) Attendees: Attendees
Scott Martin, Scottish National Party (Chair) Matt Edmonds, Scottish Conservative and
Unionist Party Pete Morrison, Scottish Green Party Maria McCann, Scottish Government
Malcolm Burr, Convener, Electoral Management Board for Scotland Chris Highcock,
Secretary, Electoral Management Board for Scotland Pete Wildman, Scottish Assessors
Association (Chair of Electoral Registration Committee and EMB Member) Rachel Winham,
Royal Mail Scott Forsyth, Royal Mail Hannah Standring, Scotland Office Andrei
Vitaliev, Scotland Office Paul Docker, DLUHC Jeanne Delebarre, DLUHC Donald
Mackinnon, DLUHC James Lee, DLUHC Isabel Drummond-Murray, Boundary Commissions for
Scotland Dame Susan Bruce, Electoral Commissioner Roseanna Cunningham, Electoral
Commissioner Louise Edwards, Director of Regulation, Electoral Commission Andy
O'Neill, Head of Electoral Commission, Scotland Sarah Mackie, Manager, Electoral
Commission, Scotland Catherine Heggie, Partnerships and Information Officer Lindsey
Hamilton, Business Support Officer (Minutes) Apologies Paul Moat, Scottish Liberal
Democrats, John Hardy, Scottish Green Party and James Kelly, Scottish Labour Party
Welcome and introductions Scott Martin (SXM) welcomed those present and introductions
were made. Sue Bruce (SB) informed the panel that Roseanna Cunningham and Chris Ruane
had joined the Electoral Commission as the Nominated Commissioner for the Scottish
National Party and Nominated Commissioner for the Labour Party, respectively. Sal
Naseem had also been appointed as an adviser to the board. Matters arising (SXM)
requested a minor correction be made to the previous minutes and for the survey of
Returning Officers on e-counting at the May 2022 elections mentioned by James Newman
at the last meeting to be circulated to the panel. Action: 1. EC correct minute 2. SG
to circulate survey of Returning Officers on e-counting The minutes of 16 May 2022
were approved. Agenda Item 7. was moved up the agenda as Isabel Drummond-Murray had
to leave early. Scottish Boundary Commissions update Isabel Drummond-Murray (I-DM)
said the first of three consultations on the Westminster boundaries had begun (ending
on 5 December 2022) and encouraged participation. I-DM indicated that the Second
Review of the constituencies and regions of the Scottish Parliament commenced on 1
September 2022 using election data from that date. The Commission expected to publish
its provisional proposals for consultation in spring 2023. They aimed to submit a
report to Scottish Ministers by 1 May 2025. If subsequently approved by the Scottish
Parliament, the new boundaries would be effective at the next Scottish Parliament
election, expected in May 2026. Report on the Scottish council elections 2022 Sarah
Mackie (SM) gave an overview of the findings of the report which had been circulated
to the panel on 21 September 2022. She said that, in general, the elections had been
well run with high levels of voter satisfaction but said there was work to take
forward regarding spoiled ballot figures, candidate abuse, staffing and
accessibility. Others contributed to the discussion highlighting areas where the
administration of the elections had been well delivered and areas where opportunities
for improvement existed. SXM said the recording of rejection of ballot papers
required a more developed approach, more suited to STV and should be reviewed. He

suggested that where someone marks multiple 'X's on the ballot paper for the same party candidates, a solution could be a fraction of the person's vote should be attributed to each of the candidates they had indicated a preference for. Elections Act implementation Code of Practice for campaigners - SM said the Electoral Commission was currently reviewing and updating the code of conduct for campaigners for reserved elections to ensure it reflected the new offences in the Elections Act 2022 which included prohibiting campaigners from handling postal votes and safeguarding the secrecy of postal voting. Some minimal changes were planned to the code for devolved elections in Scotland and Wales so that the reserved and devolved versions were as similar as possible. She asked that parties nominate someone from the team with whom they can liaise during this review process. It was expected to formally consult the Panel on a revised code early next year and to have the updated code ready in the autumn of 2023. Digital Imprint Guidance - SM encouraged responses to a consultation on digital imprint guidance which had commenced on 31 October and due to close on 19 December. The Code for non-party campaigners would also be reviewed and consulted on at the same time. Feedback from a round table event would be available at the end of November. Changes to notional spending for reserved elections would come into force from 23 November when all new parties would be obliged to provide a statement of existing assets and liabilities. Party Finance and Regulation (PFR) would be updated accordingly, and a new form issued. Public Awareness - Catherine Heggie (CHe) said the Electoral Commission would soon be publishing guidance for Electoral Registration Officers on processing Voter Authority Certificates and was working on guidance for Returning Officers and candidates. The Electoral Commission would be launching a public awareness campaign in England in January ahead of the May 2023 local elections, which would be rolled out in Scotland ahead of the next UK Parliament general election. The campaign would target voters who already had ID through a mass advertising campaign. The Commission would also be working with charities and other partners to raise awareness amongst groups who needed additional support to prepare for the change. Scotland Office/DLUHC update Consultation on the draft Strategy and Policy Statement - Hannah Standring (HS) said the Consultation on the draft Strategy and Policy statement would close on 5 December 2022 and hoped all would look at it. Jeanne Delebarre (JD) said the Consultation on the draft Strategy and Policy statement had been shared with the UK Parliament and following the consultation, the draft Statement would be subject to the approval of the UK Parliament. She said the statement would not contain provisions relating to the Commissions functions which were within competence of the Scottish Parliament or Senedd Cymru. The Act required the Secretary of State to consider the views of the Electoral Commission, the Speakers Committee on the Electoral Commission (Speaker's Committee) and the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee via a statutory consultation before submitting the draft Statement for the approval of the UK Parliament. The DLHUC Select Committee and Electoral Commission had been asked to provide their views by 5 December 2022. Scottish Government update Maria McCann (MMcC) thanked everyone for their feedback on the electoral reform topics shared by the Minister at a previous meeting and said the pre-consultation was going well. They had hoped to launch the consultation by the time of this meeting, however, that had proved not to be the case but would launch the consultation before Christmas. She said the role of the group was fundamental and hoped that a focused discussion could be held at the next meeting. The consultation period would be at least 14 weeks. Royal Mail update Rachel Winham (RW) indicated to the Panel that Royal Mail in relation to by-elections was working with local authorities, Returning Officers and

Electoral Registration Officers to manage their way around recent and forthcoming strike action, and to date, had been successful. Electoral Management update Chris Highcock (CHi) said the EMB review of the 5 May 2022 elections had found that less experienced parties and candidates had difficulty in completing the home address form. The EMB would work with the Electoral Commission and parties to increase understanding of how nomination forms should be completed, as well as when and how they should be submitted. They would, working with the Electoral Commission, look at how to reduce rejected ballot rates through public awareness. Also, they intended to review how to maintain a resilient and robust pool of staff who worked on the election. CHi was asked and agreed to share the EMBs review of the elections document. Pete Wildman (PW) said the annual canvass was progressing smoothly and new registers would be published by 1 December. The EROs would review their handling of the canvass post 1 December. SXM requested that any learning points be shared. The Voter Authentication Certificate, relevant to reserved elections in Scotland, would launch in January 2023, and EROs would work with DLHUC colleagues to ensure the system was live and workable. Scottish Government and UK Government rules around absent voters would likely diverge in Scotland and consideration needed to be given on how to handle that in the interests of the voter. Electoral Commission update CHe updated the Panel on plans for the Welcome to your Vote Week 2023, which would take place from 30 January to 5 February. The Commission would be providing resources and working with education partners to encourage schools to sign up to get involved and organise democratic education lessons and events. CHe encouraged panel members to raise awareness of the campaign. Louise Edwards (LE) said the process to revamp the now 10-12-year-old Political Finance online system had not gone as planned and the Commission was no longer satisfied this was value for money. The new approach adopted an off the shelf product, it would be easier, quicker and more compatible with what the parties use. In the meantime, investment in the current system would increase capacity and give parties and candidates a better experience until the new system was built. SXM noted that parties' input on the development of the system had been captured. LE to consider how best to share that with parties. Sue Bruce (SB) said the Audit Committee of the Electoral Commission was working with the team and the key emphasis was sustaining the current system until the new one was available. Dates of future meetings Andy O'Neill (AON) suggested the panel meet for two meetings in 2023; one late February/early March and one in October but these could be moved/expanded upon to suit events. AOCB AON informed the Panel that Kelsey Gillies had been appointed to take up the post of Senior Officer, Regulation and Campaigns, Scotland from next week and would be engaging with the parties thereafter.

Wales (devolved) annual report 2021/22 | Electoral Commission Search

Wales (devolved) annual report 2021/22 You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 On this page Overview Key achievements Performance analysis Looking ahead Governance First published: 1 August 2022 Last updated: 1 August 2022 Overview Overview This section provides an overview of our work on devolved matters in Wales, our purpose, our performance during the last year and the key risks to achieving our goals. We have included summary financial information within the performance report. This is consistent with the financial statements, where more detail is available. The Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) established the Electoral Commission. We are independent of government and political parties and directly accountable to the UK, Scottish and Welsh parliaments. Amendments made to the Government of Wales Act 2006 by the Wales Act 2017 transferred responsibility for devolved Welsh elections and referendums from the UK Parliament to the Senedd. The Senedd Elections Wales Act 2020 set out the funding and accountability arrangements of the Electoral Commission's devolved activities in Wales. Key achievements In May 2021 we supported the successful delivery of the Senedd and Police and Crime Commissioner elections, working with the Wales Electoral Coordination Board to provide advice and guidance for those running and contesting the polls. We ran a mass-media voter registration campaign, and provided other voter information – including political literacy materials through schools – to support voter participation and confidence We provided expert advice and an evaluation plan on the Welsh government's plans for pilots at the May 2022 elections. We responded to a Welsh Government request for our views on the UK Government's Elections Bill and Legislative Consent Memorandum, and contributed to the work of the Special Purpose Committee on Senedd Reform. We appeared before the Llywydd's Committee to give evidence as part of its scrutiny of the 2022/23 financial estimate and accompanying 5-year corporate plan. Performance analysis Measure Performance Work with the Scottish Parliament and Senedd to implement our new accountability arrangements, including a new funding formula and business plans for Scotland and Wales Completed We comment on 100% of relevant legislation and policy proposals 100% Achieved Further specific performance measures for Wales are being developed and will become operational in 2022-23. Looking ahead While elections in Wales are well run and our survey work shows high levels of public satisfaction in the processes in place for voters to register and cast their votes, challenges still remain. To support more newly enfranchised voters across Wales to become involved in Welsh democracy, we will extend the reach and impact of our education programme ahead of the Welsh local government elections in 2022 and Senedd election in 2026. We want to build on the work already achieved by engaging further with partner organisations across Wales to educate young people about the democratic process and to prepare educators to teach political literacy with confidence. We will support parties and campaigners to comply with the law, while continuing to ensure political finance is transparent. We will support Returning Officers and electoral administrators to help them meet the challenges they face in delivering well-run electoral services and adapt to the increasingly diverse approach to the way elections are delivered, brought about by devolution and the changing needs of voters. We will work closely with the Senedd and Welsh Government as they introduce new primary legislation to bring into effect plans for both Senedd and electoral reforms. We will, through our work with the Wales Electoral Coordination Board, seek to ensure that the views of Returning Officers and s are taken into account in the development of this new legislation. Underpinning our

five-year plan is the requirement to provide value for money and maintain a well-run organisation. The plan incorporates a renewed focus on equality, diversity and inclusion, and is designed to encourage staff engagement, development of skills and use of the technology required to support effective ways of working and continuous learning and improvement. We look forward to working constructively with the Welsh Government, Senedd, other UK governments and parliaments, parties and campaigners, electoral administrators and other interested groups to maintain voter confidence in our electoral system. Commitment to EDI As noted above we have taken significant steps to refresh our approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), including producing and consulting on a new EDI Strategy. As a key part of this work, we are committed to the principle that in its conduct of public business and provision of resources and services, the Welsh and languages should be treated on a basis of equality. During 2021/22, we undertook important work with regard to the Welsh language. This has led to further improvement in the service we provide to partners in Wales in the language of their choice and to ensuring that the Welsh Language Standards, set in July 2016, are not only met, but that we are innovative and ambitious in the services that we provide. Using resources During 2021/22 we utilised £1.65m of resources from the £1.75m available. This was predominately for staffing £1.15m (69.69%) and Campaigns £0.50m (27%); the remaining amounts represent the Senedd contribution to common activities and corporate overheads. The underspend is due to savings in design and print of guidance materials, digital transparency campaigns and depreciation. Governance Accountability to the Senedd While the Electoral Commission has regularly reported to both the Scottish and Welsh parliaments in relation to our role at devolved elections, formal accountability (through legislation) has previously only been to the UK Parliament, specifically to the Speaker's Committee of the House of Commons. From 1 April 2021 the Commission became formally accountable to, and received funding from, the Senedd in respect of its functions in relation to devolved Welsh elections and referendums. The Commission reports to the Llywydd's Committee which was established for this purpose and works to the "Statement of Funding Principles". In the autumn we submitted our first set of estimates to both the Scottish and Welsh parliaments enabling the UK Treasury to transfer the agreed level of funding to the Welsh Consolidated Fund and the Scottish Parliament. These processes will ensure all parliaments can be confident in scrutinising our work plans and accounts in the coming years. Funding and financial governance Commission expenditure on devolved matters is payable out of the Welsh Consolidated Fund, following the Senedd and Elections (Wales) Act 2020. However Section 129 of the Government of Wales Act 2006 lists the bodies to which payments can be made from the Welsh Consolidated Fund. It does not include the Electoral Commission. Therefore, the Welsh Government has agreed to undertake the administrative function for drawing down funding and paying it to the Commission on behalf of the Senedd. As part of preparing the Governance Statement and Accounts for the Welsh Government and the Fund, the Permanent Secretary will formally write to the Electoral Commission Accounting Officer to seek a general assurance in respect of the systems of internal control. This is to ensure the propriety and regularity of funding provided from the Welsh Government budget and payable from the Fund.

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pilot schemes First published: 4 July 2019 Last updated: 4 July 2019 Page summary
This page outlines key figures from each local authority holding voter identification
(ID) pilots at the May 2019 local elections. Local authorities Braintree Impact on
voters Voters at the ballot box 112,754 31% 203 73 0.3% people were registered to
vote of the electorate voted at the ballot box voters were initially turned away of
those turned away did not return were not issued with a ballot paper The types of ID
that voters used In Braintree, voters could choose to show either a specified form of
photo ID or two pieces of specified non-photo ID. Nine out of every ten people
(90.4%) used photographic identification at the polling station, with just 9.6% using
ID with no picture. Use of photographic ID in Braintree The three most commonly-used
forms of identification were: Forms of ID used in Braintree The local authority
issued... 1 ID certificate locally Experiences of voters Of the people we spoke to:
42% 80% 100% 67% had seen or heard something about the pilots knew that they would
have to take a form of ID to the polling station think it would be easy to do at
future elections would be more confident in the security of the election if
photographic ID was required in the future The top three places people heard about
the pilots were: Letter or postcard Poll card Local TV news 27% 25% 21% Perceptions
of fraud The number of people who thought that electoral fraud is not a problem rose
from 31% in January to 54% in May. Perceptions of electoral fraud in Braintree.
Rounding of figures means they may not total 100%. In May, 99% of people thought
voting in a polling station is safe from fraud or abuse. Impact on administration of
the poll Of the electoral administration staff we spoke to: 99% 74% 66% felt
instructions on acceptable forms of ID were clear had no problems checking ID were
very confident this could be replicated at another election Broxtowe Impact on voters
Voters at the ballot box 81,390 40% 231 69 0.3% people were registered to vote of the
electorate voted at the ballot box voters were initially turned away of those turned
away did not return of voters who tried to vote could not The types of ID that voters
used In Broxtowe, voters could choose to show either a specified form of photo ID or
two pieces of specified non-photo ID. Nine out of every ten people (92.3%) used
photographic identification at the polling station, with just 7.7% using ID with no
picture. Use of photographic ID in Broxtowe The three most commonly-used forms of
identification were: Forms of ID used. Other forms (shown in green) comprised 1.5%.
The local authority issued... 2 1 ID certificate locally replacement polling card
Experiences of voters Of the people we spoke to: 62% 94% 86% 45% had seen or heard
something about the pilots knew that they would have to take a form of ID to the
polling station think it would be easy to do at future elections would be more
confident in the security of the election if photographic ID was required in the
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news Letter or postcard 38% 21% 20% Perceptions of fraud The number of people who
thought that electoral fraud is not a problem rose from 27% in January to 54% in May.
Perceptions of electoral fraud. Rounding of figures means they may not total 100%. In
May, 84% of people thought voting in a polling station is safe from fraud or abuse.
Impact on administration of the poll Of the electoral administration staff we spoke
to: 88% 63% 64% felt instructions on acceptable forms of ID were clear had no
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Craven Impact on voters Voters at the ballot box 27,687 37% 129 49 0.7% people were
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turned away of those turned away did not return were not issued with a ballot paper The types of ID that voters used In Craven, voters could choose to show either a specified form of photo ID or two pieces of specified non-photo ID. Nine out of every ten people (90.4%) used photographic identification at the polling station, with just 9.6% using ID with no picture. Use of photographic ID in Craven The three most commonly-used forms of identification were: Forms of ID used in Craven The local authority issued... 0 ID certificates locally Experiences of voters Of the people we spoke to: 61% 98% 80% 27% had seen or heard something about the pilots knew that they would have to take a form of ID to the polling station think it would be easy to do at future elections would be more confident in the security of the election if photographic ID was required in the future The top three places people heard about the pilots were: Poll card Letter or postcard Local TV news 34% 29% 22% Perceptions of fraud Craven joined the pilot scheme too late to be included in the January public opinion fieldwork. Perceptions of electoral fraud in Craven. Rounding of figures means they may not total 100%. In May, 85% of people thought voting in a polling station is safe from fraud or abuse. Impact on administration of the poll Of the electoral administration staff we spoke to: 96% 73% 71% felt instructions on acceptable forms of ID were clear had no problems checking ID were very confident this could be replicated at another election Derby Impact on voters Voters at the ballot box 178,641 36% 514 256 0.6% people were registered to vote of the electorate voted at the ballot box voters were initially turned away of those turned away did not return were not issued with a ballot paper The types of ID that voters used In Derby, voters could choose to show either a specified form of photo ID or two pieces of specified non-photo ID. Eight out of every ten people (83.9%) used photographic identification at the polling station, with 16.1% using ID with no picture. Use of photographic ID in Derby The three most commonly-used forms of identification were: Forms of ID used in Derby The local authority issued... 0 300 ID certificate locally replacement poll cards Experiences of voters Of the people we spoke to: 45% 91% 90% 40% had seen or heard something about the pilots knew that they would have to take a form of ID to the polling station think it would be easy to do at future elections would be more confident in the security of the election if photographic ID was required in the future The top three places people heard about the pilots were: Poll card Local TV news Local radio 33% 21% 16% Perceptions of fraud The number of people who thought that electoral fraud is not a problem fell from 32% in January to 30% in May. Perceptions of electoral fraud in Derby. Rounding of figures means they may not total 100%. In May, 85% of people thought voting in a polling station is safe from fraud or abuse. Impact on administration of the poll Of the electoral administration staff we spoke to: 92% 75% 77% felt instructions on acceptable forms of ID were clear had no problems checking ID were very confident this could be replicated at another election Mid Sussex Impact on voters Voters at the ballot box 104,929 37% 15 8 0.03% people were registered to vote of the electorate voted at the ballot box voters were initially turned away of those turned away did not return were not issued with a ballot paper The types of ID that voters used In Mid Sussex, voters could show either their poll card or a specified form of photo ID. Nine out of every ten people (94.4%) used their poll card at the polling station, with 5.6% using photographic identification. Use of photographic ID in Mid Sussex The three most commonly-used forms of identification were: Forms of ID used. 'Driving license' (shown in magenta) comprised 4.5%; 'passport' (purple) 0.9%; and other forms (green) 0.2%. The local authority issued... 40-50 replacement poll cards Experiences of voters Of the people we spoke to: 36% 79% 92% 48% had seen or heard something about the pilots knew that

they would have to take a form of ID to the polling station think it would be easy to do at future elections would be more confident in the security of the election if photographic ID was required in the future The top three places people heard about the pilots were: Poll card Local TV news Letter or postcard 30% 14% 11% Perceptions of fraud The number of people who thought that electoral fraud is not a problem remained at 30% from January to May. Perceptions of electoral fraud. Rounding of figures means they may not total 100%. In May, 86% of people thought voting in a polling station is safe from fraud or abuse. Impact on administration of the poll Of the electoral administration staff we spoke to: 95% 72% 79% felt instructions on acceptable forms of ID were clear had no problems checking ID were very confident this could be replicated at another election North Kesteven Impact on voters Voters at the ballot box 81,219 31% 145 68 0.4% people were registered to vote of the electorate voted at the ballot box voters were initially turned away of those turned away did not return were not issued with a ballot paper The types of ID that voters used In North Kesteven, voters could choose to show either a specified form of photo ID or two pieces of specified non-photo ID. Nine out of every ten people (89.6%) used photographic identification at the polling station, with 10.4% using ID with no picture. Use of photographic ID in North Kesteven The three most commonly-used forms of identification were: Forms of ID used in North Kesteven The local authority issued... 0 ID certificates locally Experiences of voters Of the people we spoke to: 49% 93% 97% 48% had seen or heard something about the pilots knew that they would have to take a form of ID to the polling station think it would be easy to do at future elections would be more confident in the security of the election if photographic ID was required in the future The top three places people heard about the pilots were: Letter or postcard Poll card Word of mouth 59% 36% 14% Perceptions of fraud The number of people who thought that electoral fraud is not a problem rose from 35% in January to 59% in May. Perceptions of electoral fraud. Rounding of figures means they may not total 100%. In May, 86% of people thought voting in a polling station is safe from fraud or abuse. Impact on administration of the poll Of the electoral administration staff we spoke to: 98% 78% 68% felt instructions on acceptable forms of ID were clear had no problems checking ID were very confident this could be replicated at another election NW Leics Impact on voters Voters at the ballot box 62,660 31% 266 61 0.4% people were registered to vote of the electorate voted at the ballot box voters were initially turned away of those turned away did not return were not issued with a ballot paper The types of ID that voters used In NW Leics, voters could show either their poll card or a specified form of photo ID. Nine out of every ten people (95.3%) used their poll card at the polling station, with just 4.6% using photographic ID. Use of photographic ID in NW Leics The three most commonly-used forms of identification were: Forms of ID used. 'Driving license' (shown in magenta) comprised 3.6%; 'passport' (purple) 0.6%; and other forms (green) 0.5%. Experiences of voters Of the people we spoke to: 38% 63% 90% 46% had seen or heard something about the pilots knew that they would have to take a form of ID to the polling station think it would be easy to do at future elections would be more confident in the security of the election if photographic ID was required in the future The top three places people heard about the pilots were: Poll card Local TV news Word of mouth 24% 19% 15% Perceptions of fraud The number of people who thought that electoral fraud is not a problem fell from 38% in January to 26% in May. Perceptions of electoral fraud. Rounding of figures means they may not total 100%. In May, 87% of people thought voting in a polling station is safe from fraud or abuse. Impact on administration of the poll Of the electoral administration staff we spoke

to: 98% 76% 56% felt instructions on acceptable forms of ID were clear had no problems checking ID were very confident this could be replicated at another election Pendle Impact on voters Voters at the ballot box 58,796 38% 284 101 0.7% people were registered to vote of the electorate voted at the ballot box voters were initially turned away of those turned away did not return were not issued with a ballot paper The types of ID that voters used In Pendle, voters had to show a specified form of photo ID. The three most commonly-used forms of identification were: Forms of ID used in Pendle The local authority issued... 70 local elector identity cards Experiences of voters Of the people we spoke to: 50% 90% 73% 32% had seen or heard something about the pilots knew that they would have to take a form of ID to the polling station think it would be easy to do at future elections would be more confident in the security of the election if photographic ID was required in the future The top three places people heard about the pilots were: Local TV news Letter or postcard Local newspaper and Poll card 19% 17% 15% Perceptions of fraud The number of people who thought that electoral fraud is not a problem rose from 21% in January to 30% in May. Perceptions of electoral fraud. Rounding of figures means they may not total 100%. In May, 74% of people thought voting in a polling station is safe from fraud or abuse. Impact on administration of the poll Of the electoral administration staff we spoke to: 91% 78% 63% felt instructions on acceptable forms of ID were clear had no problems checking ID were very confident this could be replicated at another election Watford Impact on voters Voters at the ballot box 70,596 33% 94 33 0.2% people were registered to vote of the electorate voted at the ballot box voters were initially turned away of those turned away did not return were not issued with a ballot paper The types of ID that voters used In Watford, voters could show either their poll card or a specified form of photo ID. Almost nine out of every ten people (88.2%) used their poll card at the polling station, with 11.8% using photo ID. Use of photographic ID in Watford The three most commonly-used forms of identification were: Forms of ID used in Watford. 'Passport' (shown in purple) comprised 2.6%, and other forms (in green) 0.8%. The local authority issued... 69 replacement poll cards Experiences of voters Of the people we spoke to: 23% 66% 99% 83% had seen or heard something about the pilots knew that they would have to take a form of ID to the polling station think it would be easy to do at future elections would be more confident in the security of the election if photographic ID was required in the future The top three places people heard about the pilots were: Word of mouth Local newspaper Local TV news 13% 11% 10% Perceptions of fraud The number of people who thought that electoral fraud is not a problem rose from 21% in January to 36% in May. Perceptions of electoral fraud in Watford. Rounding of figures means they may not total 100%. In May, 92% of people thought voting in a polling station is safe from fraud or abuse. Impact on administration of the poll Of the electoral administration staff we spoke to: 97% 82% 82% felt instructions on acceptable forms of ID were clear had no problems checking ID were very confident this could be replicated at another election Woking Impact on voters Voters at the ballot box 74,156 36% 87 22 0.1% people were registered to vote of the electorate voted at the ballot box voters were initially turned away of those turned away did not return were not issued with a ballot paper The types of ID that voters used In Woking, voters had to show a specified form of photo ID. The three most commonly-used forms of identification were: Forms of ID used. Other forms (shown in green) comprised 2.0%. The local authority issued... 24 local elector identity cards Experiences of voters Of the people we spoke to: 45% 99% 99% 41% had seen or heard something about the pilots knew that they would have to take a form of ID to the polling station think it would be

easy to do at future elections would be more confident in the security of the election if photographic ID was required in the future The top three places people heard about the pilots were: Letter or postcard Poll card Local newspaper 36% 27% 16% Perceptions of fraud The number of people who thought that electoral fraud is not a problem rose from 33% in January to 62% in May. Perceptions of electoral fraud in Woking. Rounding of figures means they may not total 100%. In May, 91% of people thought voting in a polling station is safe from fraud or abuse. Impact on administration of the poll Of the electoral administration staff we spoke to: 96% 77% 83% felt instructions on acceptable forms of ID were clear had no problems checking ID were very confident this could be replicated at another election Related content Register to vote All you need to register to vote is 5 minutes and your National Insurance number. Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Party registration decisions View our decisions on political party names, descriptions and emblems Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run

Codes of Practice on spending by candidates and political parties at elections to the Scottish Parliament: a consultation | Electoral Commission Search

Codes of Practice on spending by candidates and political parties at elections to the Scottish Parliament: a consultation You are in the Our consultations section

Home Our consultations On this page How to respond Introduction What this consultation is for Explaining the Codes of Practice Download the Codes The consultation First published: 15 April 2020 Last updated: 28 July 2020 How to respond This consultation closed on 15 July 2020. We will consider the responses we received and publish our response soon. Introduction Elections legislation enables us to prepare Codes of Practice about election spending for political parties and candidates. We have previously drafted and consulted on Codes of Practice for elections that fall within the remit of UK Parliament and the Senedd in Wales. The Scottish Elections (Reform) Bill, currently going through the Scottish Parliament, will after Royal Assent extend our powers to make candidate Codes for devolved Scottish elections. A Code of Practice is a statutory document that provides detailed practical guidance on how to comply with legal obligations. Our aims in preparing the Codes are: to provide guidance for candidates, their agents and political parties about what items of spending count towards the spending limits and are to be reported to provide enhanced clarity to political parties and candidates about when spending (including notional spending) should be in a candidate return and when it should be in a party return to ensure that there is clarity and consistency in the reporting of spending, including digital campaigning by parties and candidates The Codes we are consulting on will apply to elections to the Scottish Parliament. These Codes set out what is and isn't included in the categories of spending for elections that are listed in the legislation. The Codes also allow us to give guidance on the cases and circumstances when spending will be regarded as for the purposes of a candidate's election. Once finalised, the Codes will be presented to Scottish Ministers for approval (with or without modification), before being laid before the Scottish Parliament for approval. When in force, political parties and candidates must have regard to the Codes, particularly when organising their campaigns and when completing their spending returns after an election. Following the Codes will provide parties and candidates with a statutory defence. We would welcome views on the draft Codes. We invite comment in particular from those who will need to have regard to the Codes once in force. What this consultation is for . Codes of practice for Scottish Parliament elections We have the power under Schedule 8, paragraph 3 Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act (PPERA) 2000, to prepare a Code for political parties on what does and does not fall in Part 1 of that Schedule. The Scottish Elections (Reform) Bill, currently going through the Scottish Parliament will, once law, provide the Commission with the power to draft a Code of Practice for candidates at devolved Scottish elections. To ensure that our aims in preparing the Codes are achieved, we are consulting with Scottish Government, political parties and other stakeholders from across the electoral community. Once the consultation process is completed and we have made any necessary changes to the Codes, they will be presented to Scottish Ministers for approval, and then will be laid before the Scottish Parliament. The Codes we are currently consulting on are for elections to the Scottish Parliament and will not apply to other elections. Other Codes of Practice and consultations We have previously prepared Codes of Practice for political parties and candidates for UK Parliamentary elections and other elections that fall under the remit of UK Parliament. We have also consulted on Codes for elections under the remit of the Senedd in Wales. These Scottish Codes have been drafted taking account of the

consultation responses and feedback we received from Governments, political parties and other stakeholders, in our previous consultations. Our aim is to ensure that the Codes are applied consistently, so far as possible, in elections across GB and Northern Ireland.

Explaining the Codes of Practice

How election spending works

Spending by parties and candidates in the lead up to elections is regulated. The law places separate limits on how much candidates and parties can spend on campaigning. There are also controls on who can incur and pay for spending to make sure election spending is within the legal limits.

Candidates at an election to the Scottish Parliament can stand as a candidate in a constituency, or as a candidate on a regional list, or they can do both if the constituency is located within the region where they are standing. Candidates that stand in a constituency and on a regional list are known as 'dual candidates'. Campaign spending promoting the regional list candidates counts towards the party campaign spending limit and must be reported in the party return. Spending promoting the constituency candidate counts toward the separate candidate limit. There may be some instances where campaign material promotes both the regional list candidates and a constituency candidate. In these instances, campaign spending may need to be split between the candidate return and the party return. Sometimes candidates make use of items their supporters (such as their party or a non-party campaigner) have transferred or made available to them at less than market value. The law requires an amount to be treated as spending by the candidate. This is called 'notional spending'. A candidate's notional spending must be included in their spending return. A similar rule applies to parties. A party's notional spending must be reported in the party return. Parties and candidates are required to report spending within certain categories. These categories are set out in the legislation. Some of the categories for parties and candidates are the same and some are different. For example both sets of rules include categories called 'advertising' and 'unsolicited material'. However, the rules for political parties have additional separate categories for 'party political broadcasts' and 'manifestos'.

What the Codes do

The Codes set out what should be included in each category of spending, as well as listing what isn't included. The Codes are designed to give illustrative examples rather than an exhaustive list. In particular, the Codes seek to address:

- the circumstances when something should be in a candidate return and when something should be reported by a political party
- how to account for spending that promotes dual candidates (a candidate standing in both a constituency and in an electoral region)

Why we are making the Codes

In writing these Codes we have drawn on our experience of regulating elections and reviewing spending returns. We learnt a lot from the feedback we received on the UK and Welsh Codes. We asked parties about their experiences and incorporated their views. We want to gather more feedback through this consultation. The aim of the Codes is to ensure that the rules are as clear and comprehensive as possible. This should make it easier for candidates and parties to comply with the law. This will improve transparency, fairness, and consistency, and therefore improve public and campaigner confidence.

For example:

- The Codes will promote consistency in reporting, so everyone knows what to expect in a spending return of a candidate or party.
- Parties and candidates should find it easier to comply with the law and this should make it easier for people to compare returns and spending, and check that the rules are being followed.

In turn, this will increase transparency of election spending. Given the commentary around spending on digital campaigning at elections, the Codes are one way we are able to be clear where money spent on digital campaigning at elections should be reported. Since these are statutory Codes, having been approved by the Scottish Parliament, they will create an

enforceable framework of how election spending law will be applied. This strengthens the regulatory framework of spending at elections. Download the Codes The consultation We are seeking your views on whether we have achieved our stated aims. Please answer the questions in your consultation response. You are welcome to send us any comments you may have outside of the questions we have asked. The language in the Codes The Codes are a piece of statutory guidance. They will be laid before the Scottish Parliament. This means we need to use formal language. However we also want the Codes to be easy to read and understand. Deciding where to account for an item of spending Candidate spending and party spending The political party and candidate Codes are intended to give clear guidance as to what should be in a candidate spending return and what should be in a party spending return. The candidate Code explains when something is candidate spending. You can find this section on pages 9 to 12 of the candidate Code under the heading, "When will expenses be regarded as incurred for the purposes of a candidate's election?" This will help the candidate and their agent know what counts as candidate spending. It will also help parties with knowing what is not candidate spending, and needs to be reported as party spending. This will include any spending by the party to promote regional party list candidates. In elections to the Scottish Parliament, some campaign materials will encourage voters both to vote for a constituency candidate, and to vote for a political party in the regional elections using their second vote. Therefore, while some campaign activity can be regarded as used wholly for the purposes of the candidate's election in a constituency, in other circumstances the costs of campaign material will need to be split between the candidate and the party. The Codes will provide guidance on when to apportion costs between the two spending returns. Under our powers to draft Codes of Practice, we are limited in what we are able to include in the Codes about splitting spending between the candidate and party return. So we will provide further guidance on how to split spending alongside the Codes. The candidate Code also explains how to account for spending which promotes dual candidates (where a candidate stands both in a constituency, and on a regional party list). Examples in the Codes The draft Codes currently include specific examples for illustration purposes. These can be found set out in the boxes on pages 10 to 12 of the candidate Code and pages 9 to 10 of the party Code. Further comments We welcome any further comments that you may have in relation to the Codes. Related content Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Party registration decisions View our decisions on political party names, descriptions and emblems View current applications View the political party names, descriptions and emblems which we are currently considering as part of our assessment process Registers of unincorporated associations Download and view the registers of unincorporated associations

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Investigations On this page The decision to investigate What our investigation found

Offences committed First published: 11 May 2018 Last updated: 13 June 2021 Overview

In February 2017 the Commission became aware of reports suggesting that services had been provided to Leave.EU by the US data analytics firm Cambridge Analytica and the US campaign strategist firm Goddard Gunster. Leave.EU did not report spending on either. Any services provided at no cost would have constituted a donation from an impermissible source. An investigation was opened in April 2017. The scope of that investigation was extended as further evidence came to light. It examined: whether Leave.EU exceeded its statutory spending limit for referendum campaigning. As a registered campaigner that was not a political party and was not the designated lead for one of the referendum outcomes, it had a limit of £700,000 the accuracy of pre-poll transaction reporting of regulated transactions (loans) totalling £6m given to Leave.EU in relation to the referendum the completeness of Leave.EU's referendum campaign spending return, looking at the same transactions, the spending, and the inclusion of supporting invoices and receipts for payments over £200 Update – 11 October 2019 Leave.EU appealed against the sanctions set out in the following report. Judgments were given on the appeal by the Central London County Court: firstly on liability for the offences, on 21 March 2019, and secondly on the size of the penalties, on 8 April 2019. The Court substantively refused the appeal and confirmed all offences, but allowed parts of the appeal. It upheld three of the penalties imposed, totalling £50,000, but reduced one of the penalties from £20,000 to £16,000. Leave.EU was therefore fined £66,000 in total. It has subsequently paid these fines.

Summary of findings We made the following findings: as a non-designated campaigner, the referendum spending limit imposed by section 118(1) and Schedule 14(1)(2)(c) PPERA on Leave.EU was £700,000. Leave.EU reported spending of £693,094, which is £6,906 under the spending limit. Leave.EU failed to include a minimum of £77,380 in its spending return, which meant that it exceeded its spending limit more than 10%. We are satisfied that the actual figure was in fact greater, given the failure to report an appropriate proportion of the cost of services provided by Goddard Gunster. The responsible person for Leave.EU authorised those expenses to be incurred by or behalf of Leave.EU. We are satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that she knew or ought reasonably to have known that the expenses would be incurred in excess of the spending limit on 28 April 2016 in its pre-poll transaction reports, Leave.EU reported the receipt of three regulated transactions from Mr Arron Banks totalling £6m. These were the only reported sources of funding for Leave.EU's referendum campaign. Leave.EU did not report these transactions correctly. The dates the transactions were entered into, the repayment date, the interest rate and the provider of the transactions were all incorrectly reported. These transactions were also incorrectly reported in Leave.EU's referendum spending return. While the repayment date and interest rates were correct in that return, the date the transactions were entered into and the provider were not. Variations to the transactions were also not correctly reported. Leave.EU paid for services from the US campaign strategy firm Goddard Gunster that should have been reported in its spending return but were not. Those services from Goddard Gunster were paid for before the regulated period started on 15 April 2016, but Leave.EU made use of them during the regulated period. Accordingly, a proportion of the cost of services from Goddard Gunster should have been included in Leave.EU's spending return. The Commission cannot, on the available evidence, quantify the exact proportion of this spending

which should have been declared Leave.EU failed to include spending of £77,380 in its referendum spending return, being fees paid to the company Better for the Country Limited as its campaign organiser Leave.EU failed to provide the required invoice or receipt for 97 payments of over £200, totalling £80,224 Based on the evidence we have seen, we are satisfied that Leave.EU did not receive donations or paid-for services from Cambridge Analytica that should have been reported in its spending return.

Public statements from both Cambridge Analytica and Leave.EU (including its directors Mr Arron Banks and Mr Andy Wigmore) from 2016-17 implied services were being provided; however, the evidence shows that the relationship did not develop beyond initial scoping work and no contract was agreed between them. Finally, we found that it was more probable than not that Leave.EU's spending return under-stated the apportioned value of 15 payments totalling £129,720. However, the lack of clear records held by Leave.EU on how these activities were used over time meant that we could not determine beyond reasonable doubt whether the reported value was right or wrong. No offence was found in respect of these payments. The decision to investigate In February 2017 we saw media reports suggesting that services had been provided to Leave.EU by the US data analytics firm Cambridge Analytica and the US campaign strategist firm Goddard Gunster. We also received a complaint from Mr Stephen Kinnock MP on the same subject. Leave.EU's spending return did not include spending on either. Any services provided at no cost would have constituted a donation from an impermissible source. The reports and complaint drew attention to various public statements made by Leave.EU's director Mr Arron Banks, and its communications director Mr Andrew Wigmore. These included the following: A Leave.EU press release of November 2015 stating that it had hired Cambridge Analytica and Goddard Gunster A 23 December 2015 Politico.com article and a series of tweets in which Mr Banks spoke positively of the capabilities of Cambridge Analytica and stated that it had been providing services to Leave.EU A statement in February 2016 by the SCL Group, the Cambridge Analytica parent company, which said that Cambridge Analytica teamed with Leave.EU to "supercharge" Leave.EU's social media campaign leading up to the EU referendum A tweet by Mr Banks on 7 February 2016 which said "...Our campaign is being run by Gerry Gunster..." A Leave.EU press release issued on 28 June 2016 regarding Mr Banks' book The Bad Boys of Brexit which said Leave.EU was intending to "...do a big drumroll for Goddard Gunster, highlighting the accuracy of the polling, their messaging, understanding the voters..." and which went on to say: "The Leave.EU team thanks Goddard Gunster Public Affairs for its crucial strategic role of the Leave.EU campaign." According to Arron Banks, Leave.EU co-chairman, Goddard Gunster contributed significantly on a number of fronts: "They made our social media effort a massive success; providing a platform far bigger than the ones built up by either the Remain campaign or the official Vote Leave group... The end result," according to Banks, "was not just a fantastic tool for direct outreach, bypassing the broadcast and print media entirely, but an extremely useful database that Goddard Gunster was able to mine, allowing it to conduct in-depth demographic polling and recommend precision target-messaging An interview of Mr Gunster in the Washingtonian , reported on 29 June 2016, in which he stated Goddard Gunster embedded staff in the Leave.EU office in London: "My role with Leave.EU was to provide strategic advice on the mechanics of running a referendum campaign. I brought them the methodology and the science behind how best to win, based on my experience of running many ballot measure campaigns here in the U.S." A report in the Financial Times on 5 March 2017 in which Mr Wigmore stated that Leave.EU used artificial intelligence analysis, which was "...then executed by... Goddard Gunster." Various tweets by Mr Banks and Mr Wigmore both

before and after the EU referendum referencing Cambridge Analytica, including Mr Banks stating that “We have made no secret of working with Cambridge” on 3 March 2017, and Mr Wigmore telling the Guardian that Cambridge Analytica taught Leave.EU to gather data from social media. We asked Leave.EU about these statements. It told us that it had been in a tendering process with Cambridge Analytica and did not engage its services when the Go Movement Limited was not designated as lead Leave campaigner. Leave.EU said it received no services or advice from Cambridge Analytica either paid or unpaid. It went on to say that Goddard Gunster did provide services, including giving advice to Mr Banks, but that advice was given and paid for prior to the referendum regulated period starting on 15 April 2016. We also raised these matters with Cambridge Analytica, which said that its relationship with Leave.EU was limited to a business development relationship for the purpose of securing a potential contract with Leave.EU in the event Go Movement Limited was designated as a lead campaigner in the referendum. Cambridge Analytica stated that it met with Leave.EU on several occasions to discuss the services it could provide, but that no work was done and no value provided to Leave.EU either paid or unpaid. Having assessed the matter in line with its Enforcement Policy, we concluded that we had reasonable grounds to suspect that Leave.EU’s referendum spending return was incorrect. In April 2017 we opened an investigation. Further information What we investigated The scope of the investigation extended as evidence came to light. The following matters were examined: whether the Leave.EU pre-poll regulated transaction reports and post poll campaign EU referendum spending return correctly reported regulated transactions it entered into prior to the EU referendum (the transactions issues) whether the Leave.EU referendum spending return was incomplete in respect of donations from or spending on services provided by Cambridge Analytica (the Cambridge Analytica issues) and Goddard Gunster (the Goddard Gunster issues) whether the same return was incomplete in respect of spending on services provided by Better for the Country Limited (the Better for the Country issues) whether the same return was otherwise incomplete in respect of all campaign payments and associated invoices or receipts (the further omitted invoices and payments issues) whether Leave.EU exceeded the spending limit of £700,000 for a non-designated, non-party registered campaigner set out in Schedule 14, paragraph 1, of PPERA (the spending limit issue) The potential offences under investigation were: failure, without reasonable excuse, to accurately declare regulated transactions in the pre-poll reports, which is an offence under paragraph 5(9)(b) of Schedule 2 of EURA failure, without reasonable excuse, to include a statement of relevant donations received in respect of the referendum, which is an offence under section 122(4)(b) of PPERA failure, without reasonable excuse, to declare spending or notional spending incurred, which is an offence under section 122(4)(b) of PPERA failure, without reasonable excuse, to provide the required supporting documentation for payments in excess of £200, which is an offence under section 122(4)(c) of PPERA incurring spending in excess of the spending limit set out in Schedule 14 of PPERA where the responsible person knew or ought to have known that the spending would exceed that limit, which is an offence under section 118(2)(c)(i) and (ii) of PPERA The relevant legal framework is set out at the end of this report. The investigation in detail Leave.EU and associated individuals In April 2017 we asked Leave.EU, Mr Banks and Mr Wigmore for information about the matters under investigation, and invited Mr Banks and Mr Wigmore to interview. Mr Banks provided some high level responses but declined an interview. Mr Wigmore did not respond. We issued statutory Investigation Notices under Schedule 19B paragraph 3 of PPERA to Leave.EU and Mr Banks, requiring them to disclose relevant

material. Both Leave.EU and Mr Banks provided a significant amount of material in response. When analysing the material, we saw that Leave.EU and Mr Banks had only partially responded. Complete disclosure was made via a joint response in December 2017. In November 2017 we opened a separate investigation into the company Better for the Country Limited (company number 09609018), Mr Banks and associated entities. This investigation is ongoing. The material provided by Leave.EU and Mr Banks in that investigation raised further concerns about the completeness and accuracy of Leave.EU's referendum spending return, and its regulated transaction pre-poll reports. We told Leave.EU that the scope of the investigation had been expanded, and asked for relevant information. Leave.EU responded in February 2018. Engagement with other organisations During the investigation we contacted Cambridge Analytica and Goddard Gunster. Cambridge Analytica gave us substantial material in response to its questions. Goddard Gunster provided us with some of the information it asked for but said that it thought our request for documents was unreasonable. It also said that a confidentiality agreement was in place between it and Leave.EU so it couldn't provide anything further. We did not agree with these points, but continued the investigation using evidence it got from other sources. Engagement with other individuals We reviewed material put into the public domain by others including those who gave evidence to the Digital Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee inquiry into fake news. During the investigation we were approached by Dr Emma Briant of Essex University, who had interviewed Mr Wigmore (Leave.EU), Brittany Kaiser (Cambridge Analytica), Mr Gunster (Goddard Gunster) and Mr Nigel Oaks (SCL Group), as part of her academic research into data analytics. We reviewed details from these interviews, but did not consider that they provided evidence of the offences under investigation.

Determinations on offences In April 2018 we were satisfied that we had sufficient evidence to make initial determinations on the offences under investigation. In line with the requirements of Schedule 19C of PPERA, we issued a statutory notice to Leave.EU setting out its initial determinations and proposing penalties. The notice invited Leave.EU to make representations within the statutory 28 day period. On 1 May 2018, Leave.EU delivered its representations in respect of the proposed penalties to us. These were considered carefully before a final determination on offences and penalties was taken. We issued our final determinations to Leave.EU on 8 May 2018.

What our investigation found The transactions issues On 28 April 2016, as part of its required pre-poll transaction reporting, Leave.EU reported receiving three regulated transactions (loans) from Mr Banks, totalling £6m. These were the only reported sources of funding for Leave.EU's referendum campaign. We found that Leave.EU failed without reasonable excuse to report these transactions correctly. The dates the transactions were entered into, the repayment date, the interest rate and the provider of the transactions were all incorrectly reported. We also found that without reasonable excuse these transactions were also incorrectly reported in Leave.EU's referendum spending return. While the repayment date and interest rates were correct in that return, the date the transactions were entered into and the provider were not. Variations to the transactions were also not correctly reported. We therefore determined that the responsible person for Leave.EU committed an offence under paragraph 5(9)(b) of Schedule 2 of EURA in respect of the pre-poll transaction report. Further, these facts form part of an offence under section 122(4)(b) in respect of the referendum campaign spending return for Leave.EU.

Evidence and analysis On 28 April 2016, Leave.EU reported entering into three regulated transactions in its pre-poll regulated transaction return. Regulated transactions reported Start date Value Nature Lender Interest Date repayable 15 March 2016

£1,000,000 Loan Mr Arron Banks 0% 31/12/2017 31 March 2016 £3,000,000 Loan Mr Arron Banks 0% 31/12/2017 21 April 2016 £2,000,000 Loan Mr Arron Banks 0% 31/12/2017 As part of our investigation in respect of BFTCL and others, we obtained the loan documentation. This made it clear the reported information was inaccurate. The transaction of £3,000,000 was according to the written agreement actually entered into on 4 September 2015. The transaction of £2,000,000 was according to its written agreement entered into on 10 March 2016. The interest rate for all three transactions was, according to the agreements, 4% above bank base rate and not 0%, and the repayment dates for all three transactions was 31 December 2016 and not 2017. The evidence also included variation agreements of the terms of the transactions, in that on 17 May 2016 the repayment dates were all amended to 31 December 2017, and the interest rate for all was amended to zero. Leave.EU stated that the discrepancy in terms of the variations arose because the changes to the terms of the transactions had been agreed in principle orally before the time the pre-poll report was prepared and delivered. It provided evidence of written instructions to its solicitor to prepare variation agreements that it said constituted the formal documentation even though agreements had not been signed at the time of reporting. The legal requirement is, however, to report them accurately at the time of reporting. The transaction agreements included a clause requiring any variations to be in writing and signed. The variations in fact took place almost three weeks after the pre-poll regulated transaction report was delivered. Further, the Commission found that the funds were not provided in lump sums but appeared to be a credit facility Leave.EU could draw down as and when required. Leave.EU states that it reported the dates the transactions were entered into as the dates on which it first drew down funds. Consequently, we were satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that the transactions were not reported correctly. Further, we were satisfied that the funds reported were transferred from Rock Services Limited (company number 05960676 - a company controlled by Mr Arron Banks) to BFTCL (also controlled by Mr Banks) for use on expenditure by Leave.EU. Mr Banks was the controller of both companies, but according to Leave.EU, Rock Services Limited provided the funds on behalf of Mr Banks, acting as a proxy or third party. The reporting requirement was for both the company and Mr Banks to be identified as the provider. We were therefore satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that it was incorrect to report Mr Banks as the sole provider. The Cambridge Analytica issues The Cambridge Analytica issue We investigated whether Leave.EU had received services from Cambridge Analytica that: fell within the definition of referendum campaign activity should have been reported either as a donation in kind (if provided free or at less than commercial rate) or referendum spending Based on analysis of the evidence obtained during the investigation, we are satisfied that Leave.EU did not receive donations or paid-for services from Cambridge Analytica that should have been reported in its spending return. Public statements from both Cambridge Analytica and Leave.EU (including its directors Mr Banks and Mr Wigmore) from 2016-17 implied services were being provided. However, the evidence shows that the relationship did not develop beyond initial scoping work and no contract was agreed between them. Information about the activities of Cambridge Analytica continues to be disclosed. We will keep under review whether that provides evidence of involvement by Cambridge Analytica in Leave.EU's EU referendum campaign. Evidence Evidence and analysis We examined explanations and evidence provided by Cambridge Analytica, Leave.EU and Mr Banks of their working relationship in late 2015/early 2016. This included copies of correspondence, proposals for services, proposed contracts, draft speeches, presentations and other documents. We were evidence of the

following interactions between Leave.EU and Cambridge Analytica: 23 October 2015 – a meeting to introduce Mr Banks to Cambridge Analytica and give an overview of its services 18 November 2015 – a press launch for Leave.EU at which a Cambridge Analytica representative agreed to sit on a panel 20 November 2015 – a meeting between Cambridge Analytica and Leave.EU's social media team 4 December 2015 – a meeting between Cambridge Analytica and Ms Bilney, the responsible person for Leave.EU 6 January 2016 – Cambridge Analytica provided Leave.EU with a proposal document setting out at a high level the nature of the work it could do for the Leave.EU campaign 8 January 2016 – a meeting between Cambridge Analytica and Leave.EU at which Cambridge Analytica presented an overview of example data analysis, a proposed plan and costings. This data was drawn from a separate entity and the analysed dataset and resulting report was not provided to Leave.EU or Mr Banks 26 February 2016 – an internal SCL Group email confirmed that no contract will be agreed with Leave.EU We saw no evidence that Cambridge Analytica had any input into Leave.EU's referendum campaign. Instead, we saw evidence that the relationship between Cambridge Analytica and Leave.EU amounted to no more than preliminary engagement of a series of meetings and presentations. These were done as a pitching exercise by Cambridge Analytica prior to April 2016 with the expectation that services would be provided to the Go Movement Limited, supported by Leave.EU, should it be designated as the lead 'leave' campaigner. Meetings were held between Cambridge Analytica and Leave.EU to discuss Cambridge Analytica's capabilities and the signing of a potential contract. However, there is no evidence a contract was entered into. Cambridge Analytica told us that the meetings and presentations it undertook were typical of non-chargeable initial work in order to assess available data and scope an analysis proposal. It explained its media statements, such as the claim by its CEO Alexander Nix on 11 February 2016 that it had helped to 'supercharge' the Leave.EU social media campaign, by saying that at this point there had still been an intention to work with Leave.EU. It said that it received repeated verbal assurances by Mr Banks and Mr Wigmore that Cambridge Analytica would be contracted, and that the statement quoted as from Mr Nix was written by "an over-zealous PR/marketing consultant". The evidence we saw showed that Cambridge Analytica attempted several times to secure a contract with no apparent confirmation provided by Mr Banks or Leave.EU. Internal correspondence from Cambridge Analytica indicates that it was concerned that Leave.EU was using the reputation of Cambridge Analytica to bolster its own credibility and was exaggerating its relationship with Cambridge Analytica. It suggested to Leave.EU further public statements toning down the extent of the working relationship in light of the lack of any contract. The Goddard Gunster issues The Goddard Gunster issues We investigated whether Leave.EU had received services from Goddard Gunster that fell within the definition of referendum campaign activity should have been reported either as a donation in kind (if provided free or at less than commercial rate), notional spending or referendum spending We are satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that Leave.EU did pay for services from Goddard Gunster that should have been reported in its spending return. Further, we are satisfied that the responsible person for Leave.EU failed, without reasonable excuse, to include these payments in Leave.EU's referendum spending return. Further, these facts form part of an offence under section 122(4)(b) in respect of the referendum campaign spending return for Leave.EU. Those services from Goddard Gunster were paid for in advance of the regulated period commencing on 15 April 2016, but a proportion of the benefit from them was made use of by Leave.EU during the regulated period. Accordingly, a proportion of the cost of services from Goddard Gunster should have been included in

Leave.EU's spending return. We cannot, on the available evidence, quantify the exact proportion of spending in relation to the services provided by Goddard Gunster which should have been declared, but have found that it was incorrect not to declare any of this spending as referendum expenses. Evidence Evidence and analysis On 22 September 2015 Goddard Gunster signed a contract to work for Leave.EU (under the name it was formally known as at the time, TheKnow.EU). Under this contract, Leave.EU agreed to pay £20,000 at the signing of the agreement and then £20,000 at the first of each month for the duration of the agreement. Leave.EU also agreed to reimburse any expenses incurred by Goddard Gunster. We reviewed invoices, provided by Leave.EU, that showed the company BFTCL paid Goddard Gunster, on behalf of Leave.EU and Go Movement Limited, a total of £190,000 in monthly retainer fees alone between 21 September 2015 and 1 April 2016 for 'Strategic referendum advice and counsel' and input into an application for designation as lead campaigner for the 'leave' outcome. Over and above this, and also on behalf of Leave.EU, BFTCL paid Goddard Gunster approximately £56,000 in expenses prior to the regulated period. During the investigation Leave.EU provided a number of explanations as to why it did not report any of this spending on Goddard Gunster: Leave.EU said that the advice from Goddard Gunster was largely or completely provided to Leave.EU and Mr Banks in relation to the campaign strategy of the Go Movement Ltd, and on the assumption it would be designated a lead campaigner. Therefore, the advice was largely redundant once the Go Movement Ltd was not designated and it was not used by Leave.EU during the referendum period. Leave.EU and Mr Banks described the services provided by Goddard Gunster as being high level advice which was all provided prior to the referendum period. Mr Banks, for example, said that Goddard Gunster provided: "...high level ad hoc consultancy advice from around September 2015, paid for on a retainer basis. The retainer was brought to an end once the designation decision was made and before the restricted period came into effect. The advice received was not campaign related advice, so could in no way be counted as such in the spending return." Leave.EU stated that much of the advice was provided directly to Mr Banks in a variety of capacities, and so was not necessarily all related to his capacity as a senior figure in Leave.EU and BFTCL. We accept that, on the basis of the evidence it has seen, the advice from Goddard Gunster was paid for and largely provided prior to the referendum period. However, section 117(5) of PPERA states: Where— (a) at any time before the beginning of any referendum period, any expenses within section 111(2) are incurred by or on behalf of an individual or body in respect of any property, services or facilities, but (b) the property, services or facilities is or are made use of by or on behalf of the individual or body during the referendum period in circumstances such that, had any expenses been incurred in respect of that use during that period, they would by virtue of section 111(2) have constituted referendum expenses incurred by or on behalf of the individual or body during that period, the appropriate proportion of the expenses mentioned in paragraph (a) shall be treated for the purposes of this section as referendum expenses incurred by or on behalf of the individual or body during that period. In other words, if campaigners incur expenditure prior to the regulated period and benefits obtained from that spending are made use of during the regulated period, the spending must be treated as if it was incurred during the regulated period and must therefore be reported. We considered a significant volume of material obtained from Leave.EU relating to the support provided by Goddard Gunster to Leave.EU. The evidence included emails from Mr Gunster to various Leave.EU senior officers and showed a close working relationship between Goddard Gunster, Leave.EU and Arron Banks prior to the designation decision

with regular contact between the parties. Leave.EU said that Goddard Gunster's advice was relevant to a 'ground' campaign (i.e. door to door persuasion) and not to a social media campaign, which is what Leave.EU undertook following the unsuccessful Go Movement designation application. Leave.EU suggested, therefore, that any advice provided would have been rendered irrelevant following the decision to focus on a social media campaign following the designation. The advice provided by Goddard Gunster was at times general, but at other times detailed and specific. It included advice on planning a campaign, targeting of messages, identification of the most persuadable voter demographics, and comment and analysis of material provided to Goddard Gunster (including polling data). The documents included campaign plans tailored to a Go Movement Ltd/Leave.EU campaign, presumably to be conducted in the event that the Go Movement Limited was designated as a lead campaigner. Leave.EU described these documents as "...irrelevant for the purposes of the referendum."

However, we noted that they included phases marked 'complete'. We saw evidence that Goddard Gunster analysed polling data, which Leave.EU provided to him, and used it to identify key target demographics and key messages which would resonate with voters. For example, Goddard Gunster provided 'initial thoughts' for a 'systematic and phased campaign based on the research findings.' These include key 'strategic imperatives', a phased campaign plan, including 'voter identification and recruitment of likely 'leave' voters, 'Phase II: Persuasion' to 'Feed persuasion messaging' to 'soft leave and soft remain.' And 'Phase III: Final Push/GOTV'. It included messaging advice about tactics to ensure messages had the best chance of resonating with voters, provided detailed analysis of target demographics in terms of age, political views, employment and geographical location. We noted evidence demonstrating that Goddard Gunster's advice was under active consideration within Leave.EU days before the start of the regulated period. For example, internal correspondence from Leave.EU showed that on 12 April 2016 (three days before the regulated period started on 15 April 2016) senior Leave.EU individuals, including Mr Banks, Mr Wigmore and the responsible person Ms Bilney, discussed a potential campaign messaging strategy. A different senior Leave.EU official concluded that it was what Leave.EU "...should be doing under the phase coined by Gerry [Gunster] of 'persuading the persuadable'". Leave.EU then asked for Mr Gunster's advice on the proposed social media strategy. On 13 April 2016 Goddard Gunster was continuing to advise Leave.EU on campaign messaging and targeting, with specific reference to social media. On 15 April 2016, when the regulated period started, Goddard Gunster provided Leave.EU with some critique on a Vote Leave campaign advert and noting why he did not feel it was effective. Leave.EU stated that Goddard Gunster's advice "...was not new and did not change our strategy which was already in place and underway. We had developed our own capability and methodology by then and did not need or benefit from this information." However, even advice confirming that the messages being used were the most effective ones was of benefit to Leave.EU during the referendum campaign. Additionally, Leave.EU stated that Mr Gunster's advice had not been discussed or shared within Leave.EU and that the email of 13 April 2016 was the first time the social media team would have received it. This was despite the fact that it was clear from email evidence that these individuals were already familiar with at least part of Mr Gunster's advice from earlier emails. Further, we were satisfied that the advice resulted in practical steps being taken by Leave.EU. In a letter to us, Mr Banks explained how a call centre was established on the basis of advice from Goddard Gunster, which then continued to advise the project, when he stated: "In various discussions prior to the [regulated] period we discussed the use of polling and the effectiveness and accuracy

of polling. GG encouraged/advised me in general terms to make use of polling, which we then did. A call centre was established to call people and ask questions, GG would have periodically input their thoughts at a high level into the type of polling we were doing and questions that could be asked." Leave.EU's final point was that advice from Goddard Gunster was provided to Mr Banks personally and not to Leave.EU. The evidence, however, does not support this. Goddard Gunster was being paid by BTFC on behalf of Leave.EU, and was under contract to Leave.EU. Mr Banks was the Chair of Leave.EU. Much of the advice provided is directly relevant to a referendum campaigner. We asked Leave.EU and Mr Banks about the various public statements made by them indicating that Goddard Gunster worked on Leave.EU's referendum campaign. Leave.EU told us that the statements made prior to designation related to intended services which Goddard Gunster would have provided to the Go Movement Limited in the event of it being designated as lead campaigner. Further, it said that some of the more specific public statements concerning services from Goddard Gunster, including those in its own press releases, were inaccurate. It stated that, contrary to its press releases after the referendum, Goddard Gunster had no influence on its strategy, did not 'mine' any database or influence social media and did not assist in polling. Leave.EU explained that its public statements after the referendum were to: "vouch for their expertise generally since we were grateful for the experience they brought to bear on the pre-designation decision activities and were keen to work with them further. However the release was prepared by our London team who had no real knowledge of what GG had in fact done for us and [the responsible person for Leave.EU] had no involvement in or input into it. In [her] opinion, the release went too far in terms of GG's actual input." Mr Banks explained his previous public statements concerning Goddard Gunster as either concerning services he expected to be provided in the event of the Go Movement Limited being designated, or as simply being incorrect. Mr Banks and Leave.EU sought to distance themselves from the public statements made after the referendum and explained that the press release thanking Goddard Gunster was drafted by a team without knowledge of Mr Gunster's involvement. We noted, however, that on 27 June 2016 it was Mr Banks who emailed the relevant member of staff to explain to him what he would like the Leave.EU post referendum press release to contain: "We need a press release today thanking Goddard Gunster for their role in winning the referendum, the accuracy of their polling – calling the result exactly right 52/48. & explaining the social media strategy, understanding the voter profile and the massive social media campaign..." We are satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that the services provided by Goddard Gunster were relevant to Leave.EU's referendum campaign, and were made use of during it. This advice was provided to the Leave.EU director, Mr Banks, directly and to senior Leave.EU staff. When the Go Movement Limited designation application failed, it was Leave.EU which undertook the active campaign, and that campaign benefited from the advice from Goddard Gunster. Leave.EU paid a total of approximately £246,000 for this strategic advice. The legal obligation to quantify and report the value of spending with Goddard Gunster which benefitted Leave.EU's referendum campaign rested with the responsible person. This however did not happen. It is not possible on the basis of the evidence we have seen for us to make this assessment. The Better for the Country issues The Better for the Country issues We are satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that Leave.EU, without reasonable excuse, failed to include spending of £77,380 in its referendum spending return, comprising fees paid to BFTCL as its campaign organiser. These facts form part of an offence under section 122(4)(b) in respect of the referendum campaign spending return for Leave.EU. Evidence Evidence and analysis

Leave.EU effectively outsourced its referendum campaign to BFTCL, which incurred and paid for all staff and non-staff campaign expenditure in the name of Leave.EU, and then recharged Leave.EU. There were a number of personnel in common between Leave.EU and BFTCL. Mr Banks was a director of both, and the responsible person for Leave.EU was also a director of BFTCL. We obtained from Leave.EU the contract between Leave.EU and BFTCL. Under 'Terms of engagement', BFTCL's role was described as 'Campaign Management Services Provider'. The contract set out the services provided to Leave.EU by BFTCL on a contractor capacity, which included campaign advisory services, regulatory advisory services, media advisory services (such as public relations, branding and positioning and market research), administration and finance. More generally, the contracted services included the provision of campaign management services, including the payment of campaign spending incurred on Leave.EU's behalf. Under 'commission' within the contract, BFTCL charged Leave.EU a 'cost per seat' (which we calculated at 59% of salary) fee for each member of staff working on behalf of Leave.EU, in addition to the staff salaries. BFTCL also charged Leave.EU a management fee equal to 5% of the net campaign expenses incurred on its behalf. Under this arrangement, BFTCL would contract third party supply for campaign-related services and pay the supplier's invoice, but Leave.EU would be charged by BFTCL (and therefore incur) an amount equal to the invoice value plus an additional 5% of the invoice value to BFTCL. Leave.EU did not report the cost/value of those fees paid to BFTCL. During the investigation Leave.EU did not provide an explanation for why the 5% management fee on non-staff spending by BFTCL was not reported, other than to indicate that it did not believe it fell within the definition of campaign expenses.

In respect of the management fee on staff spending, Leave.EU's responsible person told us that Leave.EU believed that the management fees were exempt from reporting under paragraph 2 of Schedule 13 of PPERA. In its representations on our initial determinations, Leave.EU called the payments to BFTCL "internal" costs as the two were "connected companies". It said that the management fees were based on items where a mark-up was included and thus the spend would be double reported. It also argued that VAT on these costs was not reportable as it was reclaimed. Paragraph 1 of Schedule 13 sets out the types of expenditure which are reportable. Paragraph 2 sets out exclusions to the spending detailed in paragraph 1, and states that: Nothing in paragraph 1 shall be taken as extending to (a) any expenses in respect of any property, services or facilities so far as those expenses fall to be met out of public funds (b) any expenses incurred in respect of the remuneration or allowances payable to any member of the staff (whether permanent or otherwise) of the campaign organiser; or (c) any expenses incurred in respect of an individual by way of travelling expenses (by any means of transport) or in providing for his accommodation or other personal needs to the extent that the expenses are paid by the individual from his own resources and are not reimbursed to him. "Campaign organiser" is defined at section 111(4) PPERA as the individual or body by whom or on whose behalf [referendum] expenses are incurred. 4.50 By virtue of sub-paragraph (b) staffing costs of the campaign organiser are not reportable. However, by virtue of the structure created in which 24 Leave.EU was the campaign organiser, but did not directly employ the staff of BFTCL, the staffing costs of BFTCL, and the associated management fees, were not exempt. On VAT elements of management fees, we are satisfied that the campaign spending requirements of PPERA require such to be included, irrespective of any ability to recover repayment of VAT under tax law provisions. The mark-up element of management fees reflected spending by Leave.EU on a separate organisation providing campaign organisation services and should be

included as reported campaign spending. Getting the reporting requirements wrong is not a reasonable excuse, nor does honest but wrong assessment comprise a reasonable excuse. As a result of failing to include the management fees paid to BFCTL, Leave.EU's spending was under-reported. We have calculated the under-report as follows: Leave.EU reported total spending of £693,094. This included staffing costs of £79,121. The non-staff spending was therefore £613,973. The 5% management fee for this spending is £30,699. The correct figure for non-staff spending was therefore £644,672. The staffing costs of £79,121 were subject to a 59% management fee. The fee was therefore £46,681. The correct figure for staff spending was therefore £125,802. We are therefore satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that Leave.EU should have reported non-staff spending of £644,672 and staff spending of £125,802. The further omitted invoices

The further omitted invoices and payments issues

The law requires a referendum spending return to be a complete statement of all payments made and for each payment of over £200 to be accompanied by an invoice or receipt. Further, where a payment is made before the referendum period started but the benefit of it is made use of during the referendum period then it too must be included in the return. We found beyond reasonable doubt that the responsible person of Leave.EU failed, without reasonable excuse, to provide the required invoice or receipt for 97 payments of over £200, cumulatively totalling £80,224. The responsible person of Leave.EU therefore committed an offence under section 122(4)(c) of PPERA. We also found that it was more probable than not that Leave.EU's spending return under-stated the apportioned value of 15 payments totalling £129,720. However, the lack of clear records held by Leave.EU in respect of the apportioned value meant that we could not determine beyond reasonable doubt whether the reported value was right or wrong.

Evidence and analysis

Missing invoices and receipts

From our inspection of Leave.EU's referendum spending return, we identified 94 payments totalling £78,804 where invoices or receipts were required but not provided. The payments related to staff costs charged by BFCTL. There is no exemption from the invoice or receipt requirement for reportable staff costs. The remaining three payments that were not supported by invoices were paid to Facebook. Leave.EU told us that Facebook does not provide invoices for the services it provided, and that it included a PayPal transaction report instead. We are aware, however, of other campaigners and parties who have obtained services from Facebook and delivered invoices or receipts to support the payments. We are therefore satisfied that it is possible to obtain an invoice or receipt from Facebook (or any other company), particularly where it is clear that providing such an invoice or receipt with a spending return is a legal requirement under section 120(3)(a) PPERA.

Apportionment of invoices

We obtained, as part of this investigation, invoices for payments made by BFCTL on behalf of Leave.EU which were in addition to the invoices and receipts which Leave.EU included in its referendum spending return. We noted that Leave.EU had incurred debts to BFCTL of over £8m before the referendum period began on 15 April 2016. Leave.EU told us that it had included all reportable spending in its return, and that the majority of the spending covered by these invoices occurred before the referendum period. We identified 54 invoices, with a value of £176,793, which appeared to relate to reportable campaign spending. In some cases spending was apportioned partly into the regulated period according to a formula. The formula involved dividing the value of the spending by the number of days between the day the invoice was raised and the date of the referendum. The value was then apportioned according to the number of those days which fell without and within the regulated period. For example an invoice for £1,000 raised on 15 March 2016, 100 days before the referendum and 34 days before the

referendum period began would be apportioned as £10 per day and therefore £340 before the regulated period and £660 during the regulated period. This approach takes no account of when material was actually used. In a number of cases we noted that Leave.EU did not have adequate records to establish this and therefore to support the apportionment. The apportionment was therefore effectively an estimate, and not a particularly reliable one. For example, it may be reasonable to assume that leaflets were not distributed continuously before and during the regulated period but were in fact mainly distributed closer to the date of the referendum. As a result, 15 invoices in particular, with a value of £129,720, were apportioned with £49,329 reported. Due to the lack of records neither Leave.EU or the Commission is able to verify that the apportionment was accurate. We have not therefore been able to find to the required standard that an offence under section 122(4)(b) has been committed in respect of this spending but consider it more probable than not that there was further under-reporting.

The spending limit issue

The spending limit issue

As a non-designated campaigner, the referendum spending limit imposed by section 118(1) and Schedule 14(1)(2)(c) of PPERA on Leave.EU was £700,000. Leave.EU reported spending of £693,094, which is £6,906 under the spending limit. We found beyond reasonable doubt that Leave.EU failed to include a minimum of £77,380 in its spending return, which meant that Leave.EU exceeded its spending limit by more than 10%. We are satisfied that the actual figure was in fact greater, given the failure to report an appropriate proportion of the cost of services provided by Goddard Gunster. The responsible person for Leave.EU authorised those expenses to be incurred by or on behalf of Leave.EU. We are satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that she knew, or ought reasonably to have known, that the expenses would be incurred in excess of the spending limit. We therefore determined that both Leave.EU and the responsible person committed offences under section 118(2)(c) of PPERA.

Evidence Evidence and analysis

The responsible person for Leave.EU failed without reasonable excuse to report spending on referendum campaign activity in the following areas:

- Services provided by Goddard Gunster Management fees charged by BFTCL During the investigation, Leave.EU explained that spending totalling £14,816 was, in retrospect, included in error. We have accepted this and decided that it is not proportionate to take enforcement action in respect of it. Leave.EU defended its governance compliance structure and processes and highlighted the experience of its responsible person. It stated that it took an honest and reasonable approach to the assessment, apportionment and declaration of expenditure, and complied with the guidance issued by us. Leave.EU also said that it had included further non-reportable spending in its return, demonstrating a prudent approach. If correct, it would be a serious issue and potentially an offence that the spending return in fact contained a number of payments that should not have been reported. PPERA requires a complete and accurate return of the regulated spending, no more or less. The inclusion of additional spending results in a loss of both transparency and the ability to properly scrutinise complete and accurate spending, in compliance or not with the rules.

However, on the evidence before us it was not evident that there are additional elements of non-reportable spending in the Leave.EU campaign spending return. We are satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that Leave.EU made payments of campaign spending that it failed to report, and that this had the consequence of spending in excess of its permitted spending limit. The responsible person of Leave.EU was also a director of both Leave.EU and BFTCL. In addition, she was responsible for authorising payments for both companies. She was therefore aware, or should reasonably have been aware, of all spending incurred on behalf of Leave.EU by BFTCL. We are satisfied that she was

aware of the contractual arrangement between the two companies, as well as the contract between Leave.EU and Goddard Gunster. Further, she was one of those included in many of the emails received from Goddard Gunster. The spending return declaration Under section 123(2)(a) and (b)(i) of PPERA, referendum campaign spending returns must be accompanied by a declaration to us made by the responsible person of the campaigner. The responsible person is required to state that they have examined the return and, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, it is complete and correct as required by law. It is an offence for the treasurer to knowingly or recklessly make a false declaration. Civil sanctions do not attach to this offence; it can only be pursued via a criminal prosecution. We are satisfied that we have reasonable grounds to suspect that the responsible person for Leave.EU either knowingly or recklessly signed a false declaration accompanying the Leave.EU referendum spending return. In line with its Enforcement Policy, we have referred this matter to the Metropolitan Police Service. Offences committed We have determined that the following offences were committed by Ms Elizabeth Bilney, the responsible person of Leave.EU: An offence under Schedule 2 paragraph 5(9)(b) EURA in that she failed, without reasonable excuse, to submit a pre-poll regulated transaction report that was complete and accurate An offence under section 122(4)(b) PPERA in that she failed, without reasonable excuse, to deliver a referendum campaign spending return that was complete and accurate in respect of the transactions and payments reported A further offence under section 122(4)(b) PPERA in that she failed, without reasonable excuse, to deliver a referendum campaign spending return that was complete in respect of the required invoices or receipts for all payments over £200 An offence under section 118(2)(c)(i) PPERA in that she incurred spending on referendum activity that exceeded the statutory limit, and that she knew or ought to have known that the spending when incurred was in excess of that limit. 5.2 In addition, Leave.EU committed an offence under section 118(2)(c)(ii) in respect of the same spending that exceeded the statutory limit We have imposed the following penalties on Leave.EU: In respect of the offence under Schedule 2 paragraph 5(9)(b) of EURA – a penalty of £10,000 In respect of the offence under section 122(4)(b) of PPERA relating to the completeness of the spending return – a penalty of £20,000 In respect of the offence under section 122(4)(b) of PPERA relating to the failure to include invoices or receipts – a penalty of £20,000 In respect of the offence under section 118(2)(c)(i) and (ii) of PPERA – a penalty of £20,000 The total value of the penalties imposed on Leave.EU is £70,000. The level of the penalties has been constrained by the cap on our fines. Legal framework Legal framework Relevant extracts from the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) Requirement to prepare and submit a complete and accurate referendum campaign expenditure return Section 120 of PPERA requires that where any referendum expenses are incurred by or on behalf of the permitted participant during any referendum period, and that period ends, the responsible person shall make a return under this section in respect of referendum expenses incurred on or behalf of the permitted participant during that period. Section 120(2) of PPERA specifies that the return must contain: (a) a statement of all payments made in respect of referendum expenses incurred by or on behalf of the permitted participant during the referendum period in question; [...] (d) in a case where the permitted participant either is not a registered party or is a minor party, a statement of relevant donations received in respect of the referendum which complies with the requirements of paragraphs 10 and 11 of Schedule 15 Section 120(3) of PPERA states that a return must be accompanied by: all invoices or receipts relating to the payments mentioned in subsection (2)(a);

and (b) in the case of any referendum expenses treated as incurred by virtue of Section 112 of PPERA, any declaration falling to be made with respect to those expenses in accordance with Section 112(6) [...] (d) ...a statement of regulated transactions entered into in respect of the referendum which complies with the requirements of paragraphs 16 to 20 of Schedule 15A of PPERA Section 122(1) of PPERA states that where any return falls to be prepared under Section 120 in respect of referendum expenses incurred by or on behalf of a permitted participant, and an auditor's report on it falls to be prepared under section 121(1), the responsible person shall deliver the return to the Commission, together with a copy of the auditor's report, within six months of the end of the relevant referendum period. Section 122(4) of PPERA states that the responsible person commits an offence, if without reasonable excuse, they: (a) fail to comply with the requirements of sub-paragraph (1) or (2) in relation to a return under Section 120; (b) deliver a return which does not comply with the requirements of Section 120(2) or (3); or (c) fail to comply with the requirements of sub-paragraph (3) in relation to a return under that subsection Special restrictions on referendum expenses Section 118 of PPERA states that Schedule 14 of PPERA has effect for imposing, in connection with a referendum, limits on referendum expenses incurred by or on behalf of permitted participants. Under Paragraph 1(2)(c) of Schedule 14 of PPERA, the limit on referendum expenses incurred by or on behalf of a non-party undesignated regulated campaigner was £700,000. Section 118(2)(c) of PPERA states that the responsible person is guilty of an offence if they authorised expenses to be incurred in excess of that limit by, or on behalf of, the registered campaigner and knew or ought reasonably to have known that the expenses would be incurred in excess of that limit. Pre-poll regulated transaction returns Paragraph 5 of Schedule 2 of EURA states that the report for a pre-poll period must record, in relation to each regulated transaction having a value exceeding £7,500 which is entered into by the permitted participant during the period: (a) the nature of the transaction (that is to say whether it is a loan, a credit facility or an arrangement by which any form of security is given) (b) the value of the transaction (determined in accordance with paragraph 3 of the Schedule treated as inserted by paragraph 1 above ("Schedule 15A of PPERA")) or, in the case of a credit facility or security to which no limit is specified, a statement to that effect (c) the date when the transaction was entered into by the permitted participant (d) the same information about the transaction as would be required by paragraph 18(3) and (4) of Schedule 15A to be recorded in the statement referred to in paragraph 15 of that Schedule, (i.e. paragraph 6 of Schedule 6A) (e) the information about each qualifying person who is a party to the transaction which is, in connection with recordable transactions entered into by registered parties, required to be recorded in weekly transaction reports by paragraph 3 of Schedule 6A to PPERA (reading references in that paragraph to an authorised participant as references to a qualifying person who is a party to the transaction), and (f) in relation to a transaction to which a person who is not a qualifying person is a party, the information referred to in paragraph 17 of Schedule 15A of PPERA. Under paragraph 5(9)(b) of Schedule 2 of EURA the responsible person commits an offence if, without reasonable excuse, that person delivers a report to the Electoral Commission that does not comply with the requirements of sub-paragraph (3). Leave.EU background Leave.EU background Leave.EU Group Ltd ("Leave.EU" – company number 09763501) was a registered campaigner in the 2016 referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union ("the EU referendum"). Leave.EU registered as a campaigner on 15 February 2016. Leave.EU was listed as an affiliate in the application of the Go

Movement Limited, also a registered campaigner, for designation as lead campaigner for the 'leave' outcome in the EU referendum. Lead campaigners had a spending limit of £7m for campaign activity. On 13 April 2016 the Commission designated Vote Leave Limited as the lead for the leave outcome. The EU referendum took place on 23 June 2016. Under PPERA the responsible person for Leave.EU, Ms Elizabeth Bilney, had to deliver to us pre-poll transaction and donation returns in the weeks running up to the referendum poll, and a return of all campaign spending incurred by or on behalf of Leave.EU during the EU referendum regulated campaign period of 15 April to 23 June 2016. As Leave.EU incurred campaign spending in excess of £250,000, the deadline for the return's delivery was 23 December 2016. Ms Bilney delivered the return in advance of this deadline. 1.7 Leave.EU reported spending of £693,094. Its spending limit was £700,000. Related content about our enforcement work Electoral law is out of date. Find out where we want to see improvements Political parties, campaigners and other groups have to report their finances to us. Find out about campaign spending, donations and loans and annual accounts.

Letter: BBC NI Spotlight programme “Brexit, Dark Money and the DUP” | Electoral Commission Search Letter: BBC NI Spotlight programme

“Brexit, Dark Money and the DUP” You are in the Key correspondence section Home Key correspondence On this page Letter summary Read our letter in full First published: 2 August 2018 Last updated: 16 July 2019 Summary of the letter Date: 2 August 2018 To: Mr Jim Fitzpatrick Address: BBC Northern Ireland, BBC TVCA, 1st Floor Broadcasting House, Ormeau Avenue, Belfast, BT2 8HQ From: Louise Edwards, Director of Regulation Format: Sent by post Full letter Dear Mr Fitzpatrick BBC NI Spotlight

“Brexit, Dark Money and the DUP” Thank you for your letter of 17 July 2018, following your programme “Brexit, Dark Money and the DUP”. We have looked at the allegations you made that were about UK electoral law, specifically the 2016 EU referendum. These were broadly about whether particular campaigners in that referendum incurred joint spending but did not declare it. As our Enforcement Policy explains, we may open an investigation where we have reasonable grounds to suspect an offence within our remit has been committed. This threshold is applied to every case we assess, and has been applied in this case. I set out below the conclusions of our assessment.

First, please note that under section 71 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, I cannot disclose any information about donations that may or may not have been made to the DUP during 2016. We continue to urge the UK Government to bring forward legislation that will enable us to publish the information we hold on donations and loans dating back to January 2014. Transparency is an essential component to increasing public confidence in the democratic process. Our view is that information on how political parties, candidates and other campaigners raise and spend money should be open to timely public scrutiny.

Joint spending rules The ‘working together’ or ‘joint spending’ rules for the EU Referendum were set out in the European Union Referendum Act 2015. They were known as the ‘common plan’ rules in that Act. Under these rules, campaign groups can work together to achieve a particular outcome, but their spending – when combined – must not exceed their individual spending limit. Where a lead campaigner is working together with other campaign groups, all the spending will count towards the lead campaigner’s total.

Under the rules, set out by parliament, the following does not count as joint working, as they are permitted and do not dictate how money is spent:

- Donations from an individual or group to multiple campaigners.
- A single supplier working for multiple campaigners.
- Individuals volunteering for multiple campaigners.

When looking at joint spending we are not necessarily looking for a written plan, although we advise campaigners to have something in writing if they are working together. But we are looking for evidence of: joint or coordinated spending; control or influence over spending by another campaigner; or discussions or consultation about campaign activity that affects spending decisions.

You may be interested to read a recent blog we posted on this subject: When does working together break the rules? You may also be aware that we recently concluded an investigation into Vote Leave where we concluded that its spending return for the EU referendum was incomplete in a number of ways. This included a failure to declare joint spending with the unregistered campaigner BeLeave. You can find the investigation report here.

Outcome of our assessment We reviewed the information you provided. You explained that there was “no significant evidence” beyond that which was aired in the programme. We also reviewed the programme, and considered whether there were other sources we could locate to evidence the allegations made in it. We also looked at whether we could infer from what we had, a reasonable suspicion of undeclared common plan expenses. Our conclusion is that we do not have grounds to open an investigation into the

allegations about breaches of electoral law in the BBC NI Spotlight Programme “Brexit, Dark Money and the DUP”. As noted above, I am limited by section 71 PPERA as to what I can say here. In general terms it is clear a number of campaign groups had links through personnel or suppliers. This is not unexpected. We have not seen evidence beyond this to give a reasonable suspicion of actual spending to further a coordinated or common plan between any of the individuals or entities named. As such, this does not meet the threshold for an investigation to be opened. Should evidence of any breaches of the rules for the EU Referendum come to light, we would of course look again. Related content Letter: Coronavirus and its impact on the May polls Read our letter to Chloe Smith MP (Minister for the Constitution and Devolution) from March 2020 Letter: Complaint regarding EU Referendum campaigners Read our letter to the Rt Hon Priti Patel MP from August 2018 Letter: To the Chair of the Police and Crime Committee at the Greater London Assembly Read our letter to Steve O’Connell AM (Chairman, Police and Crime Committee) from February 2018 Letter: Spending by Britain Stronger in Europe at the 2016 EU referendum Read our letter to the Rt Hon Priti Patel MP from January 2018

Response to consultation feedback on the Codes of Practice on spending by candidates and political parties at Senedd elections | Electoral Commission Search

Response to consultation feedback on the Codes of Practice on spending by candidates and political parties at Senedd elections You are in the Our consultations section Home Our consultations On this page Introduction At which elections do the Codes apply? What are Codes of Practice? Key themes from previous consultations Key themes from this consultation Conclusion The codes First published: 15 January 2021 Last updated: 30 March 2021 Introduction Introduction Between October 2019 and January 2020 we carried out a consultation on two Codes of Practice on election spending: spending by candidates and spending by political parties at Senedd elections. We welcomed views from a wide range of stakeholders and recognise how important it is that the Codes are supported by those who use them. We used the feedback to amend the draft Codes to provide additional clarity where possible. In some cases where respondents asked for additional clarity on the principles contained in the Codes, we felt that it would be more appropriate to provide additional details in the supporting guidance rather than in the Codes themselves. At which elections do the Codes apply? These Codes apply at Senedd elections. Separate Codes have also been drafted for elections that fall within the remit of UK Parliament, such as UK Parliamentary elections, and Codes have also been drafted for Scottish Parliament elections. What are Codes of Practice? The National Assembly for Wales (Representation of the People) Order 2007, as amended by the Senedd Cymru (Representation of the People) (Amendment) Order 2020, and the Political Parties Elections and Referendums Act 2000, allow the Electoral Commission to draft Codes of Practice on candidate and party spending. The legislation specifies how much candidates and parties are allowed to spend at Senedd elections and states that campaign spending must be reported against specific categories. We asked the Minister for Housing and Local Government to lay the Codes of Practice before the Senedd. When in force the Codes will constitute legal documents. The Codes give clarity to candidates, agents and parties about what items count towards spending, whether they should be reported in a candidate or party return and which category of spend they should be reported under. They also set out how to report spending on digital campaigning. Electoral law is in need of reform to make it clear and easy to understand. In the absence of reform, the Codes allow us to provide clarity and consistency in reporting election spending. Key themes from previous consultations Between October and December 2018 we carried out a consultation on the draft Codes for UK Parliamentary general elections. The key themes in the feedback focused on: Language and structure of the codes Transparency for spending on digital campaigning Splitting spending between party and candidate Treatment of overhead Treatment of costs of items used at several elections Treatment of material featuring a prominent party member Treatment of legal costs Interaction of the codes with other guidance we issue Key themes from this consultation The consultation on the Senedd Codes built on the feedback from the UK Parliamentary Codes. Senedd elections are conducted using the Additional Member System. Voters receive two ballot papers and can cast two votes, one to elect their constituency candidate and one to vote for a political party. Due to the nature of these elections, some campaign materials not only encourage voters to vote for a constituency candidate, but also encourage voters to vote for a political party in the regional elections using their second vote. As a result, campaign spending may need to be split between the relevant candidate and party spending returns. The principles included in the Codes are: where campaign materials identify the constituency candidate or the constituency itself, but do not

promote the electoral region where the constituency sits, the full costs are to be included in the candidate's spending return where campaign materials are encouraging voters to participate in both elections, the costs should be split between the candidate spending return and the party spending return We received four types of responses on these principles: where possible, there should be consistency across the Codes for different elections to avoid confusion for participants the principle should be expanded to include other types of activity where targeting of material occurs in a constituency asking for more clarification on how the split works in practice and how spending is split across multiple candidates and elections where voters receive a simple reminder that there are two elections, the costs should not be apportioned as this creates administrative difficulties and the costs are likely to balance out between candidate and party returns Based on the feedback received we have added additional examples to the Codes to provide greater clarity on how costs should be split between candidate and party spending returns. It is not possible to include all possible campaigning scenarios in the Codes. We will therefore also provide additional guidance on campaign spending and reporting with a wider range of scenarios and examples than those included in the Codes. Conclusion We are grateful for all the feedback we received. The feedback supported our aim of producing Codes of Practice for Senedd elections to improve consistency and transparency in reporting of party and candidate spending. In response to the feedback, we amended the Codes and included additional examples to provide greater clarity for some scenarios. The Codes have now been submitted to the Minister, and we have asked for them to be laid in the Senedd, with a view to them being in force for the May 2021 elections. The codes Related content Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Party registration decisions View our decisions on political party names, descriptions and emblems View current applications View the political party names, descriptions and emblems which we are currently considering as part of our assessment process Registers of unincorporated associations Download and view the registers of unincorporated associations

Appendix 4 of the Code of Conduct for Electoral Commissioners: Guidance on claiming fees and travel and subsistence | Electoral Commission Search

Appendix 4 of the Code of Conduct for Electoral Commissioners: Guidance on claiming fees and travel and subsistence You are in the Code of Conduct for Electoral Commissioners section Home Commissioners Code of Conduct for Electoral Commissioners On this page Introduction How to claim fees Claiming expenses First published: 19 December 2022 Last updated: 17 June 2023 1 Introduction 1.1 Fees and expenses for Commissioners are published on the Commission's website every quarter. The information is collated to show clearly the purpose for which expenditure was incurred, in chronological order for each event for which expenses were incurred.

Please see the website (About Us/How we are run/Commissioners) for an example: <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/data/assets/pdf/0003/100596/Commissioners-Q1-10-11.pdf>

1.2 It will help us if you complete your fee and travel and subsistence claims with that in mind. Succinct but informative claim forms also avoid the need for us to check with either Commissioners or other staff regarding missing or incomplete details of any claim.

1.3 There are upper limits for expenditure for expenses, but you are asked at all times to make every effort to book travel, accommodation, and utilise subsistence as economically as possible. You may not be reimbursed if you incur costs above the limits in the guidelines, and will be expected to pay any difference. We will make every effort to help you with early booking, or finding comparative costs, wherever possible.

Travel Framework

1.4 The Commission has set up a travel framework whereby service providers make provision for online bookings on accommodation, air and rail tickets and car hire. Should you wish to use the travel framework directly, Finance and staff will provide some assistance in setting up your account with the service provider, and Commission staff can help you manage your bookings.

1.5 For more detail on all aspects of travel and subsistence policy, for example travelling by car, and taxi use, please refer to the policy itself (included in your induction pack and available on the Commission's intranet site) or ask the Secretary to the Commission Board.

2 How to claim fees

Overview

2.1 Fees are paid to the Electoral Commissioners on the basis of a daily rate. The daily rate for the Commissioners is fixed by resolution of the House of Commons.

2.2 The relevant resolution of the House of Commons provides that an Electoral Commissioner shall be paid at a rate equivalent to Band 4 of judicial salaries, currently £410 per day, and £205 per half day as the applicable rate for financial year 2022/2023.

2.3 The fees for the Electoral Commissioners are paid direct into their bank accounts from the Consolidated Fund, and payment is made by Liberata, upon receipt of a certified fee form.

Calculation of fees

2.4 Please keep a record of work undertaken for the Commission (or events attended in your capacity as a Commissioner) and provide a short description of your activities, including location, and times, on your fee claim form. Please refer to the published expenses on the website for examples. A reminder of what to include is at paragraph 2.8 below.

2.5 Time spent on preparation and reading may also be claimed. As a general rule of thumb, preparation for any meeting is expected to take about half a day. There may be circumstances where preparation time may take up to a full day: the agenda may contain many in-depth matters or there may be preparatory discussions with other Commissioners. In such cases, briefly indicate on the form what those circumstances are. Where you have units of time of less than either a whole or a half day, give start and finish times and we will aggregate those into the nearest whole and half days (a whole day being about 7.5 hours and a half day 3.5-4 hours).

2.6 In-person attendance at events such as Commission Board meetings and all day

training courses and events will usually count as one day, whether or not the total time spent on that day is less than, or exceeds, 7 hours. Where meetings are attended virtually, the fee will be based on the length of the meeting which is usually a half day. Fee claim forms 2.7 Please complete the Commissioner's fee claim form (see example of completed form at Appendix B) for each calendar month and submit the form (via email or post) to the Senior Governance Adviser. If an activity crosses a month, please split the activity accordingly across two fee claim forms.

Forms must be signed by the claimant. 2.8 Claims should be completed and sent to the Senior Governance Adviser as soon as possible after the end of the calendar month, and in any event no later than the date notified to you by Secretariat.

Payment by Paymaster will normally be made on the last day of the following month, provided the forms have been received by the Secretariat by the cut-off date.

Treasury require signed copies in order to make payment. The following information should be included in your fee claim form for each entry:

- Day worked (i.e. the date for which you're making the entry)
- Start and finish times
- Nature of activity (meeting, preparation, teleconference, briefing)
- Location

Topic/title of meeting

- Person meeting
- If claiming for preparation (reading) please state for which meeting or event Travelling time 2.9 You may claim fees for time spent travelling to the Commission's offices. Claims made for time spent travelling should be recorded as 'travel' and include start and finish times, i.e. when you left home and when you arrived at the meeting venue or hotel accommodation the evening before the meeting. However, where travel is on the same day as the meeting, a limit of one day's claim will apply to in-person Board meetings (however long, or short, the day). In other words, a day's claim is the limit one can make, regardless of the length of the meeting and travel time on the day. Dinners

2.10 Since some Commissioners usually travel to London the evening before a Commission Board meeting, there is an opportunity to get together that evening over dinner. 2.11 When a dinner is effectively a working dinner, involving substantive discussion of Commission business, the time spent may count towards overall preparation time for the next day's Board meeting. A day's claim is the limit one can make for preparation time but you should not also claim subsistence. In other words, your fee claim may include preparation time spent discussing business over dinner but you are expected to pay for your own meal. 2.12 On infrequent occasions the Commission may hold a dinner to which members of staff as well as Commissioners are invited, for example to mark someone's departure from the Commission. The

Commission will meet the costs of the food at these dinners, but any alcohol must be paid for separately by those attending. On these occasions, Commissioners who attend the dinner should not submit a fee claim for the evening. 3 Claiming expenses 3.1 The Commission will either pay direct, or reimburse you for, the reasonable actual costs of travel, accommodation, meals and certain other expenses incurred while travelling on Commission business, within the limits set out in the travel and subsistence policy. Expense Claims 3.2 You must claim only for the actual cost of expenses incurred wholly, exclusively and necessarily in the performance of your duties on Commission business. The only exceptions are where you claim the flat rate Incidental Costs Allowance for miscellaneous overnight expenses. 3.3 Commissioners are required to submit an expense claim form (example of completed form at Appendix C) via post or scanned and emailed to the Secretary to the Commission Board for each calendar month for which expenses are claimed as soon as possible after the end of the calendar month, and in any event no later than the date notified to you by Secretariat. All expenses forms should be signed and include the following:

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name, address, bank details and National Insurance number • Date of travel and mode of travel (including mileage) • Where you travelled from and to • Type of expenditure (dinner, drinks) 3.4 In addition to that, please ensure that you include all receipts or invoices needed to support your claim, and remember to sign the form. Lost/No Receipt 3.5 If you are unable to obtain a receipt, such as from a car park machine, for travel on Commission business, or have lost your receipt, you must submit your claim as normal and note the reason for absence of the receipt on the claim itself or separately by email (written confirmation is needed for audit purposes). 3.6 If you are using a personal Oyster card, you should register it for online use with TfL, and download a Journey History Report, which covers journeys made in the preceding 8 weeks, to support your claim. Authorisation of Claims 3.7 Commissioners' claims are certified by the Board Secretary (General Counsel). These claims are reviewed periodically by the Chair. 3.8 Details of all expenses paid to Commissioners, Executive Team and the Heads of the Commission's offices in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are published online every quarter. 3.9 The Electoral Commission may not reimburse the expenses you claim unless your claim is supported by the necessary evidence and the person responsible for authorising the payment has confirmed their approval of the claim. 3.10 It is your responsibility to get and keep receipts for any expenditure, and to keep a record of any car mileage you subsequently claim for. Travel and tax liability 3.11 The HMRC designation of the Commission's London office as your usual place of work means that ordinarily you would not be able to claim for costs of travel to London, or an overnight stay, without it being a taxable benefit. However, the Commission has advised HMRC that it has agreed to assume the tax liability. A written statement to that effect can be provided for use with your own accounts if required. 3.12 You are expected to book the most economical travel available. Where the purchase of a Railcard would lead to overall savings for the Electoral Commission, you may claim the cost of the Railcard. 3.13 If you have a Railcard of any description, you are expected to use it to benefit from any reductions in the costs of any travel booked by you, or on your behalf, on Commission business. 3.14 The costs of first class travel will not be reimbursed unless it was the most economical or only possible means of travel on that occasion. In that case you will be asked briefly to set out the circumstances. You may upgrade to first class travel at your own expense. 3.15 For those of you with access to a train sleeper service, there are occasions on which that service appears more expensive than the equivalent flight or day-time rail fare, but is more economical when the saving on an overnight hotel stay is taken into account. 3.16 Meetings of the Audit Committee are usually on the day before Commission Board meetings, to save on travel costs for those Commissioners who are on both bodies. Likewise, Commission staff may seek to arrange meetings with Commissioners around Board meetings to make best use of Commissioner attendance. 3.17 Use of taxis is discouraged. If circumstances have made it necessary or unavoidable for example, no alternative public transport, the time of travel ruled out an alternative, the cost of public transport is comparable - please give the reason and, if sharing with another Commissioner, indicate that in addition to the other usual information (from, to, when). (Please refer to the Commission's Travel and Subsistence policy for further detail on taxi use.) 3.18 If you use your car to claim mileage we will need to receive a copy of your car insurance which includes business use. Reviewed and approved by Shaun McNally, Chief Executive 10 March 2023

Objective: Fair and effective electoral law | Electoral Commission Search

Objective: Fair and effective electoral law You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23 On this page What we are working to achieve Work done to achieve this aim Performance indicators Ongoing and future work First published: 4 July 2023 Last updated: 27 September 2023 What we are working to achieve Our electoral system is underpinned by a legal framework which establishes how elections are delivered. It sets out who is allowed to vote and the various ways they can cast their vote. It sets out who can stand for elections, who can campaign and how much they can spend, and it sets out how electoral administrators should deliver elections, including counting and declaring the results. Given its cross-cutting impact, we want to work with parliamentarians and governments to improve electoral law so that it is fit for purpose, reduces complexity, inefficiencies and risk, and enables innovation. We are working with others to reform electoral law by: supporting effective consideration and implementation of legislation in the UK's parliaments engaging with governments' current electoral law reform agendas, while continuing to make the case for further reform continuing to provide expert advice on the practicability and impact of any changes which could be made to improve the electoral system. Work done to achieve this aim Following the May 2022 polls, we published reports on elections in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, reflecting data and evidence gathered on voting, campaigning and delivering the elections. These included recommendations for improving the system further. As the Elections Bill passed through the UK Parliament, we briefed members of the House of Commons and Lords to support their consideration of the measures. We responded promptly with accurate and impartial information to correspondence from elected officials. We continue to advocate for policy change in key areas – including modernising electoral law and protecting politics from foreign interference – in our engagement with stakeholders, parliamentarians and the media.

Performance indicators Indicator Target 2022-23 Timely publication of election / referendum reports 100% 100% Timely responses to policy proposals and legislative consultations 100% 100% Responses to elected stakeholder (MP, MSP, MLA & MS) correspondence within 10 working days 100% 97.83% PACAC Report, October 2022 It has been twenty years since the Electoral Commission was established and we believe it still plays a fundamental role in overseeing free and fair elections and referendums and regulating political finance, and should continue to do so. However, its ability to effectively fulfil its statutory functions is directly impacted by the unnecessary complexity of the law governing this area. There is a consensus that the law is in urgent need of rationalisation and simplification. PACAC Report, October 2022 Ongoing and future work The Commission will share its expertise and evidence with the UK Government as they develop statutory instruments to provide the detail of how the remaining measures in the Elections Act will work. We maintain the view that government should ensure legislation is clear at least six months before any new changes are due to be implemented, so that Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and electoral administrators have enough time to prepare. We will continue to recommend reforms to UK electoral law and stand ready to support governments and parliaments in considering how best this could be taken forward. The Commission will continue to advocate for modernising electoral law, which needs to be simplified to help electoral administrators provide the level of services that voters deserve, and to enable governments and legislatures to deliver their policy priorities. Navigation Previous Next Objective: Resilient local electoral services Objective: A modern and sustainable electoral system

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[Response to Scottish Government consultation on electoral reform](#) [Response to the Welsh Government consultation on electoral administration and reform](#) [Response to the UK Government consultation on a draft Strategy and Policy Statement for the Electoral Commission](#) [Response to the draft Senedd Cymru \(Representation of the People\) \(Amendment\) Order 2020](#) [Committee on Standards in Public Life review of electoral regulation: response to consultation](#) [Evidence to the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee: Local Government and Elections \(Wales\) Bill](#) [Our report on the UK Government's draft statutory instrument to reform the annual canvass](#) [Response to the UK Government policy consultation: Protecting the Debate](#) [Our response to the Assembly Commission's consultation 'Creating a Parliament for Wales'](#) [Response to inquiry into voting rights for prisoners](#) [Our response to the Welsh government green paper consultation "Strengthening local government – Delivering for people"](#) [Cabinet Office consultation: The Wales Act 2017 \(Consequential and Saving Provisions\)](#)

[Regulations 2018](#) [Welsh Government Consultation Document: Electoral Reform in Local Government in Wales](#) [Welsh Government Consultation: Electoral Reform in Local Government in Wales](#) [October 2017 Consultations](#) we respond to and why Governments and other organisations hold consultations when they're looking for views on a particular issue, or if they want to change something. We respond to consultations that affect us and our work, and have an impact on what we're trying to achieve. These are our responses to consultations held in the last two years. If you're looking for our response to an older consultation, contact us.

2020 electoral fraud data | Electoral Commission Search 2020
electoral fraud data You are in the Electoral fraud data section Home Our
research Electoral fraud data First published: 15 March 2021 Last updated: 17
February 2023 Overview Local, mayoral and Police and Crime Commissioner elections
that were due to take place in May 2020 were postponed until May 2021, in response to
the developing Covid-19 pandemic. Very few polls took place in 2020, which meant that
the number of allegations reported to police forces for investigation was
particularly low. Because this was not a normal year for elections in the UK, this
data cannot be meaningfully compared with data for previous or future years.
Elections in 2020 Local by-elections took place across Great Britain between January
and March 2020. After March, the only elections held – which took place under
coronavirus restrictions – were eight Scottish Council by-elections in the autumn of
2020. 15 cases of alleged electoral fraud were investigated by the police. Of these,
10 resulted in no further action and 5 were locally resolved by police. Allegations
data by police force Use this table to search for data from specific police forces,
by category of offence or outcome. Electoral fraud cases - 2020 If you need this
information in another format, please contact us . Election petitions An election
petition is a legal challenge to the result and/or the delivery of an election. One
petition was made about the administration of the 23 January 2020 local by-election
in the London Borough of Brent. It was claimed that the ballot papers had not been
counted correctly and the wrong candidate had been elected. The petition was
unsuccessful. Related content 2019 electoral fraud data about electoral fraud in
2019 and view the data 2018 electoral fraud data about electoral fraud in 2018 and
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data Report electoral fraud Your vote is yours alone. Find out about electoral fraud
and how to report it.

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Registers of unincorporated associations You are in the View donations and loans
section Home Donations and loans View donations and loans On this page Data in this
section Unincorporated associations Reporting gifts received First published: 25 July
2019 Last updated: 16 May 2023 Summary box Unincorporated associations must register
with us when they make political contributions of more than £25,000 in a calendar
year. Once registered, they must report to us certain gifts that they receive. Data
in this section Register of unincorporated associations making political
contributions over £25,000 Register of gifts to unincorporated associations
Unincorporated associations An unincorporated association is an association of
individuals who have come together to carry out a shared purpose. An unincorporated
association has an identifiable membership which is bound together by identifiable
rules or an agreement between the members. These rules set out how the unincorporated
association is to be run and managed. Reporting gifts received Once registered with
the us, unincorporated associations must tell us about reportable gifts that they
have received in the calendar years before, of and following their registration. A
gift includes anything given or transferred to any officer, member, trustee or agent
of an unincorporated association in that person's capacity within the association.
Reportable gifts include: a single gift of more than £7,500 two or more gifts given
by the same person in the same calendar year which total more than £7,500. You only
count individual gifts worth more than £500 toward this total any additional gift
given by source that you have already reported as having given a gift in that
calendar year, if it has a value of more than £1,500 The register on this page only
includes donations received and accepted by unincorporated associations which are not
also members associations. You can search the Political Finance database to review
donations received and accepted by members associations. Related content Political
Finance Online Find out how political parties are spending their money, and the
donations they're receiving on Political Finance Online Public funds View data about
public funds received by parties Donations reported late View data about donations
reported late by parties Register to vote All you need to register to vote is 5
minutes and your National Insurance number.

[Our power to make Regulations](#) | [Electoral Commission](#) [Search](#)

[Our power to make Regulations](#) You are in the section Home First published: 21 April 2023 Last updated: 21 April 2023 About our power to make Regulations The UK Parliament has given us the power to make Regulations under a number of pieces of primary legislation, including the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 and the Representation of the People Act 1983. We make these Regulations, not government ministers. Where necessary, we use our experience of the administration and regulation of elections and referendums to make Regulations to fill in the practical detail of an Act to ensure it works in daily life. The Regulations we make have legal effect and become part of the rules governing elections and referendums. We have so far used our powers to create four Regulations. Download the Regulations These are copies of the original Regulations, featuring our seal. If you would like a version of these documents in an accessible format, you can contact us to request it. [Electoral Commission Regulations - Candidate's Return as to Election Expenses \(Prescribed Form\)](#) [Regulations 2007](#) [Electoral Commission Regulations - Registered Parties' Quarterly and Weekly Donation Reports \(Additional Information\)](#) [Regulations 2007](#) [Electoral Commission Regulations - The Counting Officers', Regional Counting Officers' and Chief Counting Officer's Accounts \(European Union Referendum\)](#) [Regulations 2016](#) [Electoral Commission Regulations - The Counting Officers', Regional Counting Officers' and Chief Counting Officers' Accounts \(Parliamentary Voting System Referendum\)](#) [2011 Related content](#) Our role as a regulator about our role as a regulator How we make decisions Find out about our Board, committees and groups Our plans and priorities Find out about what's important to us, and what we plan to achieve in the future

Scottish Parliament Political Parties Panel meeting minutes: 16 May 2022 | Electoral Commission Search Scottish Parliament Political Parties

Panel meeting minutes: 16 May 2022 You are in the Party panels section Home How we make decisions Party panels On this page Intimation of Electoral Reform Consultation Feedback on the Scottish council elections Returning Officer/Electoral Management Board roles / recommendations / guidance Electoral Registration Electoral administration / Nominations / Candidate briefings etc Postal voting Polling day issues Verification and count Integrity issues Campaigning issues and campaign material Public awareness Scottish Government update Scotland Office / Cabinet Office update Scottish Boundary Commission update Royal Mail update Electoral Commission update Dates of future meetings First published: 11 November 2022 Last updated: 24 November 2022 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Scott Martin, Scottish National Party (Chair) Paul Moat, Scottish Liberal Democrats James Kelly, Scottish Labour Party Matt Edmonds, Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party Pete Morrison, Scottish Green Party George Adam MSP, Minister for Parliamentary Business (Items 2 and 4) Maria McCann, Scottish Government James Newman, Scottish Government Mark Sweeney, Scottish Government Chris Highcock, Secretary, Electoral Management Board for Scotland Pete Wildman, Scottish Assessors Association (Chair of Electoral Registration Committee and EMB Member) Hannah Standring, Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland Nathan Lappin, Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland Isabel Drummond-Murray, Boundary Commissions for Scotland Dame Susan Bruce, Electoral Commissioner Alasdair Morgan, Electoral Commissioner Andy O'Neill, Head of Electoral Commission, Scotland Sarah Mackie, Manager, Electoral Commission, Scotland Lindsey Hamilton, Business Support Officer (Minutes) Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising There were no matters arising and the Minutes of 8 March 2022 were approved. Intimation of Electoral Reform Consultation George Adam MSP (GA) said the Scottish Government was planning a consultation on electoral reform in the autumn of this year and sought the views of the panel on matters to be included. He was looking for ways to put the voter first, to improve accessibility and to remove barriers to voting. He wished to see the public have co-design of the process and to ensure as many people as possible engaged. The panel discussed a paper which highlighted areas where Scottish Government were planning to consult. Feedback on the Scottish council elections General reflections - Andy O'Neill (AON) reminded the panel of the Electoral Commission's statutory duty to report on the elections and said all views and comments were helpful. The Commission was presently surveying candidates, the public, Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers and Police SPOCs (Single Point of Contact) in addition to gathering information for its report via various means prior to a likely publication of the report in mid-September. Views received today would form part of the ingathering of information process. Chris Highcock (CH) said the election had been organisationally challenging due to the pandemic aftermath and the unpredictability of restrictions and staff availability, but the overall impression was that the elections were well delivered and there had been a good standard of participation. Returning Officer/Electoral Management Board roles / recommendations / guidance (CH) said the suite of directions given had become fairly standard over the last 10 years and provided consistency in voter facing elements, such as key dates for postal vote issue. He said the role of the EMB had become more fixed in the electoral landscape with EROs and electoral staff in touch for advice and guidance. Electoral Registration Pete Wildman (PW) remarked the elections had been one of the most smoothly run which he had been involved in. An agreed consistent date on second interim issue of postal ballots greatly helped. The

Household Notification Letter sent out in February had resulted in a spike of postal vote applications shortly after, in his view, likely reducing the number of later applications. Postal vote rejection letters would be sent out by 27 May. Electoral administration / Nominations / Candidate briefings etc (CH) said it was essential that candidates and agents understood what was asked for and some forms required clarity of design, such as the home address form. He could only speak for City of Edinburgh Council but said the larger parties had allowed electronic submission first. (AON) said all councils offered early electronic submission and an overwhelming majority of candidates found this helpful and had taken it up. Paul Moat (PM) asked if the home address form could be reviewed so that it was less confusing but echoed the view expressed by others that electronic pre-checks of candidate's nominations forms had been invaluable and hoped they would continue. Postal voting (CH) was still looking through statistics but said the volume was not quite as high as last year's election. The postal voting figure was now not far off one quarter of the electorate. Rejection rates were slightly lower than in 2017 (SXM) felt there should be an emergency proxy provision for anyone who found their postal ballot had not arrived in time, given that a postal vote pack could be cancelled. (CH) said they were in the hands of the Royal Mail and with one million pieces of mail going out some of loss of mail will be experienced, but if people did not complain until after the election, there was nothing they could do. If people had got in touch earlier, a replacement pack could be sent out. Polling day issues (AON) said the Electoral Commission had observers at several of the council areas both on polling day and at the counts. Localised issues were dealt with but there was nothing which grew to any great problem. Sue Bruce (SB) agreed and said she had seen a trouble-free Election Day with a steady trickle of voters and Presiding Officers had dealt with all issues in their stride. She felt this was testament to the preparation put in and resulted in a well-run effective election. Verification and count (CH) said the count was the final element of what had gone before and could only work well if other steps were in place. The count solution had begun over two years earlier and had been a huge logistical operation to ensure all had equipment and training to deliver an electronic count. There had been challenges, technically and administratively, but had been delivered with results that all can have confidence in. James Newman (JN) echoed this and said a detailed survey of Returning Officers would be made so that lessons could be learned for the next e-counting project. Integrity issues Following liaison with SPOCs, (AON) said there seemed to have been fewer allegations and the biggest cause of complaint had been a lack of imprints on printed campaign materials. (CH) said using a single printer for the whole of Scotland meant poll cards and postal votes had arrived on doorsteps at the same time across Scotland. Early intervention had ensured a sufficient supply of paper had been purchased well ahead of need. Campaigning issues and campaign material (SXM) raised a number of issues regarding campaign expenditure guidance and the Electoral Commission's view with regard to what constituted candidate expenditure. (AON) indicated that the Electoral Commission would be happy to discuss the issue with (SXM). Public awareness (AON) said the rejection rate of votes had fallen slightly and the instance of multiple 'X's was slightly down although this could, as (SXM) suggested, be attributed to the fact fewer wards had more than one candidate and (SXM) felt there should be a review of how the STV rules work. He thought an argument could be made that you can reflect someone's intention by giving a fraction of a vote. In the case of three crosses, 0.333 recurring could be given to each of the candidates. He also raised the issue of alphabetic bias and possible alternatives. Scottish Government update Maria McCann

(MMcC) had issued a written update to the panel and had nothing further to add but was happy to respond to any questions. Scotland Office / Cabinet Office update Hannah Standring (HS) indicated that a short written update had been submitted to the Panel, advised all that the Elections Bill was now an Act and offered to respond to any questions on the update. Scottish Boundary Commission update Isabel Drummond-Murray (ID-M) updated the Panel that Boundary Scotland was preparing for a Scottish Parliament review in the autumn. Royal Mail update Rachel Winham would provide a written update when she returned from annual leave. EMB Update on electoral registration and electoral administration (PW) said that EROs were now booking slots in July and August for the annual canvass and working with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on the implementation of voter ID for UK Parliament elections. (CH) said the EMB was looking at the consequences of the Elections Act and would participate in discussions regarding the implementation of the Acts provisions. Electoral Commission update (AON) asked parties to remind candidates that the spending returns were due on 10 June and advice surgery time slots were available for booking. Shaun McNally, the Commission's new Chief Executive, had now been in post since the last meeting and hoped to attend a future meeting of the SP PPP. Dates of future meetings (SXM) said the parties had discussed and would prefer a hybrid meeting going forward. (AON) said he would investigate how to provide that but if it was not possible, it would remain in a virtual format. He would suggest dates and circulate for approval.

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[European Parliamentary elections and local elections report](#) . To find out more about

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Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal one | Electoral Commission Search

Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal one You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 On this page Key achievements Performance measures First published: 30 June 2020 Last updated: 26 August 2020 Goal one To enable the continued delivery of free and fair elections and referendums, focusing on the needs of electors and addressing the changing environment to ensure every vote remains secure and accessible. This goal captures our role in overseeing the delivery of elections across all parts of the UK and focuses on three areas: delivering well-run electoral events, maximising and modernising electoral registration, and tackling electoral fraud. Key achievements To help deliver well-run electoral events, we : supported the elections in May 2019: local government, local Mayoral and combined authority Mayoral elections across parts of England, Northern Ireland local government elections, and European Parliamentary elections supported the UK Parliamentary general election in December 2019 worked with organisations supporting people with a disability to raise awareness of how to take part in elections and what support they can expect to receive worked with the National Police Chiefs Council, CPS and the College of Policing to provide new guidance for candidates and campaigners on recognising and reporting intimidation prepared for the scheduled, but then postponed, May 2020 elections: Mayor of London and London Assembly elections, local government elections, local Mayoral and combined authority Mayoral elections in parts of England, and Police and Crime Commissioner elections across England and Wales published guidance and resources, and provided support to electoral administrators, candidates and agents for the scheduled elections in May 2020 To help maximise and modernise electoral registration, we: supported the implementation of a reformed annual canvass in Great Britain, making better use of local and national data, including advising on proposals and producing new guidance for Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) and forms for the public carried out a consultation on new performance standards for EROs advised on proposals from the Northern Ireland Office and the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland to run their electoral registration canvass, now expected to take place in 2021 To help tackle electoral fraud, we: worked with the police and local authorities to provide training and review integrity plans to help prevent electoral fraud published data on alleged cases of electoral fraud reported during 2019 worked with partners to run campaigns to raise awareness of electoral fraud, timed with elections in May and December 2019 Performance measures Measure Performance We publish 100% of guidance products relating to electoral registration on time with no substantive errors 100% Achieved We provide accurate advice to Returning Officers (ROs) and EROs within three working days of receipt of the request. (Target 100%) 99.7% Achieved (Within tolerance) Additions to electoral registers during our public awareness campaigns meet or exceed our targets (specific targets agreed ahead of each poll) 100% Achieved We review 100% of integrity plans from local authorities identified to be at a higher risk of fraud 100% Achieved We publish 100% of our reports to planned deadlines 60% 1 Achieved We comment on 100% of relevant legislation and policy proposals 100% Achieved Delivering well-run electoral events Since 2017, we have developed and continuously reviewed contingency plans so we would be ready to support elections called at short notice. We saw the benefits of this in 2019, when we worked quickly to support two UK-wide polls. Despite the tight timescales and pressures on those involved in running elections, our research shows voters thought all polls were well-run. We delivered public awareness campaigns ahead of each poll and provided guidance to electoral administrators, parties, candidates and campaigners, to help them fulfil

their roles. In addition, we published financial information to help the public understand where parties got their money from and how they spent it. Two recall petitions took place in 2019, which we supported by providing guidance to those campaigning and by observing the administration of the process. We then reported on how the petitions were run, identifying practical ways to improve these in the future. Maximising and modernising electoral registration We have done a lot of work to support annual canvass reforms in Great Britain. The new process will give EROs access to robust national-level data about the resident population, to identify addresses where there is likely to have been a change in the people who are eligible to register to vote. This will allow EROs to focus their resources in areas of greatest need. Our support for these reforms included commenting on proposals; providing advice on the legislation; writing guidance to help electoral administrators understand their new responsibilities; and producing new forms for the public. These forms include versions for Wales, Scotland and England to reflect different franchises for elections in each country. Our input helped to ensure the proposals would make it easier for electoral administrators to run the canvass and for the public to respond to it. We see these reforms as an important step towards improving our electoral registration system and look forward to seeing outcomes from their first implementation in 2020. Our scrutiny of proposals from the Northern Ireland Office and Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland to run a canvass of electors – originally planned for 2020 but now scheduled to take place in 2021 – ensured plans would be workable and help to improve registration levels in Northern Ireland. This work is important as our most recent research found that one in four eligible electors in Northern Ireland were not registered correctly at their current address. Tackling electoral fraud We provided guidance and advice to support EROs, ROs and the police to deal with electoral fraud. In 2019, for the third year in a row, we worked with the City of London Police Economic Fraud Academy to host and contribute content to three training courses for police. We also jointly hosted the 15th Annual National SPOC (Single Point Of Contact) seminar in Birmingham with the National Police Chiefs' Council, supported SPOC seminars in Scotland and Wales, and provided dedicated election briefings for new SPOCs. Throughout the year, police forces across the UK sent us data about allegations of electoral fraud that they received and investigated. Every year we report on the number, type, and outcome of these allegations, to understand what has happened and how cases are resolved. For the early May and December polls in 2019, we worked in partnership with Crimestoppers and Cabinet Office to run our 'your vote is yours alone' campaign. This aims to help voters understand what constitutes electoral fraud and how to raise concerns. Our campaign contributed to more than 10,000 visits to the Crimestoppers website, where people could find out more information and report any concerns. Crimestoppers passed on 30 pieces of actionable information to the police. Report navigation links

Previous Next Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 Performance analysis: Goal two 1. We published five reports, two of them a month late. This was because data collection and analysis for the European Parliamentary elections report took longer than expected, particularly to ensure we had data on EU citizens who could not vote. This had a knock-on impact on the recall petition report. ■ Back to content at footnote 1 Related content Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 Read our annual report and accounts for 2019/20, including key figures about the year at a glance. Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal two This is goal two of the performance analysis section of our annual report and accounts Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal three This is goal three of the performance analysis section of our annual report and accounts

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Commissioners Our commissioners represent Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and four are put forward by the political parties in the House of Commons. They are known as 'nominated commissioners'. The process for selecting the nominated

commissioners is different, but all commissioners are equal. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland Three of our commissioners have responsibility for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. They make sure these areas are represented, especially when the law or processes are different. Political parties Nominated commissioners Three of

our commissioners were put forward by the Leaders of the three largest nominating parties, and the fourth is appointed from candidates put forward by the other

parties. Nominating parties are registered parties with two or more Members of the House of Commons. Submitting and recommending the candidates The Speaker gives the relevant party leaders the opportunity to submit the names and CVs of three

candidates. They also have to submit evidence of the suitability for each candidate.

An independent panel reviews the information from the party leader, and interviews the candidates. The panel writes a report for the Speaker's Committee, which

evaluates the candidates. The Speaker's Committee then makes recommendations based on this report. Once the Speaker's Committee makes the recommendations, the Speaker holds a statutory consultation with the relevant parties on the names of successful

candidates. After the consultation, the Speaker's Committee reports its recommendation to the House of Commons, including the responses received in the statutory consultation. The Speaker will ask the Leader of the House to table a

motion for an humble Address to appoint the recommended candidates. Appointing the

commissioners If the House agrees the motion, the Queen appoints our commissioners by Royal Warrant. Related content Our Commissioners Electoral Commission Board Find out

about our Electoral Commission board, and read the minutes of past meetings Interim

corporate plan 2020/21 - 2024/25 Our interim corporate plan was published following

the 2019 UK Parliament general election. It has now been replaced by our 2022/23 to 2026/27 plan. Our Executive Team Meet our Executive Team, and find out more about

them

Report: Campaign spending at the 2014 European Parliamentary elections | Electoral Commission Search Report: Campaign spending at the 2014 European Parliamentary elections You are in the European Parliamentary elections section Home European Parliamentary elections On this page About this report About these elections Download our full report First published: 10 July 2019 Last updated: 6 August 2019 About this report This report provides an overview of the campaign spending and donations rules at the 2014 European Parliamentary election. It also provides links to more information about how much was spent at the election and donations given for the purpose of meeting campaign spending at these elections.

About these elections At the 2014 European Parliamentary elections, political parties, candidates and non-party campaigners spent a total of just over £10.8 million. There were 31 political parties contesting 70 seats across Great Britain and 10 contesting three seats in Northern Ireland. Three political parties, No2EU, Britain First and Communities United Party did not meet the statutory deadline for providing a return. These failures to meet the deadline are being considered in line with the Electoral Commission's enforcement policy which is available on our website.

Political parties spent a total of £8,440,434 in England, £955,815 in Scotland, £499,971 in Wales and £296,651 in Northern Ireland. There were no individual candidates contesting these elections in Great Britain. Candidates in Northern Ireland spent a total of £391,466. As of 15 December 2014, five non-party campaigners who were registered with the Commission submitted spending returns after the election. All of these non-party campaigners submitted their spending returns on time. These non-party campaigners spent a total of £187,173 in England, £16,460 in Scotland, £11,177 in Wales and £3,224 in Northern Ireland. They received a total of £127,400 in reportable donations. Our regulatory work at these polls in the six months before polling day (22 November 2013 and 22 May 2014) included:

- Registering 47 new political parties, of which six went on to contest the European elections
- Publishing and updating written guidance for candidates and agents, political parties and non-party campaigners
- Delivering training sessions for candidates, political parties and their staff on the rules at these polls
- Providing advice in response to over 1,400 enquiries from political parties, candidates and non-party campaigners
- Undertaking campaign and campaigner monitoring to ensure the rules were being followed; and taking regulatory action where necessary

Download our full report Our report on spending at the 2014 European Parliamentary elections Related content Report: How the May 2014 elections were run Read our report about how May 2014 elections were run Results and turnout at the 2014 European Parliamentary elections View the results and turnout at the 2014 European Parliamentary elections Report: May 2019 European Parliamentary elections and local elections Read our report about the 2019 European Parliamentary elections and local elections Inquiry report: the voting registration process for EU citizens resident in the UK for the 2019 European Parliamentary elections held in the UK Read our inquiry report about the voting registration process for the 2019 European Parliamentary election

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Board business 2018-19 Decision-tracker for February Chair's and Chief Executive's
meetings, and meetings in devolved legislatures Commissioner wash-up First published:
23 July 2019 Last updated: 23 July 2019 Summary Date: 21 March 2018 Time: 9:30am to
1:20pm Location: Boothroyd Room, 3 Bunhill Row, London Date of next scheduled
meeting: Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Sir John Holmes (JEH) Chair
Anna Carragher (AC) Elan Closs Stephens (ECS) John Horam (JRH) David Howarth (DH)
Alasdair Morgan (AM) Bridget Prentice (BP) Rob Vincent (RV) Claire Bassett (CB)
Kieran Rix (KR) Ailsa Irvine (AI) Robert Posner (RP) Craig Westwood (CW) Louise
Footner (LF) Katy Thomas (KT) Polly Wicks (PW) Marcia Owusu-Mfum (MO) Phil Thompson
(PT) Andy O'Neil (AON) Rhidian Thomas (RT) (by v/c) Niki Nixon (NN) Apologies Sue
Bruce (SB). Elan Closs Stephens (ECS) – item EC 13/18 and item EC 20/18 were
discussed first so that ECS could be present. She left the meeting at 10.15am.
Declaration of interests All the nominated Commissioners had stood for election, and
been nominated as Commissioners by political parties that had contested recent
elections and also registered as campaigners in the EU Referendum. AC was a member of
the Board of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland (which received money from the EU
Peace 3 Programme, and the Corners programme for individual artists). A Trustee of
the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, a recipient of EU funding, she had now returned to
that role at the conclusion of the Referendum. AC declared her sister was Head of BBC
News in Northern Ireland. DH in 2008 drafted and put forward in parliament an
amendment to the then European Union (Amendment) Bill, proposing an EU referendum in
the terms 'Should the United Kingdom remain in the European Union?' DH had stood for
election on a manifesto supporting an in-out referendum on the European Union. DH was
a council member of Justice, an organisation which had in the past received EU
funding. DH reported that the European Parliament subsidised a regular annual visit
by his Public Policy students to Brussels. DH declared that he had been awarded a
research grant of over €40,000 from the European Parliament. DH declared that he had
been at university with Jon Lansman, but had no current contact with him. JRH was a
member of the pro-Europe Conservative Europe Group, the parliamentary group
Conservative European Mainstream, and of the all-party parliamentary group on Reform,
Decentralisation and Devolution Group, chaired by Lord Foulkes. JEH reported that he
was Chair of the Advisory Board, Cargo Logic Air (British Air Cargo Company
established in 2015 by the Russian owner of the Volga Dnepr Group) (remunerated).
Minutes Minutes of 24 January 2018 Approved. Minutes of 21 February 2018 Approved. To
note Agenda items were not discussed in the order on the agenda, to allow ECS to be
present for items EC 20/18 and EC 13/18. The late addition to the agenda (EC 20/18)
was taken first and noted below. Regulatory matter for decision RP, as final decision
maker in the investigation, left the room. All present were reminded of the need for
complete confidentiality, the law on actual and perceived bias, conflict of interest
and the Commissioner Code of Conduct. A regulatory matter was considered, discussed
and agreed. During discussion a number of points were touched on, including:
Consideration of previous decisions on regulatory matters, and the importance of

consistency in our approach. The development of our prosecution policy, which, if agreed by the Board, would provide a route for prosecutions in appropriate cases to be brought by the Commission rather than requiring a police referral. Agreed: That: The Board having satisfied itself that the circumstances outlined in the paper met the threshold for referral, the matter be referred to the police for investigation; It be noted that the referral would figure in our press release on the wider investigation, and Commissioners would be notified separately of the press release and statement; RP returned to the room. Proposal to provide indicative funding information to the Scottish Parliament and National Assembly for Wales AON introduced the paper, asking the Board to agree that the figures presented in the paper should form the basis of our advice to the Scottish Parliament (SP) and National Assembly for Wales (NAW) regarding our future accountability to these bodies. Commissioners welcomed the comprehensive work undertaken to date. A question was asked on whether we would change how we managed our budget in future. CB explained that the current approach - event funding which predominately covers electoral events, and core funding which covers permanent resources - worked well and could be easier to manage with the new accountability structure. We could go back to the Speakers' Committee with a Supplementary Estimate if we encountered unplanned events. Questions were asked on whether the proposed request for resources would sit centrally and if further requests would come to this Board. CB responded that requests for additional funding would come back to Board for information, though as the organisation's accounting officer, the request would be under her name. AON advised that for elections taking place in Scotland, funding would come partly from Westminster and partly from Holyrood, according to the electoral event it was required for. The Board agreed to the principles identified in the paper which underpinned the financial modelling and the draft advice to the SP/NAW contained in the report, with an amendment to the wording in section 2.1 by deleting all of the first bullet point after its first sentence. Meeting conclusion With ECS leaving the meeting at this point, the Board was no longer quorate. The Board meeting concluded. There then followed informal discussion on the following agenda items by those Board members remaining present with staff. No decisions were taken. May elections update AI updated on the upcoming elections and highlighted the ongoing work to ensure the delivery of well-run elections through the risk-based approach to profiling local authorities. The Commission had met with those authorities that were rated "red" and "amber", and had this time also had a conversation with all authorities who were rated "green". This support and challenge of Returning Officers and their staff would continue through the electoral period but, as yet, nothing significant had been picked up. PT updated on the ID and postal pilot evaluation preparations. Extensive data collection was being conducted, and we would be gathering feedback from candidates and polling staff during and after the election. The statutory deadline for completing and publishing the evaluation was 4 August 2018, three months after the poll. It would be a challenge to draw conclusions across the different areas due to the variations in form of the different pilots. It was asked whether local authorities had been given any autonomy over the process. PT replied that the Cabinet Office were leading on the pilots, but that local authorities had been given latitude to propose what they wanted to test and the ID to be used. It was noted that evidence from the pilots might not be able to provide information on whether the pilots had had an impact on disenfranchisement. In response to a question on how the Commission intended to address this risk, PT explained that we would incorporate questions in our public opinion surveys to try to get a sense of any potential impact. In response

to a question on the form of the postal vote pilots, PT said that follow-ups either through a phone call or a visit would be carried out after completed postal votes had been received back by the Returning Officer, with a focus on asking voters if they had directly completed their ballots. During the discussion, it was suggested that neighbouring local authorities could be impacted by the pilots, with potential confusion amongst the electorate. Further discussions touched on the likelihood of campaigners against the pilots being present on polling day. CB advised that Commission staff had been working with local authorities to ensure awareness of this risk. Some of them had been in contact with police regarding any potential disruption. In response to a question on whether polling staff were receiving additional training for these polls, AI replied that they would, and that it was the responsibility of the local authority to provide this. PT added that he had seen the training plans that had been established by the local authorities. CB advised that we would be monitoring social media in the run up to the elections and confirmed we would highlight anything significant to local authorities. RP updated on the political finance and regulation work in respect of the May polls, noting that there had been 42 approved applications for new political parties. CW highlighted the organisation's campaign activity and public enquiries work leading up to both the registration deadline and polling day. Campaign beermats were shared with the Board. They would be distributed to pubs located in student areas as a route to engage this group – recognised as currently under-registered – in the voter registration drive. The fraud campaign had been formally launched with CrimeStoppers. Noted. Accuracy and Completeness Study PT introduced the paper, summarising the background behind the accuracy and completeness study. In response to a question on how the study would be conducted, PT advised that a clustered, quasi-random sample would be used and a house to house survey. PT advised that the overall sample size would consist of around 5,000 addresses, which equated to approximately 9,500 people. Asked whether the issue of double registration would be included in the study. PT advised questions on this topic could be included in the survey (although this might need to be in place of others) but highlighted that data emerging from these questions would be attitudinal, rather than factual. A range of questions were asked around whether we could join together with other studies. PT advised that, although possible, it would take the specific focus away from accuracy and completeness of the register. PT said he would review the research landscape to understand whether compatible studies were being undertaken, with which we could collaborate. A question was asked regarding whether it was more appropriate to undertake the study following the local government elections in May, as opposed to a study in December 2018. PT explained that, at the moment, December was the preferred choice so as to provide a baseline for assessing the impact of any changes to the annual canvass. CB added that there had been delays to proposed changes in the canvass which meant that a May study now felt a bit premature. However, in the long term, a case could be made to consider moving future studies to May. It was noted that the next study would be undertaken in December 2018, and then consideration given to moving to a May timeframe in the future.

Business Plan 2018-19: Principles for Performance Measures KR presented a series of slides setting out the principles for performance measurement that would form the basis of measures included in the Business Plan 2018-19. KR highlighted the performance measures already contained in the Corporate Plan, and noted these would provide a framework for additional measures in the Business Plan. The issues of understanding what drove impact, and measuring impact, were discussed by the Board. CB highlighted that some work had been undertaken on this issue already, with the

division of impact indicators (looking at activity with impacts our work but outside our direct control) and performance measures (activity which was within our control). It was noted that it would be beneficial to review and incorporate the policy recommendation tracker in this work on performance measures, to provide a clearer overview of our impact as an organisation. KR thanked Commissioners for their input and advised that further comments from the Board would be welcome outside of the meeting. It was noted that the first draft of performance measures supporting the Business Plan 2018-19 would be reviewed at the June Board meeting (27 June 2018) and that the policy recommendation tracker should be included on a future Board agenda.

Chief Executive's Update for March As noted in the Update, CB welcomed the involvement of Chloe Smith (Minister for the Constitution) in the launch of the anonymous voting changes and the work on electoral fraud. CB advised that the recent publication of UKPGE spending returns for larger parties had gone well, despite a slightly later than planned publication date. Focus was now on the local elections in May. AI updated on electoral registration work, highlighting our ongoing work with Cabinet Office on reforms to the annual canvass, and progress with our modernisation project, looking for example at using data in a more effective way. The Commission had produced guidance, in collaboration with the Information Commissioner's Office, Association of s (AEA) and Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), on the impact of the General Data Protection Regulation which had been well received. AI advised that we were working on responses to two open consultations – the National Assembly for Wales consultation on electoral reform, where responses were due by early April, and the Scottish Government's consultation on electoral reform, where the response was due by 29 March. RP updated the Board on the first publication of political party donations in Northern Ireland on 12 March. RP also advised that, when reviewing the spending returns of parties with spending over £250K relating to the 2017 UKPGE, the team had identified a number of reporting issues with the majority of these returns. These were now subject to investigation. The Commission had been hosting training sessions for police on electoral fraud over the last six months. These had now concluded and had been well received by attendees, with a request for further sessions which we were reviewing. RP said that work was underway to produce a report on digital campaigning that was likely to be published in mid-May. In response to a question around digital campaigning, RP advised that we were working with the relevant authorities as part of our inquiries. LF updated on two legal matters. The judicial review brought by the Democrats had been dismissed. The claimant had now gone to the Court of Appeal to ask for leave of appeal. Judgement had been reserved in relation to the judicial review claim lodged by the Good Law Project. We would continue to monitor both cases. KR updated the Board on the NAO's interim audit update which had been presented at the Audit Committee on 20th March, advising that the interim audit had gone well. Preparations were underway for the year-end audit, which was due to take place in May. Quarter 3 Finance and Performance Report KT introduced the Quarter 3 report, noting that all Key Performance Measures had been achieved in the last quarter, aside from one relating to party registrations. This measure had not been achieved due to the volume of registration applications received. KT highlighted the Q3 financial position, with CB noting the Supplementary Estimate was approved by Speaker's Committee in January 2018. In response to a question on the finance summary and our income, KT undertook to rework the summary table to reflect income in a clearer manner. CB advised that she, Kieran Rix and John Holmes would be appearing before the Speaker's Committee on 27 March to seek approval for the Corporate Plan 2018-19 to 23-24 and the 18-19 Main Estimate. Noted. Annual

Review of Corporate Governance Agreed: That the Corporate Governance Framework be approved, subject to the changes highlighted in the document. Forward Plan of Board business 2018-19 Noted. Decision-tracker for February The Chair discussed the action on the issue of shortage of EMS suppliers arising from the 18 January 2017 Board meeting. Noted. Chair's and Chief Executive's meetings, and meetings in devolved legislatures Noted. Commissioner wash-up

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Parliament general election. It has now been replaced by our 2022/23 to 2026/27 plan.

Public attitudes towards voting in England in the context of COVID-19 | Electoral Commission Search Public attitudes towards voting in England in the context of COVID-19 You are in the Public attitudes towards voting in the context of COVID-19 section Home Our research Public attitudes towards voting in the context of COVID-19 On this page Introduction Key findings Polling station voting Postal Voting Other findings First published: 20 January 2021 Last updated: 19 March 2021 Introduction In February 2021, we asked a representative sample of eligible voters in England about their attitudes towards voting during the pandemic. The questions covered attitudes towards postal voting and other options for the safe running of the election in 2021. This is a repeat of the work carried out in December 2020. This page provides a summary of findings from the latest of these studies, makes comparison with December. Key findings The key findings are consistent between December and February with voting in a polling place remaining the preferred option amongst a majority of voters although the results indicate a likely increase in the proportion of voters opting to use a postal vote at the May 2021 elections compared to previous polls. Polling station voting The majority said they would feel safe voting at the polling station. This was consistent between December (71%) and February (73%). When they are informed about the Covid safety measures, based on Electoral Commission guidance, there is an increase in the proportion who see in-person voting as safe (82%). Of those who would not feel safe, around 4 in 5 (82%) said there were no additional provisions that would make them feel safe voting at a polling station. 61% of BAME respondents in Great Britain said voting in person was safe compared to 75% of White respondents. Once told about the Electoral Commission guidance around safety measures 73% of BAME respondents feel safe voting in person compared with 84% of white respondents. Postal voting There was no change between December and February in the proportion of people who said they would vote by post (42%). 22% of people who normally vote in person said they intend to vote by post (23% in December). While this should not be taken as a reliable indicator of the number of people who will actually vote by mail this does indicate that there could be a significant uplift in the number of postal votes compared with previous polls. Other findings There has been an increase in the proportion of people who say that they would vote if an election was to take place now. Rising from 79% in December up to 88% in February. When presented with options on how the May elections could be conducted the most popular choice was to hold the poll largely as usual (40%). The second most popular choice was for the polling stations to be open more than one day (31%). 13% preferred an all postal vote and 8% wanted the election postponed for a short period. The only finding that was not consistent between December and February was the number of people thinking that it should be postponed doubled, albeit only from 4% to 8%. Just under a third (33%) of those people who intend to vote in person said that if their household had to isolate due to Covid-19 then they would not know someone able to vote for them. Just over half (53%) said they would. Background notes Background notes All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from work done for the Commission by YouGov Plc. For the February fieldwork, total sample size was 1894 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 29th January and 20th February 2021. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all adults in England (aged 18+). For the December fieldwork, total sample size was 1,461 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 7th and 8th December 2020. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all adults in England (aged 18+). Full tables England Related content Public attitudes towards voting in Scotland in the context of COVID-19 Read more about

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Report on the May 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election | Electoral Commission Search Report on the May 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election

You are in the Northern Ireland Assembly elections section Home Northern Ireland Assembly elections Currently reading: of 4 - Show page contents On this page Voting at the election Campaigning at the election Delivering the election Supporting evidence Summary This report looks at how the May 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election was run, how voters and campaigners found taking part, and what lessons can be learned for the future. We have reported separately on elections held this year in England , Scotland and Wales . On 5 May 2022, the Northern Ireland Assembly election was held. A total of 1,373,731 people were registered to vote, up from 1,254,709 at the last Assembly election on 2 March 2017. Overall our research shows that most people were confident that the election was well-run, and satisfaction with the process of registering to vote and voting remains high. However, the low levels of awareness of the Digital Registration Number (DRN) indicate that it may have been a barrier to some voters. As such we recommend that the UK Government reviews the operation of the DRN within the postal and proxy voting process to ensure it does not prevent people from accessing their vote. s were able to engage with voters using a variety of methods, with most people finding it easy to get information about the elections. However, a majority of candidates reported experiencing threats, abuse or intimidation. This behaviour has no place in our political system and it's important that all candidates and campaigners are able to freely participate in the democratic process. We will work with the wider electoral community to make sure we understand what is driving candidate abuse and intimidation, and to ensure this issue is addressed as a matter of urgency. The administration of polling day and the count generally went well, despite challenging circumstances relating to capacity, resilience and the late confirmation of the approach by the UK Government regarding provisions for Covid. There were, however, some concerns raised relating to the efficiency of the count. We recommend that the Chief Electoral Officer builds on previous improvements to the first stages of the count process by examining where efficiencies can be made in relation to the latter stages of the count.

Voting at the election The experience of voters at the 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election Most people were confident that the 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election was well-run, and satisfaction with the process of registering to vote and voting remains high. Nine in 10 (93%) of polling station voters felt confident that they could vote safely in person in light of Covid, and most voters were able to vote using their preferred method (91%). Nearly all voters found it easy to fill in their ballot paper. The low levels of awareness surrounding the Digital Registration Number may have been a barrier to some people accessing their vote.

Summary On 5 May 2022, the Northern Ireland Assembly election was held. A total of 1,373,731 people were registered to vote, up from 1,254,709 at the last Assembly election on 2 March 2017. Voters continue to have positive views about how elections are run. Voters continue to have positive views about how elections are run. After each election we ask members of the public who were eligible to vote for their views on voting and elections, which helps us understand if views have changed since the last comparable election. Satisfaction with the registration and voting process remains high. People had high levels of satisfaction with the process of registering to vote and voting. Our research shows that: 84% of people across Northern Ireland were satisfied with the process of registering to vote - this is consistent with the levels of satisfaction reported by people after the 2017 Assembly election. 95% of people across Northern Ireland were satisfied with the process of voting - this is broadly consistent with the 2019 UK

Parliamentary general election (97%) and is an increase from the 2017 Assembly election (87%) A majority of voters found polling stations safe in relation to Covid Unlike in the rest of the UK, there was no emergency proxy vote provision for people with Covid in Northern Ireland. This meant that, if someone became unwell as a result of Covid shortly before polling day, their only option to vote was to do so in person at a polling station. Despite the absence of such a provision, a majority of voters reported finding polling stations safe. 93% of voters found polling stations very or fairly safe in relation to Covid, although 4% of voters found them fairly or very unsafe. Most people were confident that the election was well-run When asked, 82% of people said they were confident that the election was well-run, while 8% were not confident. This is broadly consistent with the 2019 UK Parliamentary general election (83%) and is a slight decrease from the 2017 Assembly election (86%). Confidence that the election was well run was lower amongst those limited a lot by a disability/health condition, with 75% of such people saying they were confident the election was well-run and 12% not confident. Views about the safety of voting and whether electoral fraud is a problem were also consistent with the most recent comparable elections, with 84% of people saying they thought voting was safe from fraud and abuse. However, perceptions of electoral fraud remain high, with 20% of people surveyed saying they thought it was a problem. The main reason given by people who thought fraud had taken place was that they thought there was voter fraud happening by post, but they hadn't seen anything specific. Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) provide data to the Commission on alleged cases of electoral fraud. They have confirmed they received one report of suspected personation on polling day. Following an investigation no further action was taken as there was no evidence of an offence. Turnout at these elections was consistent with previous comparable elections Overall turnout at the election was 63.6%, a decrease of around one percentage point from the last Assembly election in 2017 (64.8%). However, given the increase in the number of people registered to vote for this election, the total number of ballot papers was higher (873,787 up from 812,783 in 2017). People who told us that they didn't vote were mostly likely to say this was because they did not have time. The most common reasons given were: Lack of time / too busy / I was busy at work (13%) You just can't trust politicians to keep their promises / voter's wishes ignored / politicians do not care / only in politics for their own benefit (9%) There was no point in voting because it was obvious who would win / my vote wouldn't have made a difference to the outcome / my vote doesn't count (8%) I didn't like the candidates / parties / they didn't represent my views (8%) I'm just not interested in politics / fed up with politics (7%) Medical/health reasons not related to Covid (7%) I was away on 5 May / voting day (7%) Methods of voting In Northern Ireland, people can apply to vote in one of three ways; in person, by post or by proxy (asking someone they trust to vote on their behalf). When applying for an absent vote, people must provide a valid reason why they cannot attend their polling station on polling day. This is different to the rest of the UK, where postal and proxy voting is available on demand. Voters who register to vote online (which has been available in Northern Ireland since 2018) are required to provide a Digital Registration Number (DRN) when applying to vote by post or proxy. The DRN is intended to be a digital replacement for the wet ink signature that is required on paper registration forms. It is supplied to voters when they register online, or can be requested from the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland. The DRN is not a requirement elsewhere in the UK. Methods of voting Most people could vote using their preferred method While most people report being able to vote using their preferred method of voting (91%), 6% of

people say they were not able to vote using their preferred method. Voting by their preferred method was lower for people limited a lot by a disability or health issue, with 83% of those who voted in person saying it was their preferred method. There are low levels of awareness surrounding the Digital Registration Number. Alongside our large-scale voter registration campaign ‘Got 5?’ we ran a targeted online campaign to raise awareness of the Digital Registration Number (DRN). This campaign targeted those groups we knew were more likely to need a postal or proxy vote. The campaign directed voters to the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland’s website where they could request their DRN. This campaign was supported by both partnership and public relations activity. The Electoral Office for Northern Ireland received 8,161 requests for a DRN in the run up to the election. Despite efforts to raise awareness of the DRN, awareness levels remain low: 64% of people said they didn’t know you are given a DRN when you apply to register to vote online 5% of people said they lacked confidence in the election because they could not find or were confused by the DRN. In total there were 21,039 postal and proxy vote applications approved for the 2022 Assembly election, with 6,031 applications rejected. The main reason for rejection was that no DRN was provided (3,636). At the last Assembly election in 2017 there was no online registration and therefore no DRN. The total number of postal and proxy vote applications approved was significantly higher (29,590) and the rejection rate lower (2,345). Recommendation 1 Recommendation 1 The low levels of awareness and the large number of rejected postal and proxy applications due to a missing DRN indicate that it may have been a barrier to some voters, despite public awareness activity. We therefore recommend that the UK Government reviews the operation of the DRN within the postal and proxy voting process to ensure it does not prevent people from accessing their vote. Most people were confident they knew how to vote without making a mistake. Nearly all voters (98%) said that they found it easy to fill in their ballot paper, but some votes continue to be rejected and not included in the count. 11,074 ballot papers were rejected at the count, as the voter had not followed the instructions for marking it. This represents 1.3% of all votes cast. This was a slight increase compared to the 2017 Assembly election when 9,450 ballot papers were rejected, representing 1.2% of all votes cast. Campaigning at the election The experience of campaigning at the 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election s were able to engage with voters using a variety of methods, although concerns about Covid impacted campaigners. A majority of candidates responding to our survey said they experienced threats, abuse and/or intimidation. In most cases this related to the theft or damage of campaign materials, online and verbal abuse. It is important that candidates and campaigners are able to freely participate in our democratic processes, and we plan to meet with the wider electoral community to understand what is driving candidate abuse and intimidation, and to ensure this issue is addressed as a matter of urgency. Most people found it easy to get information, but younger age groups feel less well informed about candidates. Transparency about who is responsible for political campaign activity online remains important for voters. Parties and candidates reported higher campaign spending than at any Assembly election since 2003, but overall spending by campaigners did not reach the limits that were set in law. Summary A total of 239 candidates stood for election to the Northern Ireland Assembly (compared with 228 in 2017), 87 of which were female candidates, representing 36.4% of all candidates. 17 political parties and 24 independent candidates contested the election. s were able to engage with voters using a variety of methods, although concerns about Covid impacted campaigners At the 2022 Assembly election, campaigners provided information in a variety of different

ways. The most common way people reported seeing information on parties and candidates included: Leaflet from a candidate / political party (64%) Posters / billboards (51%) Party leader debate on television (32%) Leaflet from another source (e.g. individual / organisation supporting a party) (31%) Word of mouth (30%) On a news website (27%) Candidates responding to our survey also told us that leaflets and canvassing were their most used campaigning methods, specifically: almost half (47%) told us that their most used campaigning method was door-to-door canvassing, with 88% saying it was one of their top three campaigning methods leaflets, newsletters or flyers was the second most popular, with three-quarters (76%) listing it in their top three campaigning methods Social media was the most popular digital campaigning tool, with around a third (31%) of the candidates that responded to our survey saying this was their third most used campaigning method, although it was primarily used to support more traditional campaigning methods. Free methods of digital campaigning were far more popular than paid-for tools with candidates who responded to our survey. We found that: the majority (92%) said they posted on social media about their campaign over half (53%) uploaded video to their social media nearly half (47%) said they asked their supporters to share their posts only one in 10 (10%) of respondents said that they paid for adverts on social media Concerns about Covid impacted campaigners despite the improved public health situation. Concerns about Covid impacted campaigners despite the improved public health situation. Many of the candidates who responded to our survey reported that Covid affected their campaigns in some way. For most, this was due to concerns about the health and safety of others involved in their campaign and the impacts of Covid on recruiting volunteers. Our research found that: just over half of candidates who responded to our survey (57%) felt that they were able to effectively get their views across to voters during the campaign over three quarters (77%) said that concerns about the health of others involved impacted their campaigns three quarters (74%) said that Covid affected their ability to recruit volunteers to some degree A majority of candidates reported experiencing threats, abuse and/or intimidation A majority of candidates who responded to our survey (71%) said they had some sort of problem with threats, abuse, or intimidation, with a quarter (24%) of respondents experiencing a serious problem. Our research shows that: of those who experienced threats, or intimidation, the most common sources were the theft or damage of campaign materials such as posters (77%), online abuse (69%) and verbal abuse (60%) Two thirds (66%) of those who experienced abuse said that it came from members of the public or from anonymous/unknown sources. A quarter (23%) received threats from campaigners/volunteers and 6% received it from other candidates women were more likely than men to report having had a serious problem of those who either experienced threats, abuse or intimidation themselves or witnessed it, 44% reported it to the police. A tenth (11%) said that their experience would discourage them standing as a candidate in the future PSNI has confirmed that it received 128 reports relating to the election, the majority relating to the theft or damage of campaign material (93) with a smaller number of reported incidents relating to online misogyny (2) or assault (5). While robust political debate is part of a healthy democracy, sometimes things can go too far and cross the line into abuse and intimidation. When this happens it is vital that incidents are investigated and action is taken against those found guilty of criminal offences. Intimidating and abusive behaviour has no place in our political system and it's important that all candidates and campaigners are able to freely participate in the democratic process. Due to the cross-cutting nature of candidate and campaigner abuse, tackling it will require the efforts of people from across the electoral community. While we do not

investigate or prosecute incidents of abuse, we are well placed with our expertise across elections to bring together those who have a role to play in addressing this issue. Recommendation 2 Recommendation 2 Urgent action is needed to tackle and prevent abuse and intimidation of candidates and campaigners at elections. Candidates and campaigners should be able to participate freely in the democratic process, ensuring that voters can hear from a range of voices during elections. We will work with the wider electoral community to tackle this cross-cutting issue and will invite PSNI, representatives from a range of political parties and the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland to a roundtable event on candidate abuse. The event will provide the opportunity to understand the recent experiences of candidates at the 2022 Assembly election and to explore what action can be taken to ensure candidates and campaigners can freely participate in our democratic processes. Most people found it easy to get information but younger age groups feel less well informed about candidates. Most voters found it easy to find information, but there is still a sizable proportion, particularly among younger age groups, who did not feel they had enough information about candidates. Our research after the election found that: 84% of people said they found it easy to find information on what the election was about a similar proportion (86%) felt that they found it easy to find information on the candidates and parties running for election 71% of people agreed that they had enough information on candidates to make an informed choice, although 12% disagreed 88% of people aged 65 and over said they had enough information on candidates to make an informed decision, compared to only 53% of 18-34 year olds. Transparency about who is responsible for election campaign material is important to build trust. Ahead of the 2022 Assembly election, imprint requirements on printed election material were brought into line with the law elsewhere in the UK. The change required all printed party and non-party campaign material to include an imprint. We welcome this change as it helps voters understand which parties and campaigners target them with printed election materials. However digital campaigning accounts for an increasingly large proportion of election spending and our research after the election confirmed that people continue to value transparency about who is responsible for political campaign activity online at elections, with: 62% of people agreeing that it is important for them to know who has produced the political information they see online almost half (49%) saying they would trust digital campaigning material more if they knew who produced it 30% saying that they cannot find out who has produced the political information that they see online The UK Government has introduced legislation that will require most campaigners to include information to identify who has promoted and/or published their online campaign material in future. This new digital imprint requirement will help voters understand who is targeting them online with information at elections and referendums in future. These changes are expected to come into force from the end of 2023. We will monitor any impact of the new digital imprint requirement on people's level of confidence in political information online.

Candidates were able to access support to understand and comply with election law. The Commission focussed on providing candidates and parties with proactive support to understand and comply with political finance law, both before and after the election. Alongside our written guidance we delivered a range of pre-election seminars for candidates and parties on the spending and donation rules. Post-election, we delivered seminars for candidates and agents on completing their spending and donation returns and ran advice surgeries for parties where they could book an appointment to speak to us about specific issues. Our approach has been informed and led by the evidence and feedback we received in our most recent survey of the

regulated community. We will continue to focus on delivering more bespoke advice and guidance resources so that parties and campaigners can easily understand political finance law, regardless of their size or experience.

s spent more at this Assembly election than at recent elections, but did not reach permitted spending limits There are limits on how much campaigners can spend in the period during an election campaign. For parties and non-party campaigners, this 'regulated period' started on 5 January 2022 and ended on polling day. For candidates, the period started the day after they became a candidate. The earliest date a person could become a candidate was the date the Assembly was dissolved (28 March 2022). s have to declare what they spent, and we publish this information.

s reported more campaign spending than at recent Assembly elections There are limits on how much can be spent on campaigning during an election. These differ depending on if the spending is done at a party, non-party campaigner, or candidate level. At a party level, reported campaign spending totalled £515,434.29 during the regulated period for the May 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election. This total amount was more than at any Assembly election since 2003. Six parties reported no regulated campaign spending. The amount of spending reported by individual parties varied significantly, ranging from £125 to £178,199. For candidates, the total amount of campaign spending reported was £1,069,656.07. The average amount spent per candidate was £4,475.54. This was much higher than the average amounts spent per candidate at the Assembly elections in 2016 (£3,689) or 2017 (£2,852).

Total campaign spending By parties

Party	Spending (£)
Alliance - Alliance Party of Northern Ireland	£83,165.98
Aontú	£61,385.00
Cross Community Labour Alternative (CCLA)	£0
Democratic Unionist Party - D.U.P.	£51,915.82
Green Party	£174,986.81
Heritage Party	£6,242.00
Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP)	£39,298.23
Northern Ireland Conservatives	£125.00
People Before Profit Alliance	£9,910
PUP (Progressive Unionist Party)	£0
SDLP (Social Democratic & Labour Party)	£60,308.12
Sinn Féin	£41,056.16
Socialist Party (Northern Ireland)	£149,844.62
The Workers Party	£178,199.22
TUdV	£14,629.73
Ulster Unionist Party	£166,667.26
N/A	£29,723.63
Total	£133,767.07
No third-party campaigners	£67,364.28
Independent candidates	£13,811.74
Total	£1,069,656.07

By candidates

Candidate	Spending (£)
1	£83,165.98
2	£61,385.00
3	£0
4	£51,915.82
5	£174,986.81
6	£6,242.00
7	£39,298.23
8	£125.00
9	£9,910
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average of around 35% of what they were permitted to spend, but there was considerable variation between candidates: one candidate spent 98% of their permitted limit, while several (13) reported no regulated campaign spending at all. Three quarters of candidates (178 out of 239) spent less than half of the permitted amount, and only five candidates spent more than 80% of the amount they were allowed to spend. Parties reported they spent most money on advertising, while candidates spent the most on unsolicited material to voters. Parties reported that they spent a total of £251,312.02 on advertising during the campaign for the May 2022 Assembly election. This represented nearly half of all campaign spending reported by parties in 2022.

This was similar to most previous Assembly elections when advertising was also the largest single category of spending. In 2011, parties reported spending slightly more on campaign broadcasts than on advertising. Category Amount of spending reported (by parties) Advertising £251,312.02 Unsolicited material to electors £67,090.41 Market research/canvassing £62,028.00 Campaign broadcasts £51,239.19 Media £26,866.54 Rallies and other events £16,706.44 Transport £16,470.46 Manifesto or Referendum material £12,495.60 Overheads and general administration £11,225.63 Category 2 Amount of spending reported (by candidates) Advertising £449,433.08 Unsolicited material to electors £575,847.95 Transport £13,824.99 Public meetings £9,132.77 Agent and other staff costs £6,727.36 Accommodation and administration £12,501.10 Other authorised spending £23,848.15 Personal expenses £12,326.33 To compare, candidates spent the most on unsolicited material to voters. Candidates spent around 42% (£449,433.08) of their total spend on advertising and around 54% (£575,847.95) of their total spend on unsolicited materials sent to voters. This compares to 2017, where 59% of candidate spending was unsolicited materials to voters, and 39% on advertising.

Delivering the election

The experience of delivering the 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election

The 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election was well run. The late confirmation of the approach relating to provisions for Covid impacted on the Chief Electoral Officer's ability to plan for the poll. Attracting and retaining experienced staff and the booking of venues continue to pose significant challenges for the Chief Electoral Officer. The administration of polling day and the count generally went well, although candidates raised some concerns relating to the efficiency of the count.

Delivering the election summary

The Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland is the registration officer and returning officer for all elections in Northern Ireland. The Chief Electoral Officer's duties include managing electoral registration, nominations, absent voting, polling stations and the counting of votes. Our evidence shows that these elections were well-run, and voters and campaigners reported high levels of confidence. However, underlying issues relating to capacity and resilience remain, with Covid further impacting the ability to attract and retain experienced staff. Early clarity on legislation is essential to support effective planning.

Late confirmation of the approach relating to provisions for Covid impacted on the Chief Electoral Officer's ability to plan for the poll. Unlike in the rest of the UK there was no emergency proxy vote provision for people with Covid in Northern Ireland. This meant that if someone became unwell as a result of Covid shortly before polling day, their only option was to vote in person at a polling station. The Electoral Commission and the Chief Electoral Officer sought clarity from the UK Government on what provisions would be in place to support voters to participate safely in the context of the Covid pandemic. The UK Government did not provide clarity until March 2022 that no legislative provisions would be introduced. This late decision impacted on the Chief Electoral Officer's ability to plan for the poll, and our ability to deliver clear information to voters on what to expect when voting on polling day.

Despite these challenges, and informed by the learnings and guidance we provided from the elections delivered in Great Britain in 2021, the Chief Electoral Officer put in place a range of public health measures for the safety of voters at polling stations. This included hand sanitisers, protective screens, ventilation and advice to wear a face covering. The Chief Electoral Officer needs early clarity to be able to deliver the changes introduced by the Elections Act Changes introduced by the Elections Act will present new challenges for the Chief Electoral Officer and the wider electoral community. It is important that the UK Government works with the electoral community in Northern Ireland and across the UK as a whole to ensure there is sufficient clarity on how the Elections Act is going to be implemented. Recommendation 3

Recommendation 3 The UK Government should provide early clarity on decisions that would impact on the Chief Electoral Officer's ability to plan for elections. All legislation relating to electoral events should be in place at least six months before it is required to be implemented or complied with to ensure appropriate time for planning. Capacity and resilience remains a significant challenge to the delivery of elections Concerns about resilience and capacity in relation to the delivery of elections remain, with Covid making it even more difficult to attract and retain experienced staff and book venues for polling stations. These issues are exacerbated by the challenges of delivering elections within an outdated and increasingly complex electoral law framework. We continue to support the Law Commissions' review of electoral law which would simplify and improve electoral law across the UK, supporting the effective delivery of elections. Recruiting and retaining staff to work at the elections remained a problem The Chief Electoral Officer highlighted problems around recruiting and retaining experienced polling station and count staff, with a high number of recruits dropping out ahead of polling day. This issue is being seen across the UK, and has been exacerbated by the Covid pandemic. We will continue to work with the Chief Electoral Officer and the wider electoral community to develop and deliver proposals that will support more resilient electoral management.

Specifically, we have formed a sub-group of the UK Electoral Coordination and Advisory Board (ECAB) to discuss and identify solutions to the capacity and resilience challenges experienced by Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers across the UK. An immediate focus for this sub-group will be addressing the challenges around the recruitment of polling station staff. Challenges booking polling station venues Booking venues for polling stations is another aspect of managing the elections that has been highlighted as a continuing challenge. In part this appears to be an impact of Covid, with schools particularly reluctant to be used as polling stations. The ability for those running the polls to be able to access suitable venues is key to ensuring the smooth delivery of elections. The administration of polling day and the count generally went well, although candidates raised some concerns relating to the efficiency of the count The administration of polling day and the count generally went well, with a majority of voters (82%) and a majority of the candidates responding to our survey (78%) reporting they were confident the election was well run. The counting of votes was undertaken at three venues across Northern Ireland: Titanic Exhibition Centre in Belfast, Ulster University in Jordanstown, and Meadowbank Sports Arena in Magherafelt. Candidates raised concerns relating to the efficiency of the count Only 46% of respondents who attended the count reported that they were satisfied with how efficiently the count processes were run. Improvements introduced to the verification and primary sort in 2016 and 2017 supported the first stage of the count to move efficiently.

Verification of the used ballot papers began at 8am on Friday 5 May and by that

afternoon a number of candidates had been deemed elected. However, unlike in 2017, the count was not completed on the same day, and it took until the early hours of Sunday 8 May for the last constituency to be declared. Historically election counts in Northern Ireland have taken two days to complete, with 2017 the first time a second day was not needed, in part due to how the votes transferred in the latter stages. At this year's election, there were many more stages of the count where only a small number of votes were able to be transferred at each stage, with more stages then needed before candidates had enough votes to get above the quota and be deemed elected.³ These challenges were exacerbated by the issue of retaining experienced count staff due to Covid. While the way the votes fell in an STV election and the dropout rates of experienced count staff contributed to the time-consuming nature of the count, we believe there remains the potential for improvements to be made to the latter stages of the count. Recommendation 4 Recommendation 4 The Chief Electoral Officer should build on previous improvements to the first stages of the count process by examining where efficiencies can be made to the latter stages of the count. This should include looking at what role technology could play. Concerns raised by candidates on access and facilities at the count A number of free text comments were also provided in our survey of candidates that related specifically to access and facilities at the count. The most common concerns raised related to traffic management, admissions to the count and the lack of facilities in some venues. While the issues highlighted will not have significantly impacted the time taken to complete the count, they will have added to the frustrations of some candidates. The Chief Electoral Officer's survey of count staff has identified similar concerns and as part of a process of continual improvement is committed to reviewing these. Supporting evidence Northern Ireland Assembly election May 2022 Public opinion research tables 2022 Northern Ireland Electoral data 1. The spending limit is calculated by adding together a base amount and a variable top up that takes into account the number of registered electors in the constituency contested. The spending limit is £8,700 plus 6% of the number of eligible voters (in borough constituencies) or 9% (in county constituencies). The four Belfast constituencies are borough constituencies. The other constituencies in Northern Ireland are county constituencies. Candidates standing in the same constituency that publish joint election material or use the same election agent are considered joint candidates and have lower spending limits as they are sharing some costs. If they are one of two joint candidates their limit is reduced by 25% and if they are one of three or more joint candidates their limit is reduced by 33%. ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. The spending categories that candidates use are different to those for parties, however both include 'Advertising' and 'Unsolicited material to electors' as categories. ■ Back to content at footnote 2 3. In STV elections, voters rank candidates in order of preference. Any candidate who obtains enough first preference votes to reach the minimum required to be elected (known as the quota), is deemed elected. If a voter's first-choice candidate does not get elected, or if they are elected with more votes than the next candidate, their vote can be transferred to help elect their second choice and so on. If no candidate has reached the quota at the end of a stage, the candidate with the lowest numbers of votes is excluded and their votes transferred. ■ Back to content at footnote 3 Page history First

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our report on the May 2022 Scottish council elections. Looking back at the May 2022 elections Read our latest blog post on looking back at the May 2022 elections.

You are in the Party panels section Home How we make decisions Party panels On this page Democracy Club presentation Minutes of the last meeting and actions arising (ECPPP 05/06/2018) Digital Campaigning report Electoral Observers consultation Codes of practice on election spending PFR Online and Modern Guidance projects Any other business Actions First published: 4 September 2018 Last updated: 2 September 2019 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Labour: Andrew Whyte (AW), Chair of meeting Scottish National Party: Scott Martin (SM) Conservative Party: Paul Bolton (PB) Megan Tucker (MT) Liberal Democrats: Darren Briddock (DB) Natalia Villazan (NV) Plaid Cymru: Geraint Day (GD) Democracy Club (for item 1): Joe Mitchell (JM) Sym Roe (SR) Electoral Commission: Craig Westwood, Director of Communications & Research (CW) Bob Posner, Director of Political Finance and Regulation & Legal Counsel (BP) Ellen Wilkie, Communications Officer (EW) Democracy Club presentation JM made a presentation introducing the PPP to the Democracy Club and their work. He requested three key actions for the panel: for them to make candidate data available to Democracy Club, to tell candidates about it and to inform the Democracy Club about the needs of political parties and candidates. DB raised concerns about whether this would be considered election spending. BP explained that it possibly would, but queried whether there would necessarily be a tangible cost and said that providing information is important. SM suggested that if the same opportunity was available to all candidates then it does not favour any candidate, in line with Electoral Commission hustings advice. DB raised concerns about the handling of data in light of GDPR. SR clarified that Democracy Club uses public open data and that candidates are invited to provide their own data. AW advised Democracy Club to seek advice from the Information Commissioner's Office. PB asked whether Democracy Club had contacted Electoral Registration Officers directly for this information. SR responded that they had but had seen varied success rates. DB and AW asked about the moderation and accuracy of crowdsourced data. SR explained the cross checking process. AW thanked Democracy Club for their presentation. Minutes of the last meeting and actions arising (ECPPP 05/06/2018) GD pointed out an error in the previous meeting minutes. CW responded that they would be corrected. NV requested that the minutes be circulated earlier. CW suggested that the minutes be circulated to the chair and panel at the same time. This was agreed. AW asked when a meeting would be set up to review the progress of the new PFR online system. BP responded that Carol Sweetenham would arrange the meeting and it was agreed that it should be on the same day as the planned guidance meeting for the convenience of those not based in London. Digital Campaigning report BP gave an update to the group on the Commission's recently published digital campaigning report. He explained that the Commission was now waiting to see how the government responds, and noted that the Cabinet Office are currently consulting on the possibility of requiring imprints on digital campaigning material. BP encouraged panel members to respond to the consultation. AW requested further information about revised spending categories. BP stated that the codes of practice provide further definition but legislative change would be required for anything further. AW responded that Labour is not opposed to transparency of finances, but noted that the guidance needs to work. DB asked BP what would take place if legislation is not changed. BP responded that the codes of practice will help. SM suggested the requirements for digital materials could be different from printed ones, noting that on printed materials this could be a P.O. Box, which is unlikely to be suitable for digital campaign materials. The panel discussed whether

having correct WHOIS data for a website domain should be sufficient when the purpose of the imprint is traceability. AW added that the medium should fit the channel so on digital materials it could be a website. CW responded that questions of what form an imprint might take were covered in the Cabinet Office consultation. AW asked whether the Commission had been in contact with social media platforms in light of the report. BP explained that the Commission continued to be in dialogue with social media companies, but noted that he was unsure how far they would be voluntarily willing to go. Electoral Observers consultation CW drew the panel's attention to the Commission's consultation on electoral observers and encouraged them to respond. SM raised a concern that some elements of the revised scheme seemed to apply equally to international observers and to UK residents, which he argued was not appropriate. He added that electoral observation should not be used by parties as a method of getting more supporters into the count. He gave the example of the need for strict political impartiality during leisure time, which is appropriate for international observers but not for national observers who have a vote in the election. Codes of practice on election spending BP referred to an update given at a previous meeting on the codes of practice and stated that the panel's feedback had been incorporated, but the themes were the same. He added that the drafts should now read better and offer more clarity, and that the Commission would appreciate consultation responses from panel members. AW asked whether the drafting takes into account the recent Supreme Court ruling. BP confirmed that it did. GD stated that translation costs should be exempt from spending rules. SM added that creation of easy read manifestos should also be exempt to encourage parties to create them. Other panel members added that braille versions and a person to sign for a deaf candidate should be exempted also. BP responded that in principle the Commission supported this. DB asked whether there was any possibility of raising the candidate spending limit. AW added that the distinction between the long and short campaign could be removed. BP noted that these may be points panel members want to raise in their consultation responses to the draft codes. Following the consultation the Commission currently plan to submit the Codes, and highlight any key submissions received to the Cabinet Office minister. They can take forward changes in the law. AW confirmed that panel members would respond to the consultation. PFR Online and Modern Guidance projects BP updated the panel that the projects are moving forward. He added that they were challenging but that it is important that they happen. DB asked whether a date had been decided for the new PFR online system. BP responded that the Commission has set a presently realistic goal for it to be working by the end of next summer. PB suggested that it would be optimal for the new system to be working for Quarter 1. The panel agreed. Any other business AW stated that the panel is collectively concerned about the Commission's firmer regulatory and enforcement approach. He stated that for example it appears that the Commission has changed its approach on regulation of late reporting. He added that it was important the panel was consulted in advance of any internal policy changes. BP agreed that the Commission has become more firm in its regulatory approach, and indicated this is likely to continue. He added that there is a view that more could be done by parties to invest in internal governance to assist themselves and panel members to enable regulatory compliance. The panel responded that the parties are voluntary organisations often reliant on volunteers to complete financial reporting, and that action by the Commission can be off-putting to volunteers. BP and SM discussed an instance where a compliance warning had been issued incorrectly by the Commission. BP assured that this was an isolated case and was not in line with usual practice. BP stated that the rules had been in place a

long time and he believed the Commission's approach is proportionate. However, he stated that he did not underestimate the challenge parties face. Actions Action Owner Status Set up meeting to demo progress of PFR system, to immediately follow or precede the next PPP meeting CS Complete CS has arranged for 4 December Related content Party registration decisions View our decisions on political party names, descriptions and emblems View current applications View the political party names, descriptions and emblems which we are currently considering as part of our assessment process Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Registers of unincorporated associations Download and view the registers of unincorporated associations

You are in the Northern Ireland Assembly elections section Home Northern Ireland Assembly elections Currently reading: of 4 - Show page contents On this page Voting at the election Campaigning at the election Delivering the election Supporting evidence Summary This report looks at how the May 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election was run, how voters and campaigners found taking part, and what lessons can be learned for the future. We have reported separately on elections held this year in England , Scotland and Wales . On 5 May 2022, the Northern Ireland Assembly election was held. A total of 1,373,731 people were registered to vote, up from 1,254,709 at the last Assembly election on 2 March 2017. Overall our research shows that most people were confident that the election was well-run, and satisfaction with the process of registering to vote and voting remains high. However, the low levels of awareness of the Digital Registration Number (DRN) indicate that it may have been a barrier to some voters. As such we recommend that the UK Government reviews the operation of the DRN within the postal and proxy voting process to ensure it does not prevent people from accessing their vote. s were able to engage with voters using a variety of methods, with most people finding it easy to get information about the elections. However, a majority of candidates reported experiencing threats, abuse or intimidation. This behaviour has no place in our political system and it's important that all candidates and campaigners are able to freely participate in the democratic process. We will work with the wider electoral community to make sure we understand what is driving candidate abuse and intimidation, and to ensure this issue is addressed as a matter of urgency. The administration of polling day and the count generally went well, despite challenging circumstances relating to capacity, resilience and the late confirmation of the approach by the UK Government regarding provisions for Covid. There were, however, some concerns raised relating to the efficiency of the count. We recommend that the Chief Electoral Officer builds on previous improvements to the first stages of the count process by examining where efficiencies can be made in relation to the latter stages of the count. Voting at the election The experience of voters at the 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election Most people were confident that the 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election was well-run, and satisfaction with the process of registering to vote and voting remains high. Nine in 10 (93%) of polling station voters felt confident that they could vote safely in person in light of Covid, and most voters were able to vote using their preferred method (91%). Nearly all voters found it easy to fill in their ballot paper. The low levels of awareness surrounding the Digital Registration Number may have been a barrier to some people accessing their vote. Summary On 5 May 2022, the Northern Ireland Assembly election was held. A total of 1,373,731 people were registered to vote, up from 1,254,709 at the last Assembly election on 2 March 2017. Voters continue to have positive views about how elections are run Voters continue to have positive views about how elections are run After each election we ask members of the public who were eligible to vote for their views on voting and elections, which helps us understand if views have changed since the last comparable election. Satisfaction with the registration and voting process remains high People had high levels of satisfaction with the process of registering to vote and voting. Our research shows that: 84% of people across Northern Ireland were satisfied with the process of registering to vote - this is consistent with the levels of satisfaction reported by people after the 2017 Assembly election 95% of people across Northern Ireland were satisfied with the process of voting - this is broadly consistent with the 2019 UK

Parliamentary general election (97%) and is an increase from the 2017 Assembly election (87%) A majority of voters found polling stations safe in relation to Covid Unlike in the rest of the UK, there was no emergency proxy vote provision for people with Covid in Northern Ireland. This meant that, if someone became unwell as a result of Covid shortly before polling day, their only option to vote was to do so in person at a polling station. Despite the absence of such a provision, a majority of voters reported finding polling stations safe. 93% of voters found polling stations very or fairly safe in relation to Covid, although 4% of voters found them fairly or very unsafe. Most people were confident that the election was well-run When asked, 82% of people said they were confident that the election was well-run, while 8% were not confident. This is broadly consistent with the 2019 UK Parliamentary general election (83%) and is a slight decrease from the 2017 Assembly election (86%). Confidence that the election was well run was lower amongst those limited a lot by a disability/health condition, with 75% of such people saying they were confident the election was well-run and 12% not confident. Views about the safety of voting and whether electoral fraud is a problem were also consistent with the most recent comparable elections, with 84% of people saying they thought voting was safe from fraud and abuse. However, perceptions of electoral fraud remain high, with 20% of people surveyed saying they thought it was a problem. The main reason given by people who thought fraud had taken place was that they thought there was voter fraud happening by post, but they hadn't seen anything specific. Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) provide data to the Commission on alleged cases of electoral fraud. They have confirmed they received one report of suspected personation on polling day. Following an investigation no further action was taken as there was no evidence of an offence. Turnout at these elections was consistent with previous comparable elections Overall turnout at the election was 63.6%, a decrease of around one percentage point from the last Assembly election in 2017 (64.8%). However, given the increase in the number of people registered to vote for this election, the total number of ballot papers was higher (873,787 up from 812,783 in 2017). People who told us that they didn't vote were mostly likely to say this was because they did not have time. The most common reasons given were: Lack of time / too busy / I was busy at work (13%) You just can't trust politicians to keep their promises / voter's wishes ignored / politicians do not care / only in politics for their own benefit (9%) There was no point in voting because it was obvious who would win / my vote wouldn't have made a difference to the outcome / my vote doesn't count (8%) I didn't like the candidates / parties / they didn't represent my views (8%) I'm just not interested in politics / fed up with politics (7%) Medical/health reasons not related to Covid (7%) I was away on 5 May / voting day (7%) Methods of voting In Northern Ireland, people can apply to vote in one of three ways; in person, by post or by proxy (asking someone they trust to vote on their behalf). When applying for an absent vote, people must provide a valid reason why they cannot attend their polling station on polling day. This is different to the rest of the UK, where postal and proxy voting is available on demand. Voters who register to vote online (which has been available in Northern Ireland since 2018) are required to provide a Digital Registration Number (DRN) when applying to vote by post or proxy. The DRN is intended to be a digital replacement for the wet ink signature that is required on paper registration forms. It is supplied to voters when they register online, or can be requested from the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland. The DRN is not a requirement elsewhere in the UK. Methods of voting Most people could vote using their preferred method While most people report being able to vote using their preferred method of voting (91%), 6% of

people say they were not able to vote using their preferred method. Voting by their preferred method was lower for people limited a lot by a disability or health issue, with 83% of those who voted in person saying it was their preferred method. There are low levels of awareness surrounding the Digital Registration Number. Alongside our large-scale voter registration campaign ‘Got 5?’ we ran a targeted online campaign to raise awareness of the Digital Registration Number (DRN). This campaign targeted those groups we knew were more likely to need a postal or proxy vote. The campaign directed voters to the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland’s website where they could request their DRN. This campaign was supported by both partnership and public relations activity. The Electoral Office for Northern Ireland received 8,161 requests for a DRN in the run up to the election. Despite efforts to raise awareness of the DRN, awareness levels remain low: 64% of people said they didn’t know you are given a DRN when you apply to register to vote online 5% of people said they lacked confidence in the election because they could not find or were confused by the DRN. In total there were 21,039 postal and proxy vote applications approved for the 2022 Assembly election, with 6,031 applications rejected. The main reason for rejection was that no DRN was provided (3,636). At the last Assembly election in 2017 there was no online registration and therefore no DRN. The total number of postal and proxy vote applications approved was significantly higher (29,590) and the rejection rate lower (2,345). Recommendation 1 Recommendation 1 The low levels of awareness and the large number of rejected postal and proxy applications due to a missing DRN indicate that it may have been a barrier to some voters, despite public awareness activity. We therefore recommend that the UK Government reviews the operation of the DRN within the postal and proxy voting process to ensure it does not prevent people from accessing their vote. Most people were confident they knew how to vote without making a mistake. Nearly all voters (98%) said that they found it easy to fill in their ballot paper, but some votes continue to be rejected and not included in the count. 11,074 ballot papers were rejected at the count, as the voter had not followed the instructions for marking it. This represents 1.3% of all votes cast. This was a slight increase compared to the 2017 Assembly election when 9,450 ballot papers were rejected, representing 1.2% of all votes cast. Campaigning at the election The experience of campaigning at the 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election s were able to engage with voters using a variety of methods, although concerns about Covid impacted campaigners. A majority of candidates responding to our survey said they experienced threats, abuse and/or intimidation. In most cases this related to the theft or damage of campaign materials, online and verbal abuse. It is important that candidates and campaigners are able to freely participate in our democratic processes, and we plan to meet with the wider electoral community to understand what is driving candidate abuse and intimidation, and to ensure this issue is addressed as a matter of urgency. Most people found it easy to get information, but younger age groups feel less well informed about candidates. Transparency about who is responsible for political campaign activity online remains important for voters. Parties and candidates reported higher campaign spending than at any Assembly election since 2003, but overall spending by campaigners did not reach the limits that were set in law. Summary A total of 239 candidates stood for election to the Northern Ireland Assembly (compared with 228 in 2017), 87 of which were female candidates, representing 36.4% of all candidates. 17 political parties and 24 independent candidates contested the election. s were able to engage with voters using a variety of methods, although concerns about Covid impacted campaigners At the 2022 Assembly election, campaigners provided information in a variety of different

ways. The most common way people reported seeing information on parties and candidates included: Leaflet from a candidate / political party (64%) Posters / billboards (51%) Party leader debate on television (32%) Leaflet from another source (e.g. individual / organisation supporting a party) (31%) Word of mouth (30%) On a news website (27%) Candidates responding to our survey also told us that leaflets and canvassing were their most used campaigning methods, specifically: almost half (47%) told us that their most used campaigning method was door-to-door canvassing, with 88% saying it was one of their top three campaigning methods leaflets, newsletters or flyers was the second most popular, with three-quarters (76%) listing it in their top three campaigning methods Social media was the most popular digital campaigning tool, with around a third (31%) of the candidates that responded to our survey saying this was their third most used campaigning method, although it was primarily used to support more traditional campaigning methods. Free methods of digital campaigning were far more popular than paid-for tools with candidates who responded to our survey. We found that: the majority (92%) said they posted on social media about their campaign over half (53%) uploaded video to their social media nearly half (47%) said they asked their supporters to share their posts only one in 10 (10%) of respondents said that they paid for adverts on social media Concerns about Covid impacted campaigners despite the improved public health situation. Concerns about Covid impacted campaigners despite the improved public health situation. Many of the candidates who responded to our survey reported that Covid affected their campaigns in some way. For most, this was due to concerns about the health and safety of others involved in their campaign and the impacts of Covid on recruiting volunteers. Our research found that: just over half of candidates who responded to our survey (57%) felt that they were able to effectively get their views across to voters during the campaign over three quarters (77%) said that concerns about the health of others involved impacted their campaigns three quarters (74%) said that Covid affected their ability to recruit volunteers to some degree A majority of candidates reported experiencing threats, abuse and/or intimidation A majority of candidates who responded to our survey (71%) said they had some sort of problem with threats, abuse, or intimidation, with a quarter (24%) of respondents experiencing a serious problem. Our research shows that: of those who experienced threats, or intimidation, the most common sources were the theft or damage of campaign materials such as posters (77%), online abuse (69%) and verbal abuse (60%) Two thirds (66%) of those who experienced abuse said that it came from members of the public or from anonymous/unknown sources. A quarter (23%) received threats from campaigners/volunteers and 6% received it from other candidates women were more likely than men to report having had a serious problem of those who either experienced threats, abuse or intimidation themselves or witnessed it, 44% reported it to the police. A tenth (11%) said that their experience would discourage them standing as a candidate in the future PSNI has confirmed that it received 128 reports relating to the election, the majority relating to the theft or damage of campaign material (93) with a smaller number of reported incidents relating to online misogyny (2) or assault (5). While robust political debate is part of a healthy democracy, sometimes things can go too far and cross the line into abuse and intimidation. When this happens it is vital that incidents are investigated and action is taken against those found guilty of criminal offences. Intimidating and abusive behaviour has no place in our political system and it's important that all candidates and campaigners are able to freely participate in the democratic process. Due to the cross-cutting nature of candidate and campaigner abuse, tackling it will require the efforts of people from across the electoral community. While we do not

investigate or prosecute incidents of abuse, we are well placed with our expertise across elections to bring together those who have a role to play in addressing this issue. Recommendation 2 Recommendation 2 Urgent action is needed to tackle and prevent abuse and intimidation of candidates and campaigners at elections. Candidates and campaigners should be able to participate freely in the democratic process, ensuring that voters can hear from a range of voices during elections. We will work with the wider electoral community to tackle this cross-cutting issue and will invite PSNI, representatives from a range of political parties and the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland to a roundtable event on candidate abuse. The event will provide the opportunity to understand the recent experiences of candidates at the 2022 Assembly election and to explore what action can be taken to ensure candidates and campaigners can freely participate in our democratic processes. Most people found it easy to get information but younger age groups feel less well informed about candidates. Most voters found it easy to find information, but there is still a sizable proportion, particularly among younger age groups, who did not feel they had enough information about candidates. Our research after the election found that: 84% of people said they found it easy to find information on what the election was about a similar proportion (86%) felt that they found it easy to find information on the candidates and parties running for election 71% of people agreed that they had enough information on candidates to make an informed choice, although 12% disagreed 88% of people aged 65 and over said they had enough information on candidates to make an informed decision, compared to only 53% of 18-34 year olds. Transparency about who is responsible for election campaign material is important to build trust. Ahead of the 2022 Assembly election, imprint requirements on printed election material were brought into line with the law elsewhere in the UK. The change required all printed party and non-party campaign material to include an imprint. We welcome this change as it helps voters understand which parties and campaigners target them with printed election materials. However digital campaigning accounts for an increasingly large proportion of election spending and our research after the election confirmed that people continue to value transparency about who is responsible for political campaign activity online at elections, with: 62% of people agreeing that it is important for them to know who has produced the political information they see online almost half (49%) saying they would trust digital campaigning material more if they knew who produced it 30% saying that they cannot find out who has produced the political information that they see online The UK Government has introduced legislation that will require most campaigners to include information to identify who has promoted and/or published their online campaign material in future. This new digital imprint requirement will help voters understand who is targeting them online with information at elections and referendums in future. These changes are expected to come into force from the end of 2023. We will monitor any impact of the new digital imprint requirement on people's level of confidence in political information online.

Candidates were able to access support to understand and comply with election law. The Commission focussed on providing candidates and parties with proactive support to understand and comply with political finance law, both before and after the election. Alongside our written guidance we delivered a range of pre-election seminars for candidates and parties on the spending and donation rules. Post-election, we delivered seminars for candidates and agents on completing their spending and donation returns and ran advice surgeries for parties where they could book an appointment to speak to us about specific issues. Our approach has been informed and led by the evidence and feedback we received in our most recent survey of the

regulated community. We will continue to focus on delivering more bespoke advice and guidance resources so that parties and campaigners can easily understand political finance law, regardless of their size or experience.

s spent more at this Assembly election than at recent elections, but did not reach permitted spending limits There are limits on how much campaigners can spend in the period during an election campaign. For parties and non-party campaigners, this 'regulated period' started on 5 January 2022 and ended on polling day. For candidates, the period started the day after they became a candidate. The earliest date a person could become a candidate was the date the Assembly was dissolved (28 March 2022). s have to declare what they spent, and we publish this information.

s reported more campaign spending than at recent Assembly elections There are limits on how much can be spent on campaigning during an election. These differ depending on if the spending is done at a party, non-party campaigner, or candidate level. At a party level, reported campaign spending totalled £515,434.29 during the regulated period for the May 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election. This total amount was more than at any Assembly election since 2003. Six parties reported no regulated campaign spending. The amount of spending reported by individual parties varied significantly, ranging from £125 to £178,199. For candidates, the total amount of campaign spending reported was £1,069,656.07. The average amount spent per candidate was £4,475.54. This was much higher than the average amounts spent per candidate at the Assembly elections in 2016 (£3,689) or 2017 (£2,852).

Total campaign spending By parties

Party	Spending (£)
Alliance - Alliance Party of Northern Ireland	£83,165.98
Aontú	£61,385.00
Cross Community Labour Alternative (CCLA)	£0
Democratic Unionist Party - D.U.P.	£51,915.82
Green Party	£174,986.81
Heritage Party	£6,242.00
Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP)	£39,298.23
Northern Ireland Conservatives	£125.00
People Before Profit Alliance	£9,910
PUP (Progressive Unionist Party)	£0
SDLP (Social Democratic & Labour Party)	£60,308.12
Sinn Féin	£41,056.16
Socialist Party (Northern Ireland)	£149,844.62
The Workers Party	£178,199.22
TUdV	£14,629.73
Ulster Unionist Party	£166,667.26
N/A	£29,723.63
Total	£133,767.07
No third-party campaigners	£67,364.28
Independent candidates	£13,811.74
Total	£1,069,656.07

By candidates

Candidate	Spending (£)
1	£83,165.98
2	£61,385.00
3	£0
4	£51,915.82
5	£174,986.81
6	£6,242.00
7	£39,298.23
8	£125.00
9	£9,910
10	£0
11	£60,308.12
12	£41,056.16
13	£149,844.62
14	£178,199.22
15	£14,629.73
16	£166,667.26
17	£29,723.63
18	£133,767.07
19	£67,364.28
20	£13,811.74
21	£1,069,656.07
22	£125.00
23	£64,494
24	£166,667.26
25	£133,767.07
26	£1,069,656.07
27	£178,199.22
28	£14,629.73
29	£67,364.28
30	£13,811.74
31	£83,165.98
32	£61,385.00
33	£0
34	£51,915.82
35	£174,986.81
36	£6,242.00
37	£39,298.23
38	£125.00
39	£9,910
40	£0
41	£60,308.12
42	£41,056.16
43	£149,844.62
44	£178,199.22
45	£14,629.73
46	£166,667.26
47	£29,723.63
48	£133,767.07
49	£67,364.28
50	£13,811.74
51	£1,069,656.07
52	£125.00
53	£64,494
54	£166,667.26
55	£133,767.07
56	£1,069,656.07
57	£178,199.22
58	£14,629.73
59	£67,364.28
60	£13,811.74
61	£83,165.98
62	£61,385.00
63	£0
64	£51,915.82
65	£174,986.81
66	£6,242.00
67	£39,298.23
68	£125.00
69	£9,910
70	£0
71	£60,308.12
72	£41,056.16
73	£149,844.62
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271	£83,165.98
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273	£0
274	£51,915.82
275	£174,986.81
276	£6,242.00
277	£39,298.23
278	£125.00
279	£9,910
280	£0
281	£60,308.12
282	£41,056.16
283	£149,844.62
284	£178,199.22
285	£14,629.73
286	£166,667.26
287	£29,723.63
288	£133,767.07
289	£67,364.28
290	£13,811.74
291	£1,069,656.07
292	£125.00
293	£64,494
294	£166,667.26
295	£133,767.07
296	£1,069,656.07
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385	£133,767.07
386	£1,069,656.07
387	£178,199.22
388	£14,629.73
389	£67,364.28
390	£13,811.74
391	£83,165.98
392	£61,385.00
393	£0
394	£51,915.82
395	£174,9

average of around 35% of what they were permitted to spend, but there was considerable variation between candidates: one candidate spent 98% of their permitted limit, while several (13) reported no regulated campaign spending at all. Three quarters of candidates (178 out of 239) spent less than half of the permitted amount, and only five candidates spent more than 80% of the amount they were allowed to spend. Parties reported they spent most money on advertising, while candidates spent the most on unsolicited material to voters. Parties reported that they spent a total of £251,312.02 on advertising during the campaign for the May 2022 Assembly election. This represented nearly half of all campaign spending reported by parties in 2022.

This was similar to most previous Assembly elections when advertising was also the largest single category of spending. In 2011, parties reported spending slightly more on campaign broadcasts than on advertising. Category Amount of spending reported (by parties) Advertising £251,312.02 Unsolicited material to electors £67,090.41 Market research/canvassing £62,028.00 Campaign broadcasts £51,239.19 Media £26,866.54 Rallies and other events £16,706.44 Transport £16,470.46 Manifesto or Referendum material £12,495.60 Overheads and general administration £11,225.63 Category 2 Amount of spending reported (by candidates) Advertising £449,433.08 Unsolicited material to electors £575,847.95 Transport £13,824.99 Public meetings £9,132.77 Agent and other staff costs £6,727.36 Accommodation and administration £12,501.10 Other authorised spending £23,848.15 Personal expenses £12,326.33 To compare, candidates spent the most on unsolicited material to voters. Candidates spent around 42% (£449,433.08) of their total spend on advertising and around 54% (£575,847.95) of their total spend on unsolicited materials sent to voters. This compares to 2017, where 59% of candidate spending was unsolicited materials to voters, and 39% on advertising.

Delivering the election

The experience of delivering the 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election

The 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election was well run. The late confirmation of the approach relating to provisions for Covid impacted on the Chief Electoral Officer's ability to plan for the poll. Attracting and retaining experienced staff and the booking of venues continue to pose significant challenges for the Chief Electoral Officer. The administration of polling day and the count generally went well, although candidates raised some concerns relating to the efficiency of the count.

Delivering the election summary

The Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland is the registration officer and returning officer for all elections in Northern Ireland. The Chief Electoral Officer's duties include managing electoral registration, nominations, absent voting, polling stations and the counting of votes. Our evidence shows that these elections were well-run, and voters and campaigners reported high levels of confidence. However, underlying issues relating to capacity and resilience remain, with Covid further impacting the ability to attract and retain experienced staff. Early clarity on legislation is essential to support effective planning.

Late confirmation of the approach relating to provisions for Covid impacted on the Chief Electoral Officer's ability to plan for the poll. Unlike in the rest of the UK there was no emergency proxy vote provision for people with Covid in Northern Ireland. This meant that if someone became unwell as a result of Covid shortly before polling day, their only option was to vote in person at a polling station. The Electoral Commission and the Chief Electoral Officer sought clarity from the UK Government on what provisions would be in place to support voters to participate safely in the context of the Covid pandemic. The UK Government did not provide clarity until March 2022 that no legislative provisions would be introduced. This late decision impacted on the Chief Electoral Officer's ability to plan for the poll, and our ability to deliver clear information to voters on what to expect when voting on polling day.

Despite these challenges, and informed by the learnings and guidance we provided from the elections delivered in Great Britain in 2021, the Chief Electoral Officer put in place a range of public health measures for the safety of voters at polling stations. This included hand sanitisers, protective screens, ventilation and advice to wear a face covering. The Chief Electoral Officer needs early clarity to be able to deliver the changes introduced by the Elections Act Changes introduced by the Elections Act will present new challenges for the Chief Electoral Officer and the wider electoral community. It is important that the UK Government works with the electoral community in Northern Ireland and across the UK as a whole to ensure there is sufficient clarity on how the Elections Act is going to be implemented. Recommendation 3

Recommendation 3 The UK Government should provide early clarity on decisions that would impact on the Chief Electoral Officer's ability to plan for elections. All legislation relating to electoral events should be in place at least six months before it is required to be implemented or complied with to ensure appropriate time for planning. Capacity and resilience remains a significant challenge to the delivery of elections Concerns about resilience and capacity in relation to the delivery of elections remain, with Covid making it even more difficult to attract and retain experienced staff and book venues for polling stations. These issues are exacerbated by the challenges of delivering elections within an outdated and increasingly complex electoral law framework. We continue to support the Law Commissions' review of electoral law which would simplify and improve electoral law across the UK, supporting the effective delivery of elections. Recruiting and retaining staff to work at the elections remained a problem The Chief Electoral Officer highlighted problems around recruiting and retaining experienced polling station and count staff, with a high number of recruits dropping out ahead of polling day. This issue is being seen across the UK, and has been exacerbated by the Covid pandemic. We will continue to work with the Chief Electoral Officer and the wider electoral community to develop and deliver proposals that will support more resilient electoral management.

Specifically, we have formed a sub-group of the UK Electoral Coordination and Advisory Board (ECAB) to discuss and identify solutions to the capacity and resilience challenges experienced by Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers across the UK. An immediate focus for this sub-group will be addressing the challenges around the recruitment of polling station staff. Challenges booking polling station venues Booking venues for polling stations is another aspect of managing the elections that has been highlighted as a continuing challenge. In part this appears to be an impact of Covid, with schools particularly reluctant to be used as polling stations. The ability for those running the polls to be able to access suitable venues is key to ensuring the smooth delivery of elections. The administration of polling day and the count generally went well, although candidates raised some concerns relating to the efficiency of the count The administration of polling day and the count generally went well, with a majority of voters (82%) and a majority of the candidates responding to our survey (78%) reporting they were confident the election was well run. The counting of votes was undertaken at three venues across Northern Ireland: Titanic Exhibition Centre in Belfast, Ulster University in Jordanstown, and Meadowbank Sports Arena in Magherafelt. Candidates raised concerns relating to the efficiency of the count Only 46% of respondents who attended the count reported that they were satisfied with how efficiently the count processes were run. Improvements introduced to the verification and primary sort in 2016 and 2017 supported the first stage of the count to move efficiently.

Verification of the used ballot papers began at 8am on Friday 5 May and by that

afternoon a number of candidates had been deemed elected. However, unlike in 2017, the count was not completed on the same day, and it took until the early hours of Sunday 8 May for the last constituency to be declared. Historically election counts in Northern Ireland have taken two days to complete, with 2017 the first time a second day was not needed, in part due to how the votes transferred in the latter stages. At this year's election, there were many more stages of the count where only a small number of votes were able to be transferred at each stage, with more stages then needed before candidates had enough votes to get above the quota and be deemed elected.³ These challenges were exacerbated by the issue of retaining experienced count staff due to Covid. While the way the votes fell in an STV election and the dropout rates of experienced count staff contributed to the time-consuming nature of the count, we believe there remains the potential for improvements to be made to the latter stages of the count. Recommendation 4 Recommendation 4 The Chief Electoral Officer should build on previous improvements to the first stages of the count process by examining where efficiencies can be made to the latter stages of the count. This should include looking at what role technology could play. Concerns raised by candidates on access and facilities at the count A number of free text comments were also provided in our survey of candidates that related specifically to access and facilities at the count. The most common concerns raised related to traffic management, admissions to the count and the lack of facilities in some venues. While the issues highlighted will not have significantly impacted the time taken to complete the count, they will have added to the frustrations of some candidates. The Chief Electoral Officer's survey of count staff has identified similar concerns and as part of a process of continual improvement is committed to reviewing these. Supporting evidence Northern Ireland Assembly election May 2022 Public opinion research tables 2022 Northern Ireland Electoral data 1. The spending limit is calculated by adding together a base amount and a variable top up that takes into account the number of registered electors in the constituency contested. The spending limit is £8,700 plus 6% of the number of eligible voters (in borough constituencies) or 9% (in county constituencies). The four Belfast constituencies are borough constituencies. The other constituencies in Northern Ireland are county constituencies. Candidates standing in the same constituency that publish joint election material or use the same election agent are considered joint candidates and have lower spending limits as they are sharing some costs. If they are one of two joint candidates their limit is reduced by 25% and if they are one of three or more joint candidates their limit is reduced by 33%. ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. The spending categories that candidates use are different to those for parties, however both include 'Advertising' and 'Unsolicited material to electors' as categories. ■ Back to content at footnote 2 3. In STV elections, voters rank candidates in order of preference. Any candidate who obtains enough first preference votes to reach the minimum required to be elected (known as the quota), is deemed elected. If a voter's first-choice candidate does not get elected, or if they are elected with more votes than the next candidate, their vote can be transferred to help elect their second choice and so on. If no candidate has reached the quota at the end of a stage, the candidate with the lowest numbers of votes is excluded and their votes transferred. ■ Back to content at footnote 3 Page history First

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Feasibility studies: scope and approach | Electoral Commission Search

Feasibility studies: scope and approach You are in the Modernising electoral registration: feasibility studies section Home A modern electoral register

Modernising electoral registration: feasibility studies First published: 19 July 2019 Last updated: 8 June 2021 Feasibility studies: scope and approach We conducted feasibility studies to explore the technical, operational and resource requirements necessary to deliver a number of electoral registration reforms, including: better use of public data by Electoral Registration Officers (EROs); direct or automatic enrolment processes; integrating electoral registration into other public service transactions; and the better identification and management of duplicate registration applications.

Summary

We began the feasibility studies by identifying reliable information already collected by government departments and agencies, which could potentially be used to support each of the electoral registration reforms. We also conducted research on existing public sector data infrastructures to explore the extent to which they could be used or developed further to support reform. We discussed the proposed reforms with key stakeholders to better understand their requirements and gain insight into the challenges they face in managing electoral registration, particularly in relation to making use of data. We developed and tested a number of implementation scenarios for each of the proposed reforms. We also undertook desk research on other countries' experiences of electoral registration reform to further inform the feasibility studies and our understanding of whether models from overseas could be applied or adapted to the UK.

Purpose and scope of the feasibility studies

The purpose of the feasibility studies was to identify the technical, operational and resource requirements necessary to deliver the following electoral registration reforms in the UK:

- Purpose and scope of the feasibility studies**
- Better use of public data**
- EROs** can currently access data held locally by local authorities and others to help identify potential electors and manage their electoral registers. We wanted to explore the potential benefits of enabling access to national level public data, to identify people who have changed address and updated their details with other public services, for example when they have applied for a driving licence or passport.
- Direct or automatic enrolment processes**
- We examined options for increasing the level of automation within the electoral registration system: automated registration, where reliable data would serve as the basis of an individual's electoral registration application, but citizens would still be required to take some steps to complete the process; and automatic registration, where citizens would be added to the electoral register, or their address updated, without them being required to take any active steps.
- Integrating electoral registration into other public service transactions**
- We examined the extent to which electoral registration applications could be made simultaneously as part of or alongside accessing other public services.
- Better identification and management of duplicate registration applications**
- We also considered a number of potential ways in which duplicate applications might be better identified and managed within the system. We wanted to understand the extent to which reforms could reduce the administrative impact of processing duplicate applications and help voters check whether they were already registered to vote.
- How we conducted the feasibility studies**
- Mapping public sector data sources and infrastructures**
- We sought to identify reliable information (principally the core information about voting eligibility) already collected by government departments and agencies (referred to in this report as Data Source Organisations or DSOs), which could potentially be used to support each of the electoral registration reforms. We made contact with the Driver and

Vehicle Licensing Agency, HM Revenue and Customs, HM Passport Office, Department of Work and Pensions, Department for Education and the Education and Skills Funding Agency to discuss the databases they hold and to explore opportunities to share public data with EROs. We also wanted to find out about the public sector data infrastructures that could be utilised or developed further to support reform. We were particularly interested in the extent to which the IER Digital Service, EMS systems and any planned upgrading of infrastructures could help deliver any or all of the reforms. We discussed these points with officials from a number of UK Government departments, including Cabinet Office officials working on the UK Government's Modernising Electoral Registration Programme, and representatives of EMS suppliers.

Wider stakeholder consultation It was also important to discuss the proposed reforms with other key stakeholders to better understand their requirements and gain insight into the challenges they face in managing electoral registration, particularly in relation to making use of data. We therefore had discussions with the following organisations and groups: Association of s Elections, Referendums and Registration Working Group Electoral Coordination and Advisory Board Electoral Office for Northern Ireland Scottish Assessors Association Society of Local Authority Chief Executives Wales Electoral Coordination Board Wales Electoral Practitioners' Working Group We particularly wanted to explore with stakeholders their views on how they saw the reforms working in practice and the specific features and capabilities that would be needed. One clear area of interest concerned the structural implications of any reform; in particular, whether a more joined-up system could be integrated into the current, largely decentralised system of electoral registration (at least in Great Britain), or whether a greater degree of centralisation would be required. A further area of discussion focused on the functional requirements of the reforms, i.e. what would key stakeholders expect any new electoral registration process to do? Examples might be for the system to enable EROs to receive up-to-date information from other public bodies about citizens potentially eligible to register; for it to be compatible with existing EMS systems; or for it to be simple to use and therefore require minimal training to operate. Developing implementation scenarios For each of the reforms being considered we developed a number of implementation scenarios as a precursor to testing their feasibility. In order to do this, we applied a feasibility framework called TELOS to each of the implementation scenarios. TELOS is an acronym for the five main areas to be taken into account in a feasibility study: Technical feasibility : what technology would be necessary to implement the electoral registration reform? What additional hardware and software would be required in developing workable solutions? Economic feasibility : what would the estimated cost of implementing and maintaining the reform be? How would the cost compare to the estimated benefits gained from the reform? Legal feasibility : could the reform be delivered under existing legislative provisions or would there need to be changes to legislation? Operational feasibility : what operational changes would need to be put in place to support the reform? How would the reform work across the electoral community? Would additional resources be required? Would the reform be managed centrally or locally? Scheduling feasibility : what would the timeframe be for implementing each of the reforms for governments, DSOs, suppliers and local authorities? What level of coordination would be required? We also undertook a gap analysis in order to identify in broad terms the work necessary to bridge the gap between the current electoral registration system and the scenarios explored by the feasibility studies. Electoral registration framework We also assessed each implementation scenario against our framework for developing priorities for electoral

registration, which states that the registration system should:

- Maintain or improve current levels of accuracy and completeness
- Make it as easy as possible for electors to ensure their own registration record is accurate and complete, particularly ahead of elections and referendums
- Deliver improved public confidence in, understanding of and satisfaction with the system of registering to vote
- Make better use of resources across the public sector and be more cost-effective
- Be centred on using trusted data and information
- Recognise that registration is year-round and not only focused in the autumn or in the immediate lead-up to an electoral event
- Support innovation and ensure best practices are implemented
- Enable performance to be demonstrated in a consistent and accurate way, with a focus on outcomes rather than outputs
- Be sufficiently flexible to recognise the different challenges faced in different parts of the UK

International comparisons

A range of new and established democracies around the world have already made significant changes to their systems, reflecting rapidly changing demographic and digital communication trends. Several countries have, for example, implemented more datadriven and flexible electoral registration approaches, including more direct or automatic enrolment procedures.

We therefore undertook desk research on other countries' experiences of electoral registration reform to further inform the feasibility studies and our understanding of whether models from overseas could be applied or adapted to the UK.

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Conducting elections under coronavirus restrictions | Electoral Commission Search
Conducting elections under coronavirus restrictions You are in the Our research section Home Our research On this page Summary Lessons from our observations Background First published: 8 January 2021 Last updated: 8 January 2021 Overview This report summarises key lessons learned from our observations of the Scottish Council by-elections held in the autumn of 2020 under coronavirus restrictions. Summary Eight council by-elections were held in Scotland between 1 October and 26 November 2020, against the backdrop of the coronavirus pandemic and associated restrictions. These by-elections have been the only electoral events held in the UK since the Coronavirus Act 2020 introduced provisions to postpone elections due to the pandemic. We observed the administration of the by-elections and have identified a number of lessons relevant to preparations for the May 2021 polls. We have used these lessons to inform the supplementary guidance and resources we have issued to administrators for the May 2021 polls. Our main findings are as follows: Elections can be conducted safely under coronavirus restrictions. Returning Officers must however take additional steps to ensure that public health advice around physical distancing, proper hand hygiene, and the use of face coverings is followed at key election events. It takes more time to plan and costs more to deliver. Returning Officers will need to ensure that their planning arrangements are robust and that they are adequately resourced to deliver the election. Venues and staffing are crucial. Returning Officers should consider whether the venues they plan to use for polling and other election proceedings, including the count, allow for physical distancing. Returning Officers must also consider whether they will need additional staff to assist with key aspects of the election in the coronavirus context. Early engagement with key stakeholders including political parties, candidates and agents, as well as suppliers, is important, especially where normal arrangements may need to be adapted in line with coronavirus restrictions and public health advice. Many voters are still choosing to vote in person. Returning Officers will nevertheless need to consider how they communicate the key messages that polling stations will be safe places to vote; that there are a range of voting options open to voters; and that those who would prefer to vote by post should apply early. Lessons from our observations Planning and preparation Elections can be conducted safely against the backdrop of coronavirus restrictions, but Returning Officers will need to risk assess key proceedings and put in place appropriate mitigations and additional measures to ensure that public health advice around physical distancing, proper hand hygiene and the use of face coverings is followed. The experience of Returning Officers from the by-elections was that planning and delivery was more complicated due to factors including: staff being largely home based which made co-ordinating activity more difficult the need to risk assess and adapt key proceedings and venues to ensure that physical distancing requirements could be met the need to reduce face to face contact and instead deliver video briefings for candidates and training for polling and count staff remotely the requirement for additional safety equipment and measures within polling places and count venues Returning Officers should not underestimate the scale and complexity of the May 2021 polls. They will have to review and adapt their approach to delivering key proceedings as necessary to reflect different ways of working as a result of the coronavirus restrictions. Risk assessing key aspects of delivery, including the choice of venues, takes time and resources. Returning Officers will need to give early consideration to securing suitable venues for key election processes, including nominations, polling and the count, and build in sufficient time to risk assess, prepare or adapt venues to meet physical distancing requirements. Several of the

Returning Officers we spoke to indicated that choosing and adapting polling place layouts and choosing a count venue was more challenging given physical distancing requirements and took up more time than usual. Returning Officers will also need to give adequate consideration to recruitment and training of staff. It is likely that additional staff will be needed for key processes. All the authorities that held by-elections utilised additional staff in polling stations to help direct voters, which worked well. Also, all carried out training using video conferencing equipment and online materials. Early engagement with key stakeholders, including staff, political parties, candidates and agents, is vital. Returning Officers are likely to need to adapt key proceedings, including the nominations process, to account for physical distancing requirements. It will be important to explain and seek understanding by stakeholders on any changes to key processes in the context of coronavirus. Returning Officers need to be satisfied that key suppliers have carried out their own risk assessments and have contingency arrangements in place to ensure that they are able to deliver their services in the run up the polls. Returning Officers need to ensure they have resources to deliver. Administrators in Scotland indicated that the costs associated with the by-elections were higher than would typically be the case due to the coronavirus related measures. Additional costs resulted from providing PPE to staff, screens in polling places and other venues, as well as the recruitment of additional staff. Polling To make polling safer, Returning Officers will need to take additional measures. In Scotland a range of measures were taken in polling places, including: two-metre floor markings to encourage physical distancing signage to encourage voters to observe physical distancing and to wear face coverings hand sanitiser for use by voters when entering and leaving polling places requiring staff to wear face coverings when dealing with voters single use pencils provided for use by voters one way systems in operation where possible to minimise contact screens in use at polling station desks for the protection of staff and voters periodic cleaning of polling booths throughout the hours of poll minimising the number of polling agents permitted in the polling station at any time additional staff used to greet voters and manage any queues, and to encourage voters to use the sanitisers on entering and leaving stations and to observe physical distancing While there was no significant evidence of queuing at any of the by-elections, there were instances where it did occur. The additional staff employed to direct and assist voters played a crucial part in keeping things moving. Nevertheless the approach by some authorities of only allowing a single voter or household into the polling station at any time, together with the additional hygiene measures in place, inevitably slowed voting down. Returning Officers will need to consider how they will manage the flow of voters through the polling stations in May 2021, taking into account the specific circumstances of those polls. Voters appeared willing to continue to turn out to vote in person. Feedback from polling station staff supported this, and this is also reflected in the findings of our own research in Scotland on public attitudes to voting in the context of coronavirus . Voters, candidates and agents generally observed the advice on wearing face coverings and followed instructions and requests in relation to physical distancing and hand sanitising. Voters were also patient where queues did occur. Returning Officers will nevertheless need to consider how they can engage with stakeholders to raise their awareness of the arrangements that will be in place at an early stage and to secure their cooperation in observing the safety measures. Most polling station staff that we spoke to indicated that they were not unduly concerned about working at the polls. Staff were reassured through engagement and training that the additional measures in place for the conduct of the

poll were adequate for their own safety. To minimise face to face contact, briefings for candidates and agents, and training of polling station staff, were for the most part conducted remotely using video conferencing platforms. There was no evidence of any significant increase in postal voting for the by-elections compared with previous similar polls. In any case, Returning Officers will need to engage with local Electoral Registration Officers on how they will manage any increase in absent voting applications in the period leading up to the May 2021 polls, including the potential for any such increase to occur close to the absent voting deadline. The potential for increased applications for emergency proxies due to coronavirus should also be factored into plans. Verification and counting of votes The verification and counting of votes in Scottish council by-elections is largely done electronically using e-counting equipment. As a result, count layouts and processes are different to those that will be in place for the May 2021 polls, with the exception of London where e-counting will be in place for the London Mayor and GLA elections. In any case, Returning Officers will have to consider the suitability of venues for enabling processes to be carried out accurately and transparently while maintaining physical distancing. Physical distancing arrangements in place at the counts for the Scottish council by-elections generally worked well. Returning Officers do however need to ensure that the arrangements in place are such that candidates and agents are able to observe and scrutinise key processes and exercise their rights under the rules to challenge the Returning Officer's decisions e.g. around the adjudication of doubtful ballots. The ability of candidates and agents to fulfil their important role in scrutinising the verification and count processes should not be negatively impacted by the adjustments to the processes due to coronavirus restrictions. Returning Officers should engage with candidates, agents, and other stakeholders to explain key processes, particularly where these are going to be different from what stakeholders normally expect. If for example Returning Officers intend to restrict numbers of counting agents, as was the case for the by elections, then the rationale for this should be clearly explained to candidates and agents. Again the number of counting agents permitted should be the same for each candidate and sufficient to allow proper scrutiny of proceedings. Feedback from the by-elections was that candidates and agents were generally understanding of the need to impose restrictions to minimise face to face contact and allow for physical distancing. In general, only local media requested access to the by-election counts. This could be managed safely by council communications staff. However, some communications staff raised concerns about the May 2021 election counts and accommodating requests from a wider pool of media, including broadcast media, if the current physical distancing restrictions remain in place. This is likely to be a particular challenge for those overseeing counts which include candidates likely to attract interest from broadcast media, which requires earlier access to count venues and more space for equipment. Early engagement with local and broadcast media will be important to manage expectations around access to the count in the current circumstances. The flow of people in count venues needs careful consideration to ensure the continued physical distancing of all present. Most of the Returning Officers at the by-elections deployed extra staff at the count to remind attendees to observe the physical distancing requirements, and this will also be an important consideration for counts in May 2021. Background Between October and December 2020, eight council by-elections took place in Scotland. A number of other by-elections scheduled to take place in the period have been postponed until 2021. The by-elections took place in a range of island, rural and urban wards. Local authority Ward Turnout (%) Orkney Islands Council North Isles ward - 1 October 50.7

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Na Hearadh agus Ceann a Deas nan Loch ward – 8 October 37.7
Aberdeenshire Council Ellon and District ward – 15 October 33.7 Aberdeen City Council
Kincorth/Nigg/Cove ward - 5 November 27 City of Edinburgh Council
Craigentinny/Duddingston ward - 12 November 31.6 Clackmannanshire Council
Clackmannanshire East ward - 19 November 35.1 Perth and Kinross Council Perth City
North ward - 26 November 25.5 Perth and Kinross Council Perth City South ward - 26
November 44 To assist Returning Officers in deciding whether or not to proceed with,
or postpone, by-elections, the Electoral Management Board for Scotland (EMB) produced
a risk assessment template to inform decision making. The EMB also produced
supplementary guidance to assist Returning Officers with preparing for and delivering
their polls safely. We worked with the EMB to support the development of that
guidance. Feedback from those Returning Officers that held by-elections indicated
that these resources were helpful. Related content Upcoming elections about upcoming
elections across the UK Objectives for well-run elections in the current public
health context Read our set of high-level objectives for delivering successful
elections in the current public health environment Public attitudes towards voting in
Scotland in the context of COVID-19 Read more about public attitudes towards voting
in Scotland in 2021 Elections in your area Enter your postcode to find your electoral
services team at your local council. You need to send your postal and proxy vote
application forms to them.

February 2018 Last updated: 3 October 2019 Summary of the briefing Date: February 2018 For: MPs Full briefing This briefing has been prepared for the 2nd reading of Glyn Davies MP's Bill on overseas electors on Friday 23 February 2018. The Bill makes provision to remove the existing 15 year time limit on British citizens who live abroad registering as overseas electors. This would apply to any British citizen overseas who was previously resident or registered to vote in the UK. It applies only to UK Parliamentary elections and makes no other changes to electors' eligibility to vote in different types of elections, or to British citizens living in the UK.

Overseas electors Until 2015, the number of overseas voters registered to vote had never risen above 35,000 At the 2017 UK General Election there was a record of 285,000 overseas electors registered to vote. There are no reliable estimates of how many British nationals living abroad would be eligible to register under the current 15 year rule or if the time limit is removed in future. There has been a significant increase following overseas voter registration campaigns in the run up to 2015 and 2017 General Elections, and interest in the 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the EU The Electoral Commission's overseas voter day took place on 10 May 2016; this was supported by embassies and consulates around the world and was aimed at encouraging British citizens who were eligible to register as overseas voters so that they could vote in the EU referendum. The Electoral Commission ran a public awareness campaign for overseas voters from 17 March to 9 June 2016. Over 135,000 overseas voters registered in this period. The Electoral Commission If the Bill passes into law, we will provide guidance for Electoral Registration Officers, Returning Officers and campaigners to help them understand and comply with any changes to the rules for overseas voters. We also stand ready to reach an increased overseas voter audience through our public awareness campaigns which take place to drive voter registration in the lead-up to UK Parliamentary elections. Key considerations Changes to the eligibility of overseas voters will present practical difficulties for political parties and campaigners to determine the permissibility of donations, and for the Electoral Commission to take enforcement action where the rules have been breached. To mitigate foreign influence on politics and elections, parties and campaigners are only permitted to accept donations from British citizens overseas who are registered to vote. A 2010 Supreme Court judgement ruled that a donor's eligibility to be registered was a significant factor in deciding permissibility; we would welcome the UK Government and Parliament taking this opportunity to clarify that a person must be included in a UK electoral register at the point when a donation is made in order to be a permissible donor. The UK Government should consider new approaches to improving access to the voting process for overseas electors, for example by voting at embassies and consulates, or the ability to download and print postal ballot papers. Many overseas electors face significant practical difficulties in ensuring their votes count; some have found there is not enough time to receive, complete and return their postal vote before the close of poll, while others may not be able to appoint someone in the UK to act as their proxy. Increasing the number of British citizens overseas who are eligible to be registered to vote will add strain to already stretched resources of electoral administrators, in terms of volume and complexity of registration applications, requiring verification of identities and eligibility of applicants who have not lived in the UK for some time. Our report on the administration of the 2017 UK general election highlighted increasing challenges

faced at a local level in delivering well-run elections. This places extra emphasis on the need for the voter registration processes to be enhanced further by enabling better verification of information from other government services. About the Electoral Commission : enabling the delivery of free and fair elections and referendums, focusing on the needs of electors and addressing the changing environment to ensure every vote remains secure and accessible regulating political finance – taking proactive steps to increase transparency, ensure compliance and pursue breaches using our expertise to make and advocate for changes to our democracy, aiming to improve fairness, transparency and efficiency The Commission was set up in 2000 and reports to the UK and Scottish Parliaments. To hear more or request a meeting contact Laura Mcleod on 0207 271 0529 or at

LMcleod@electoralcommission.org.uk Related content Proposals in the Queen's Speech

Read our briefing for MPs from October 2019 Briefing: Our evaluation of voter ID pilots

Read our briefing for MPs from May 2019 Briefing: The Transparency of Donations and Loans etc. (Northern Ireland Political Parties) Order 2018

Read our briefing for MPs from February 2018

Report: How the 2016 Northern Ireland Assembly election was run | Electoral Commission Search Report: How the 2016 Northern Ireland Assembly election was run You are in the Northern Ireland Assembly elections section Home Northern Ireland Assembly elections On this page About the election Registration and turnout The voter experience The administration of the poll Campaigning Recommendations: Online electoral registration Recommendations: Further improving the STV count Recommendations: Review of the electoral observer scheme Recommendations: Registration of party names and descriptions for use on ballot papers Recommendations: Transparency and accessibility of candidate spending Recommendations: Imprints Recommendations: Extending investigative and sanctioning powers Recommendations: Reporting use of social media Recommendations: Performance standards Recommendations: Donations and loans Download our full report First published: 28 June 2019 Last updated: 7 August 2019 About the election On 5 May 2016 there were a number of different polls held across the UK. This report looks specifically at the administration of the Northern Ireland Assembly election. Our overall assessment is that the May 2016 Northern Ireland Assembly election was well run. People were satisfied with the process of registering to vote and with the process of voting, whether they cast their vote in person at a polling station or by post. The count was conducted efficiently, with significant improvements in the planning compared to previous elections. Registration and turnout A total of 1,281,595 people were registered to vote in the Northern Ireland Assembly election on 5 May 2016. Overall turnout at the election was 54.9%, ranging from 64.6% in Fermanagh and South Tyrone to 49.6% in North Down. By comparison, turnout at the May 2011 Northern Ireland Assembly election was 55.7%. Turnout at the 2015 UK Parliamentary election in Northern Ireland was 58.5% and at the 2014 European Parliamentary election was 51.8%. A total of 703,744 ballot papers were cast, of which 14,126 were postal votes (2% of votes cast). Unlike the rest of the UK, where postal voting is available 'on demand', voters in Northern Ireland are required to provide a valid reason as to why they cannot attend their polling station on polling day. The voter experience Our public opinion research suggests that most voters believed the election was well-run and were satisfied with the process of registering to vote and voting. 88% of respondents were satisfied with the procedure for registering to vote and 91% expressed satisfaction with the voting process. The administration of the poll Overall the Northern Ireland Assembly election was administered professionally and efficiently. The Chief Electoral Officer made significant improvements to the delivery of the count following concerns over the time taken to complete previous election counts in 2011 and 2014. Changes to the set-up of the count venues, to the management of the verification stage, and to the primary sort of ballot papers all contributed to a quicker and more efficient count. A new test of count staff and performance monitoring has ensured that more effective count staff are now in place at each count venue. Preparations for the count, including training of staff, was done thoroughly and resulted in a smooth, well-run process. Overall communications were very good with regular announcements provided to candidates, agents and the media. Each count venue had a dedicated information point and media liaison officer who provided handouts of the result of each stage of the count to those present. Effective use was also made of Twitter and EONI's website to provide real time results to the public. All of these are welcome developments which have done much to improve confidence and transparency in the count. Campaigning Our post-election survey of candidates suggests that the majority of candidates were satisfied with the administration of the elections and agreed that

the rules on spending and donations were clear. We identified a number of accredited observers and applicants to be observers who potentially had political party affiliations, and upon further investigation we withdrew accreditation from 12 observers before the election. Unfortunately, at some count venues, we were made aware that a number of other accredited observers were clearly showing support for political parties and their candidates. The Commission is very concerned and disappointed that the observer scheme was abused at the Northern Ireland Assembly election. Accredited electoral observers who show support or bias for a political party or a candidate at a count seriously undermine the credibility and confidence of the electoral observation programme. In light of this we now intend to conduct a full review of how we accredit electoral observers in the UK, with any revisions to the process to be in place before the next scheduled elections in Northern Ireland in 2019. Recommendations: Online electoral registration Recommendation 1: Online electoral registration Both the Chief Electoral Officer and the Northern Ireland Office are committed to extending online electoral registration in Northern Ireland. The Chief Electoral Officer has put the necessary technical requirements in place within the Electoral Office to ensure the launch of the online digital portal for electoral registration in Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland Office have also drafted legislation that will amend the law to allow for online registration in Northern Ireland and this should make its way through the UK Parliament during the autumn. The introduction of online registration in England, Scotland and Wales has been very successful and there were high levels of applications made online in advance of the elections in 2015 and 2016. We are therefore pleased that online registration will now be extended to Northern Ireland. For our part we will work with the Chief Electoral Officer to promote the online registration portal to the public in Northern Ireland and encourage people to use it to register to vote and/or to update their details on the electoral register. To assist in planning for this it would be helpful if the Northern Ireland Office announced a date for the introduction of online registration in Northern Ireland to assist in planning for such activity.

Recommendations: Further improving the STV count Recommendation 2: The Chief Electoral Officer should explore further the potential for further efficiencies in STV counts, including the use of the full mini count model Given that the next scheduled elections to use STV in Northern Ireland are not until 2019, there is sufficient time to build on the successful work undertaken so far. The Chief Electoral Officer, working with his senior staff, should conduct a further review of the count process and test the potential benefits the mini-count model could bring to STV election counts in Northern Ireland. Recommendations: Review of the electoral observer scheme Recommendation 3: The Commission will conduct a review of the electoral observer scheme The Commission's observer scheme has been running now for almost ten years. At the Northern Ireland Assembly we found some evidence that the scheme was being abused. In light of this we will now conduct a full review of how it operates across the UK. Any revisions to the process will be in place before the next scheduled elections in Northern Ireland in 2019. Recommendations: Registration of party names and descriptions for use on ballot papers Recommendation 4: Registration of party names and descriptions for use on ballot papers We continue to recommend that where a candidate represents a political party on a ballot paper, it should be clear to voters which party the candidate represents. The legal provisions for registration of party descriptions present risks of confusion for voters and restrict the participation of political parties. The UK Government should work with the Electoral Commission to reform the provisions on party descriptions.

Recommendations: Transparency and accessibility of candidate spending Recommendation 5: Transparency and accessibility of candidate spending To improve transparency and accessibility of candidate spending returns, we have previously recommended that Returning Officers across the UK should be required to publish spending returns online as well as through the existing methods of public inspection. We support the recommendation in the Law Commissions' review of Electoral Law which proposes a method for implementing this change through legislation. Recommendations: Imprints Recommendation 6: Section 143 of PPERA should be extended to Northern Ireland In the interests of transparency and to ensure consistency in the use of imprints on campaign literature across the UK, the UK Government should seek to apply Section 143 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendum Act 2000 to Northern Ireland before the next set of scheduled elections in 2019. Recommendations: Extending investigative and sanctioning powers Recommendation 7: Extending investigative and sanctioning powers We continue to recommend extending our investigative and sanctioning powers at major elections for offences relating to candidate spending and donations, including at Northern Ireland Assembly elections. It will be important for Governments and Parliaments across the UK to work together on introducing the Commission's new powers for different sets of elections. Recommendations: Reporting use of social media Recommendation 8: Reporting use of social media at future elections We will give further consideration to how campaigners should report spend on social media at future elections. As spend in this area grows, there is the potential for less transparency if expenditure on social media is not easily identifiable within the spending returns, because social media is not a specific reporting category. This will need to be considered as part of reviewing all of the expenditure reporting categories to ensure that they remain proportionate and relevant to future trends in campaigning. In case any of these changes would need to be implemented through legislation, we recommend that the UK Government and Parliament should consider the timing needed for implementing changes before the next major elections. Recommendations: Performance standards Recommendation 9: Extend the performance standards framework in Northern Ireland In light of the introduction of online registration the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland should introduce an Order to extend the performance standards framework to Northern Ireland.

Recommendations: Donations and loans Recommendation 10: The UK Government should introduce secondary legislation to allow for the publication of partial information on donations and loans to political parties and regulated donees in Northern Ireland The UK Government, through the NIO, should publish a timetable to ensure that the necessary secondary legislation is put in place to allow the Commission to publish partial information on donations and loans received by political parties. This should be done as soon as possible. The Commission will continue to be available to assist NIO to ensure the legislation is appropriate. Download our full report 2016 NI Assembly election report Related content Report on the May 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election Read our report on the May 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election Report: How the 2011 Northern Ireland Assembly election was run Read our report about how the 2011 Northern Ireland Assembly election was run Report: The March 2017 Northern Ireland Assembly election Read our report about the 2017 Northern Ireland Assembly election Report: Voting in 2017 Read our report about voting at the general election in 2017

Managing our costs You are in the Corporate plan 2022/23 to 2026/27 section Home

Our plans and priorities Corporate plan 2022/23 to 2026/27 On this page Budgets

2022/23 – 2026/27 Funding Draft devolved funding shares 2022/23 – 2026/27 Focus on accountability and funding First published: 25 April 2022 Last updated: 25 April 2022

Introduction Our budget varies from year to year depending on the cycle of elections.

Our event budget reflects the costs associated with each year's elections. This varies significantly year-to-year owing to the cycle of elections, and will change if unscheduled polls are added which need to be delivered effectively. This is presented as a separate budget line to allow for more effective control and scrutiny of our core budget. Spending on core budgets includes our work supporting voters, electoral administrators, parties and campaigners outside of the cycle of elections, as well as our corporate overheads. Our core budget will be no larger at the end of the period, after inflation, than it was at the beginning (using HM Treasury's preferred measure for public spending and inflation assumptions where available). While we would always seek to manage our costs within these budgets, increases to the rate of inflation or changes to our work programme to reflect changes outside our control represent the main risks to our spending plans. Budgets 2022/23 – 2026/27 £ millions 2022/23

2023/24 2024/25 2025/26 2026/27 Core expenditure 14.04 14.06 14.51 15.10 15.22 Event

6.08 4.21 5.52 6.64 4.94 The Elections Bill 5.05 3.23 2.77 2.41 2.53 Operational spending 25.16 21.50 22.79 24.16 22.69 Policy Development Grants 2.00 2.00 2.00 2.00

2.00 Depreciation 1.33 1.46 1.46 1.46 1.45 Provisions 0.05 0.05 0.05 0.05 0.05 Total

Spending plans 28.55 25.01 26.31 27.67 26.20 Capital provisions 0.10 0.10 0.14 0.10

0.10 Capital investments 1.42 0.49 1.63 0.53 0.53 Our capital budgets reflect planned

and forecast needs to invest in capitalised IT hardware and software. The levels of capital spending in 2024/25 and 2026/27 represent new or renewed leases for offices in Edinburgh and Cardiff. We remain committed to having continued presence in all parts of the UK, and as we take advantage of increasingly flexible ways of working we will keep our office needs under continuous review. Funding We are jointly funded by the UK Parliament, the Scottish Parliament and the Senedd. The box below explains more about how that works. Draft devolved funding shares 2022/23 – 2026/27 2022/23

2023/24 2024/25 2025/26 2026/27 Budget on finding basis (£m) 22.96 21.80 23.18 24.37

22.93 Scottish Parliament £m 1.84 1.52 1.58 2.47 2.81 % 8.01% 6.98% 6.83% 10.13%

12.24% Senedd £m 1.42 1.25 1.25 1.65 1.79 % 6.18% 5.74% 5.39% 6.75% 7.80% UK

Parliament £m 19.70 19.03 20.35 20.25 18.33 % 85.81% 87.27% 87.78% 83.12% 79.96%

Focus on accountability and funding Focus on accountability and funding As part of

the devolution of powers relating to elections, the Scotland Act 2016 and Wales Act

2017 made provision for the Commission to become accountable to both those parliaments, as well as remaining accountable to the UK Parliament. The direct costs

of delivering our functions for each parliament are funded by that parliament, with overheads (including depreciation but not capital budgets or provisions) shared

according to population. Cost shares can vary due to changes in work programme or electoral cycle. In Scotland, the Scottish Parliament Corporate Body oversees our

funding and corporate accountability, in line with its role regarding other Commissions. In Wales this role is undertaken by the Llywydd's Committee, and in the

UK Parliament by the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission. Scrutiny and

accountability on specific aspects of our work is generally undertaken by specific policy committees, such as the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs

Select Committee of the UK Parliament. Each year in the autumn we submit an estimate of income and expenditure to the committees, accompanied by our plans for the coming

year (or five years when we submit a Corporate Plan). The committees then consider these according to the timetables in each parliament. The plans, budgets and other information that we submit to the committees are as required by each committee. We will continue to work with the committees, the parliamentary officials and other relevant partners to ensure effective accountability. Navigation 8. Underpinning this work Section 8 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan 10. Measuring our performance Section 10 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan

Letter: To the Chair of the Police and Crime Committee at the Greater London Assembly
| Electoral Commission Search Letter: To the Chair of the
Police and Crime Committee at the Greater London Assembly You are in the Key
correspondence section Home Key correspondence On this page Letter summary Read our
letter in full First published: 7 February 2018 Last updated: 16 July 2019 Summary of
the letter Date: 7 February 2018 To: Steve O'Connell AM, Chairman, Police and Crime
Committee Address: Greater London Assembly, City Hall, The Queen's Walk, More London,
London, SE1A 2AA From: Claire Bassett, Chief Executive Format: Sent by email Full
letter Dear Sir I committed to write to you following today's meeting of the GLA's
Police and Crime Committee, with further detail about the implementation of Sir Eric
Pickles' 2016 recommendations on electoral fraud and the registration of the new
political party Aspire. The additional information required is set out below, in the
wider context of detail about the decision and the party registration system as a
whole. I trust the Committee will find this additional information helpful. Sir Eric
Pickles' 2016 recommendations You asked for information about the proportion of Sir
Eric Pickles' 2016 recommendations which have been implemented to date. While many of
the recommendations will require legislation to be developed and introduced by the UK
and other governments, our current understanding of the status of the 50
recommendations is: 7 recommendations (14%) could be delivered immediately through
changes to Electoral Commission guidance or practice, which we implemented ahead of
the May 2017 elections 3 recommendations (6%) are being tested through pilot schemes
at the May 2018 local government elections, which are being overseen by the Cabinet
Office, although we have also addressed one of these recommendations (on providing
additional guidance on security and secrecy to postal voters) in our guidance to
Returning Officers 8 recommendations (16%) would require secondary legislation to
implement, and the Cabinet Office is considering how and when to take these forward
25 recommendations (50%) would require primary legislation to implement, and again
the Cabinet Office will be considering how and when to take these forward subject to
Parliamentary time 2 recommendations (4%) where the UK Government either rejected or
did not need to take action to implement the recommendation 6 recommendations (12%)
where the UK Government need to consider further what action it will take You will
note that the total number of recommendations in the list above adds up to 51,
because recommendation 23 (on providing additional guidance on security and secrecy
to postal voters) has been addressed in our guidance but is also being tested in
pilot schemes this year. Scrutiny of registration applications The Commission is the
registrar for political parties in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Registration
decisions are important statutory decisions taken by the Commission, and they are
treated accordingly. The Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000
(PPERA) sets out criteria that applicant parties must meet in order to be placed on
the register of political parties. Where an application meets those tests, the
Commission must register the party. All applications are subject to a detailed
assessment against the statutory criteria, including an analysis of the applicant
party's constitution, its financial scheme and applied-for party name and
descriptions and/or emblems against the relevant tests. We also publish applied-for
identity marks on our website for public comment. Where we receive comments, they are
given careful consideration. The assessment will result in a recommendation to the
Commission's internal Approvals Board. This Approvals Board ensures that the
application and assessment is considered by a wide range of senior people within the
Commission. It is chaired by the Director of Political Finance and Regulation & Legal
Counsel, who takes the final decision. As registrar, the Commission has a duty under

section 23 of PPERA to maintain the registers of political parties. This could mean that if in future we consider that any party's identity marks no longer meet the statutory tests, it will be removed. Further, should a party's circumstances change, such as the registered officers, this may give cause to the Commission to review the party's registration. Additionally, should it come to the Commission's attention that a party is not operating in accordance with its constitution or financial scheme this may also give rise to such a review.

Decision to register Aspire

Following its assessment of the application to register Aspire, the Commission determined that it met the statutory requirements set out in PPERA: its name and emblem were suitable to appear on the register; it had a constitution that set out its structure and organisation; and it had adopted a scheme detailing the party's arrangements for regulating its financial affairs for the purposes of PPERA.

Aspire's name One of the statutory tests for a party name relates to whether a voter is likely to be misled as to the effect of their vote if they see that name on the ballot paper. The existence of other organisations with the same or similar name to that proposed may be a relevant factor but an application is only rejected if the Commission forms the opinion that it is likely to result in a voter being misled as to the effect of their vote.

When assessing Aspire's application, we searched open-source material to establish whether there were other organisations named 'Aspire'. There were a number of organisations named Aspire that operated in the borough of Tower Hamlets and wider. In addition and for the record, I now understand we did receive comments from members of the public drawing our attention to some of these organisations. These comments were received in response to our publishing the proposed name, descriptions and emblems of Aspire. Each of the comments received was assessed carefully before the Commission took its decision on registration. Under the statutory functions and duties of the Commission as set out in PPERA, it is the Commission's opinion that determines whether a party's name meets the relevant criteria. We form this opinion after a robust process of assessment, opportunity for public comment, and review by a wide range of senior persons within the Commission. The decision is properly based on the reasonable judgement of the Commission, acting appropriately as a public body and in line with PPERA.

The word 'aspire' is a generic and widely used word. It is the Commission's opinion that the word 'aspire' is not likely to be so associated with one particular organisation as to result in a voter thinking that they are voting for a party that is connected to another organisation named 'Aspire' and hence being misled as to the effect of their vote. We are satisfied that is a reasonable and the proper conclusion to draw in accordance with the applicable legislation.

Aspire's emblem

The Commission cannot register an emblem that in its opinion is likely to mislead a voter as to the effect of their vote if it appeared on a ballot paper. The emblem included in Aspire's application was the depiction of a house above the word Aspire and contrary to what was stated by some Committee members during the hearing this is not identical to that used by Tower Hamlets First at the point of deregistering. The emblems registered to Tower Hamlets First at the point of deregistration can be found in an Annex to this letter, along with the registered emblem of Aspire and the emblem proposed, although not considered, in the application to register Tower Hamlets Together. Whilst the emblems of Tower Hamlets First contain images of a house, they are different to the emblem registered by Aspire. The images of a house, the number of houses and the layout are different. In our opinion, on the basis of the images alone, a voter, including a voter whose first language is not , would recognise that the images are different. Further, the inclusion of a party name on an emblem is a material consideration and removes or significantly reduces the

likelihood that a voter would be misled. We concluded that voters would not be misled by the proposed emblem. Aspire's constitution and financial scheme We also met with the proposed officers of the party before deciding on its registration, to seek information regarding the party's financial structure, procedures and controls, as well as the operation of its financial scheme and constitution. We corresponded extensively with the party's legal representatives and considered additional information provided by them in support of the party's application, including the party's written financial procedures and controls. We were content that the party was compliant with the necessary legal requirements in order to be registered. Decision to reject the application to register Tower Hamlets Together In February 2017 the Commission rejected an application to register a party called Tower Hamlets Together. The Commission came to the opinion that if the applied-for party name appeared on a ballot paper it would be likely to result in a voter being misled as to the effect of their vote. As usual, we published the proposed name, descriptions and emblem from Tower Hamlets Together for comment. Through these actions and our analysis of the registration application, we became aware of another organisation called Tower Hamlets Together, a partnership of local health and social care organisations in Tower Hamlets. According to the comments received from that organisation and others, this partnership was active and well-known locally. The applied-for party name was therefore identical to that of an active and well-known organisation, and that name was comprised of a specific phrase - three specific words in the same order. On this basis, the Commission formed the opinion that a voter would be likely to think they are voting for a party connected to or endorsed by Tower Hamlets Together, the local partnership. A party cannot be registered without a name, so rejection of the name meant that the party could not be registered. It was therefore not necessary for the Commission to determine whether the party's emblems or descriptions met the statutory criteria. The Commission's regulatory responsibilities Whilst two of the proposed registered officers named in the applications for Aspire and Tower Hamlets Together were the same, they were separate applications and the facts were different. They comprised different identity marks, different constitutions and different financial schemes. Now it is a registered political party, Aspire has a number of financial reporting obligations to meet. For example, it will be required to submit annual statements of accounts to the Commission. These will then be published on our website. Aspire will also be required to update the Commission on any changes to its registered officers, and again these will be published. Section 145 of PPERA places the Commission under a duty to 'monitor, and take all reasonable steps to secure, compliance with' the rules in PPERA relating to political funding and spending. We are proactive in fulfilling this duty and parties that fail to comply with their financial reporting obligations, or to maintain their registered details, are routinely investigated and fined. I want to assure you that the Commission will take appropriate and proportionate steps in fulfilling those duties in respect of Aspire, as we would with all registered parties. Related content Letter: Coronavirus and its impact on the May polls Read our letter to Chloe Smith MP (Minister for the Constitution and Devolution) from March 2020 Letter: Spending by Britain Stronger in Europe at the 2016 EU referendum Read our letter to the Rt Hon Priti Patel MP from January 2018 Letter: To Google about digital campaigning at the EU referendum Read our letter to Google from November 2017 Letter: To Twitter about digital campaigning at the EU referendum Read our letter to Twitter from November 2017

Donations and loans reported by campaigners at the Scottish referendum | Electoral Commission Search Donations and loans reported by campaigners at the Scottish referendum You are in the Scottish Independence referendum section Home Scottish Independence referendum On this page Pre-poll donation and loan reports Post-poll donation and loan reports Donations accepted Register of campaigners at the Scottish independence referendum Chart: Post-poll donations and loans Table: Pre-poll donations and loans Pre-poll summary documents First published: 29 July 2019 Last updated: 23 October 2019 Overview Under the Scottish Independence Referendum Act, registered campaigners were required to complete pre-poll and post-poll reports setting out what donations and loans they received over £7,500 Pre-poll donation and loan reports Pre-poll reports covered the period between commencement of the Act (18 December 2013) and 5 September 2014. The first pre-poll report covered the period from 18 December 2013 to 26 June 2014. The second pre-poll report covered the period from 27 June to 24 July 2014. The third pre-poll report covered the period from 25 July to 21 August 2014. The fourth and final pre-poll report covers the period from 22 August to 5 September 2014. Post-poll donation and loan reports The post-poll report covered the entire regulated period from 18 December 2013 to 18 September 2014. Donations accepted There were 33 registered campaigners with the Electoral Commission. There were also nine registered campaigners who are political parties and will report their donations and loans to us on a quarterly basis. Register of campaigners at the Scottish independence referendum Table: Post-poll donations and loans Chart: Post-poll donations and loans Table: Pre-poll donations and loans Pre-poll summary documents View full details of donations reported in the fourth pre-poll reports in our summary document (PDF) View full details of donations reported in the third pre-poll reports in our summary document (PDF) View full details of donations reported in the second pre-poll reports in our summary document (PDF) View full details of donations reported in the first pre-poll reports in our summary document (PDF) Related content Campaign spending at the Scottish referendum View data about campaign spending at the Scottish independence referendum Report: Regulation of campaigners at the independence referendum held on 18 September 2014 Read our report about regulation at the Scottish independence referendum Report: Scottish Independence Referendum Read our report about the Scottish Independence Referendum Our advice on the proposed Scottish independence referendum question Read our advice on the proposed Scottish independence referendum question

Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal four | Electoral Commission Search

Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal four You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 On this page Key achievements Performance measures First published: 30 June 2020 Last updated: 17 September 2020 Goal four To provide value for money, making best use of our resources and expertise to deliver services that are attuned to what matters most to voters. This goal provides a focus to activities that support the organisation and ensure we have the appropriate skilled people and resources. The aim is to deliver services that are efficient, effective and economical. Key achievements To support our organisation, we: ran a programme of testing, upgrading and benchmarking against appropriate standards to protect our digital infrastructure against cyber threats developed our working practices to reflect the expectations on a modern employer and ensured our digital systems support these changes upgraded the information technology systems that support our regulatory and electoral administration functions continued working closely with the National Cyber Security Centre to improve how we monitor our networks and platforms launched a new website to meet users' needs more effectively and provide information in easy-to-use and more accessible ways implemented new online procurement, project management and governance systems to make our processes more efficient and transparent developed a new people strategy to support the best use of our resources enhanced our skills base through a comprehensive learning and development programme and investment in specialised technical resources worked with the Scottish and Welsh parliaments to develop an operational model that allows us to report and account to them provided guidance and tools to staff to help us improve our quality assurance processes Performance measures Measure Performance Learn practical lessons from current home and remote working practices and design future accommodation accordingly Ongoing 1 Identify options, costs and benefits of e-procurement and implement a new system accordingly Not achieved 2 Stakeholder and staff satisfaction with IT tools Ongoing 3 Maintain high staff engagement scores in the annual staff survey and ensure indicators such as staff turnover are at appropriate levels Staff engagement score: 72% (2018-19: 65%.Civil Service average: 62%) Staff turnover: 13.19% (2018-19: 31.97%) Monitor significant variances on all budgets and, where appropriate, reduce these variances over the five years of our Corporate Plan Not achieved 4 Supporting the organisation In this last year, we have continued to transform the way we work through significant investments in our digital infrastructure, to improve its resilience and support flexible working practices. We have also continued working with the National Cyber Security Centre to improve how we monitor our networks and platforms, which helped with our focus on cyber security during the 2019 polls. Our new website provides a better service to our stakeholders. As our main communication channel, it was important for us to improve functionality and accessibility, to communicate our work in better ways. We have introduced other new digital tools to help us run our organisation. This includes an online procurement system, to make it easier for suppliers to participate in our tenders, and a planning system that enables us to report on our progress against our corporate goals and monitor risk more efficiently. Our new governance system gives us a more effective way to communicate with the Commission Board to give clear oversight of our performance. Our new people strategy includes actions to facilitate a culture where employees are able to perform their roles more effectively. We started this work by reviewing our performance management and development processes. We have moved away from evaluating and ranking employee performance at set times in the year and changed to a continuous approach, managed

through objectives. This addresses feedback from our 2018 staff survey and better fits with our culture. We focussed on initiatives to address staff turnover. This included changing our recruitment practices to presume all roles would be permanent, unless there is a strong case to justify a fixed-term contract. We also supported staff to re-locate to our other offices, where this fitted their circumstances and our business needs. We continued supporting staff groups that we set up to address particular areas, such as the staff engagement group, to ensure our employees have input into corporate policies and programmes. We also have groups dedicated to supporting staff with bullying, harassment and mental health issues and we have maintained strong links with our trade union, the Public and Commercial Services Union. We invested more in learning and development and ensured staff were aware of training opportunities. We also appointed a provider to deliver a leadership and management development programme for all managers, which will run throughout 2020. The Scottish and Welsh parliaments have been considering legislation that would ensure we are accountable to them for our work on devolved elections. We have always reported voluntarily to both parliaments for our policy work on devolved issues, but the new legislation will mean our formal accountability arrangements match those we have with the UK Parliament. Report navigation links Previous Next Performance analysis: Goal three Looking ahead to 2020/21 and using our resources to support the delivery of our goals 1. We implemented changes to working hours after piloting a new approach. ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. We completed our tender and signed a contract in February. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, we delayed implementation until the first quarter of 2020-21. ■ Back to content at footnote 2 3. We started significant projects to upgrade infrastructure, devices and applications, which we will evaluate once they are complete ■ Back to content at footnote 3 4. Due to exceptional factors. We explain this further under, “Using our financial resources efficiently”. ■ Back to content at footnote 4 Related content Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 Read our annual report and accounts for 2019/20, including key figures about the year at a glance. Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal one This is goal one of the performance analysis section of our annual report and accounts Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal two This is goal two of the performance analysis section of our annual report and accounts Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal three This is goal three of the performance analysis section of our annual report and accounts

Attitudes to voter registration research report: Request a PDF | Electoral Commission Search Attitudes to voter registration research report: Request a PDF On this page Request a PDF First published: 24 March 2023 Last updated: 24 March 2023 Summary The report examines attitudes to registering to vote in the UK. It covers awareness of the process of registering, the barriers and enablers to registering, and a behavioural analysis of the different mindsets towards registration. If you would like to receive a Welsh translation of this PDF report by email, please fill in the form below. Attitudes to voter registration research report Request a PDF Attitudes to voter registration research report: Request a PDF Name Email Are you... Are you... - None - An academic A student A Parliamentarian A member of the public Other... Enter other... Leave this field blank

2021 Senedd Cymru candidate spending | Electoral Commission Search
2021 Senedd Cymru candidate spending You are in the Campaign spending:
Candidates section Home Campaign spending: Candidates First published: 2 February 2022 Last updated: 27 October 2022 About the data At the May 2021 Senedd election, there were 311 constituency and independent regional candidates who had to submit a spending return, listing details of what they spent during the election campaign. The dataset includes the headline figures for the spending incurred and donations received by candidates at the 2021 Senedd election. We publish these figures to enhance transparency and to provide voters with information on donations to candidates' election campaigns and their spending and to ensure that this information can be seen together in one place. The full individual candidate returns are available for public scrutiny from the relevant Returning Officers for a period of two years after an election. The returns include the total the candidate spent, as well as a breakdown of how much they spent on things like advertising, transport and public meetings. They also include any donations the candidate received above £50 during the regulated period. The data taken from the spending returns reflects what candidates and their agents submitted to Returning Officers in Wales. We publish this information exactly as it appears on the candidate's return so that there is an accurate record of what was reported. Spending limits vary between constituencies. The vast majority of Returning Officers have sent us the returns submitted to them for inclusion in this dataset. Where information is missing, this may be because the Returning Officer didn't send them on to us, or because the candidate didn't submit their return to the Returning Officer. Under the law spending on promoting regional party list candidates counts as party spending, and was therefore reportable by the party in its election spending return. Information about candidate spending data for previous devolved elections is available online in the National Archive. 2021 Senedd Cymru candidate spending Download the data 2021 Senedd Cymru candidate spending

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Briefing summary Full briefing First published: 17 October 2019 Last updated: 17 October 2019 Summary Date: 17 October 2019 For: MPs Full briefing This briefing outlines the Electoral Commission's response to proposed legislation on electoral integrity which was included in the Queen's Speech. Voter identification The proposed legislation would introduce a requirement for voters at polling stations to show identification before they can be issued with a ballot paper. We undertook independent evaluation of the Government's voter ID pilots in 2018 and 2019 . These clarified the way in which a voter ID scheme could be delivered in Great Britain but did not point to definitive conclusions, particularly for higher turnout polls. We identified areas for further consideration, relating to security and accessibility.

We welcome the Government's commitment to for the provision of a free of charge, locally issued photo ID, as currently provided for electors in Northern Ireland. This would be available on application to voters without an approved form of photo ID. If legislation is approved by Parliament the Commission would expect to conduct public awareness campaigns in the lead-up to elections, to inform voters on what they need to do to comply with new identification rules. We will also provide guidance for Electoral Registration Officers and Returning Officers to help them deliver new voter identification requirements. We publish data on allegations of electoral offences annually and in 2014 published a report on electoral fraud. We also carry out annual survey work with voters, which regularly finds concerns about electoral fraud and the integrity of elections, including as a result of the lack of a requirement to show ID. Postal and proxy voting Proposal to introduce restrictions on campaigners handling postal votes – this would formalise the 'best practice' approach in our guidance and a voluntary code of conduct for campaigners. That would be beneficial as we do not see universal compliance by campaigners with current non-legally binding arrangements. Proposal to require people to re-apply to vote by post every three years – as we have previously recommended , would mean that voters are encouraged to regularly review and confirm that they still want to vote by post, or choose to vote in person at a polling station instead. This would help to ensure records are up-to-date and accurate. Proposal to limit the number of people for whom someone may act as a proxy voter to a maximum of two regardless of their relationship – as we have previously identified, this could disadvantage some people (including overseas voters) who have a genuine need to appoint a proxy. This should be considered in developing the legislation. The Government makes a welcome commitment of further support to people with disabilities. Extending the types of people who can act as a companion for disabled voters and improving the tools provided to support voters with visual impairments should help support people to cast their votes independently and in secret. We will work with the Government and groups representing people with sight loss and other disabilities to ensure that the proposed legislation delivers meaningful benefits. Other measures We strongly welcome the Government's commitment to implementing an imprint requirement for digital campaigning material; this is urgently needed to ensure transparency for voters about who is spending money online to influence them. We will work to ensure these proposals can improve transparency and public confidence. We also welcome the Government's intention to consult on measures to strengthen protection of our democracy from foreign interference. We continue to recommend our laws are updated to prevent foreign funding of elections and referendum campaigns. Other key priorities for the Electoral Commission While not included in the Queen's Speech, we continue to firmly recommend the UK Government

introduce other legislative changes to make our elections more transparent and maintain trust and participation in our democratic processes. These include:

Simplifying and modernising electoral law We need comprehensive electoral law reform , including a new overarching UK Elections Act. The UK's Law Commissions have already provided a blueprint for electoral law reform that is widely supported by those who deliver, regulate and campaign at elections.

Strengthening digital campaign regulation Effective campaigning is an essential part of well-run elections, but we need transparency and safeguards to maintain trust and confidence. We have set out a package of recommendations to increase transparency about digital campaign spending, and to strengthen our investigation and enforcement tools.

Related content

Party registration decisions View our decisions on political party names, descriptions and emblems

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The Scottish Elections (Reform) Act 2020 sets out the funding and accountability

arrangements for the Electoral Commission's devolved activities in Scotland. Partner

organisation Excellent partnership working which allowed us to get timely and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

the key deadlines for registration and absent vote applications and providing

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Parliament. Using our performance standards frameworks to support and challenge

Returning Officers at the Scottish council elections and Electoral Registration

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

registers. Identifying new opportunities to provide support to the regulated

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Performance analysis 2020/21: Goal three You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21 First published: 16 September 2021 Last updated: 21 October 2021 Goal 3 To be an independent and respected centre of expertise, using knowledge and insight to further the transparency, fairness and efficiency of our democratic system, and help adapt it to the modern, digital age. This area of work focuses on innovation and strengthening our evidence base. Our expertise in policy, research and communications are core to enabling this work. Key achievements To contribute to innovation and strengthening our evidence base, we: reported on the 2019 UK Parliamentary general election and made recommendations to help improve future electoral events commissioned qualitative research with the public across the UK to explore attitudes to current voting processes and access to information about elections provided the Scottish and Welsh governments and parliaments with independent expert advice on legislative and policy changes arising from their respective electoral reform agendas supported the UK, Scottish and Welsh governments to develop and put in place legislation to help meet the challenges of delivering well-run elections in the context of public health restrictions published a set of modular citizen education resources for 14-18 year olds in Scotland and for the first time in Wales, ahead of Scottish Parliament and Welsh Senedd elections submitted a detailed response to the UK Government's technical consultation to inform the development of new transparency requirements ('imprints') for digital campaign material launched a public awareness campaign and supporting online information hub to increase digital literacy in relation to online campaigning – developing content in partnership with the Information Commissioner's Office, Ofcom, the UK Statistics Authority, and the Advertising Standards Authority monitored the delivery of electoral events around the world that were held in the context of Covid restrictions, to inform the development of practices in the UK published a series of research reports about attitudes towards voting ahead of the May 2021 polls published the findings of qualitative research into public attitudes to the transparency of political finance in Northern Ireland gave evidence to parliamentary committees to ensure our expert analysis about elections and regulation would inform their work. Performance measures Measure Performance We publish 100% of our reports to planned deadlines 100% Achieved We comment on 100% of relevant legislation and policy proposals 100% Achieved Work in support of the electoral law reform recommendations from the England and Wales, Scotland and the Northern Ireland Law Commissions Ongoing Our activities during the year Innovation and strengthening our evidence base We published our statutory report on the delivery of the December 2019 UK Parliamentary general election. We found that the election was generally well-run, but our analysis highlighted new evidence showing challenges for the future. Our report described how the UK's electoral administration structures are operating under significant strain, and highlighted that people have growing concerns about some aspects of election campaigning. The UK Government's response welcomed our report, noting that it helps "to ensure that our democracy remains world-leading by identifying current challenges and opportunities". We provided expert advice and support to the UK, Scottish and Welsh governments and parliaments, to help develop policy and legislation to support the delivery of elections in the context of developing public health restrictions. This included advice on 24 separate proposals for draft legislation during this year; our input helped to ensure these would be workable in practice. We provided expert advice to the UK and Scottish governments as they developed proposals for improving the

transparency of digital campaign material. Our extensive experience of regulating the current requirement for campaigners to include an ‘imprint’, showing who is responsible for printing and promoting printed campaign material, helped the Scottish Government to put in place a new requirement for digital election campaign material for the first time in the UK. We also provided a comprehensive response to the UK Government’s technical consultation to inform its own plans for legislation which is expected to be introduced later this year. We gave evidence to parliamentary committees to ensure our expert analysis about elections and regulation would inform their work. In the UK Parliament, this included the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee, in response to its inquiry into the work of the Electoral Commission, as well as a joint session with the Local Government Association and the Association of s focussing on preparations for the May 2021 polls. We also worked with the Committee on Standards in Public Life in response to its review of electoral regulation. In the Senedd, we gave evidence to the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee on the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill, and to the Assembly Electoral Reform Committee’s inquiry into electoral systems and boundaries, and the Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee on the Senedd and Elections (Wales) Bill. In the Scottish Parliament, we gave evidence to the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee on the Scottish Elections (Franchise and Representation) Bill and the Scottish Elections (Reform) Bill. We also gave evidence to the Finance and Constitution Committee on the Referendums (Scotland) Bill. Acting on analytics and feedback from user testing, we continued to develop our website, both functionality and content. We continued to ensure compliance with website content accessibility guidelines (WCAG 2.1), converting content from PDF to HTML. Report navigation links Previous Next Performance analysis: Goal two Performance analysis: Goal four

7. A modern and sustainable electoral system | Electoral Commission Search

7. A modern and sustainable electoral system You are in the Corporate plan 2022/23 to 2026/27 section Home Our plans and priorities Corporate plan 2022/23 to 2026/27 On this page Harnessing data and technology to meet the needs of voters, campaigners and electoral administrators Understanding, calling for action and acting on the changing risks to the election system from the misuse of data and technology Continuing to build strong relationships and streamlining working practices with all bodies that are part of the electoral system Supporting governments and the wider electoral community to adopt a strategy and implementation plan which meets environmental standards required of our electoral system First published: 25 April 2022 Last updated: 25 April 2022 Summary We need to make sure our electoral system keeps pace with digital developments. We need to capitalise on the scope for greater compliance, transparency and the financial savings technology offers, while working to retain voter confidence in the electoral system. We also need to modernise the electoral system to ensure it is environmentally sustainable. We will work towards a modern and sustainable electoral system by: harnessing data and technology to meet the needs of voters, campaigners and electoral administrators understanding, calling for action and acting on the changing risks to the election system from the misuse of data and technology continuing to build strong relationships and streamlining working practices with all bodies that are part of the electoral system supporting governments and the wider electoral community to adopt a strategy and implementation plan which meets environmental standards required of our electoral system Harnessing data and technology to meet the needs of voters, campaigners and electoral administrators Data and technology present opportunities for democracy. Working with others, we will ensure we utilise data and technology to achieve efficiencies in the electoral system, to increase compliance with electoral law, and to provide accessible information to voters. We will undertake research to provide an evidence base for how data and technology can be harnessed. We will develop and implement plans to utilise data and technology to meet the needs of voters, campaigners and electoral administrators. We will work with others to implement new practices in the use of data and technology across the electoral system. Understanding, calling for action and acting on the changing risks to the election system from the misuse of data and technology Data and technology also present significant risks for democracy. We will work with others to explore and implement new practices in the use of data and technology across the electoral system, to improve the accessibility, security and efficiency of elections in each part of the UK. We will also undertake research to understand how data and technology threatens the integrity of elections, paying specific attention to voters' trust in the electoral system as a whole. Continuing to build strong relationships and streamlining working practices with all bodies that are part of the electoral system We work closely with other bodies that are part of the electoral system. We know that by working collaboratively we are better equipped to respond to the challenges the electoral system faces. We will continue to strengthen these relationships, including with a number of regulators and law enforcement bodies that play a role in enforcing electoral law. We will also continue to help voters understand who is responsible for specific areas of electoral law, and will work to ensure they know who to contact if they have concerns. We will continue to ensure we work with these other bodies in an efficient way, with the ultimate aim of increasing the impact we and they have in the delivery of an effective and trusted electoral system. Supporting governments and the wider electoral community to adopt a strategy and implementation plan which meets environmental standards required of our

electoral system Over the life of this plan it will become increasingly important to understand and reduce the environmental impact of the electoral system, ensuring it meets the challenging environmental targets which are likely to be brought into law by the UK's governments. Responding to these targets will also increasingly challenge the local delivery of well-run elections and referendums. We will develop a strategy and implementation plan which seeks to reduce the environmental impact of our electoral system, to include innovative evidence-based solutions. We will work with governments and local authorities to identify actions to reduce environmental impact. And, we will keep under review potential solutions which may lead to increased sustainability. Navigation 6. Making sure electoral law is fair and effective Section 6 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan 8. Underpinning this work Section 8 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan

4. Supporting and securing campaigner compliance with the law in Wales | Electoral Commission Search

4. Supporting and securing campaigner compliance with the law in Wales You are in the Corporate Plan for Wales 2022/23 to 2026/27 section Home Our plans and priorities Corporate Plan for Wales 2022/23 to 2026/27 On this page Ensuring campaigners can access support to understand the law in the way and at the time that works best for them Ensuring political finance laws are enforced fairly, working with law enforcement and other regulators Publishing complete and accurate political finance data Providing insights to campaigners and parliaments on how campaigning methods directly affect voter confidence in elections First published: 25 April 2022 Last updated: 25 April 2022 Summary s being able to get their messages to voters is a fundamental part of the democratic process. s, including parties, must be able to communicate with voters to explain their views and policies, so that voters are informed when they vote. And it's important that voters hear from a wide and diverse variety of campaigners. So campaigners must be able to campaign without facing undue actual or perceived barriers, while we continue to ensure political finance is transparent. We will improve the transparency of political campaigning, and help parties and campaigners to comply with the law, by: ensuring campaigners can access support to understand the law in the way and at the time that works best for them ensuring political finance laws are enforced fairly, working with law enforcement and other regulators publishing complete and accurate political finance data providing insights to campaigners and parliaments on how campaigning methods directly affect voter confidence in elections Ensuring campaigners can access support to understand the law in the way and at the time that works best for them Electoral law is complicated, but understanding and applying it should not be a barrier to those who want to campaign. We will work to ensure that campaigners can get on with campaigning, and examine barriers – both real and perceived – which prevent people who want to campaign from doing so. We will use these insights to ensure our guidance and other support tools work well for all campaigners no matter their financial size or experience. We will also complete and consolidate the strategic shift in the way we approach regulation outlined in our last Interim Corporate plan, putting greater emphasis on tools to promote compliance. We will launch our new Political Finance Online database, continue to develop our proactive support for campaigners, transition to an intelligence-led approach to monitoring, and embed an effective regulatory insights and horizon-scanning process. We will also work with our partners to provide cybersecurity advice to parties and campaigners. We will work closely with the Welsh Government to update the statutory Codes of Practice on election spending prior to the 2026 Senedd election, if necessary. We will ensure they reflect any changes to the law that are made. We will also support the Welsh Government with considering other future changes to the law, such as the potential introduction of digital imprints. We will also continue to work with Senedd officials as they draft the new reporting rules and processes to enable the rules to be adopted and dual reporting brought to an end. The Standards and Business Committees in the Fifth Senedd agreed that dual reporting will be brought to an end in Wales and that elected members will only be required to report to the Senedd. Ensuring political finance laws are enforced fairly, working with law enforcement and other regulators Parties, other campaigners and voters want confidence that political finance laws are enforced proportionately, consistently, and impartially. We will continue to conduct investigations, and be transparent about the outcomes of all our work. We will ensure the way we respond to electoral fraud is as effective as it can be, and will provide support and advice to regulators and law

enforcement. Publishing complete and accurate political finance data Compliance with the political finance reporting laws is already high. We will work to make compliance even higher, by introducing compliance tools that work for a range of campaigners, and through proportionate and impartial enforcement of the law. In Section 3, we noted our plans to make political finance data more accessible for voters. Our new Political Finance Online database will also be an important tool for campaigners, making reporting easier and faster. We will work to ensure consistent timely publication of financial data from parties, candidates and campaigners. Providing insights to campaigners and parliaments on how campaigning methods directly affect voter confidence in elections In Section 3, we noted our plans to help voters understand the rules on campaigning, with the aim of increasing confidence in elections. Another way we aim to increase voter confidence is by providing evidence-based insights to campaigners and parliaments to ensure they better understand the impact that different campaigning methods have on the way voters perceive elections and their results. We will also provide support and advice on new and developing campaigning methods. Navigation 3. Putting voters first in Wales Section 3 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan for Wales 5. Supporting local electoral services delivery and resilience in Wales Section 5 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan for Wales

Commissioners You are in the Commissioners section Home Commissioners First published: 30 May 2019 Last updated: 16 March 2023 What our Commissioners do Our Commissioners lead our strategy and set our priorities. We have ten Commissioners, each with different political backgrounds and experience. This ensures broad representation and balanced views. The Speaker's Committee is recruiting for a Commissioner to represent the smaller parties. about how our Commissioners are selected . The role of our commissioners Our Commissioners form part of the Commission Board, along with our executive team, and: set our overall strategic direction, and ensure we deliver our strategic goals set our regulatory priorities, and monitor our regulatory activity make regulatory or other statutory decisions, if required ensure we use public funds efficiently and effectively, and operate within our limits and to high standards of governance The appointment of our commissioners The Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission, with membership drawn from MPs within the UK Parliament, oversees the recruitment of electoral commissioners. The candidates for these posts are then approved by the House of Commons and appointed by HM the Queen. The Speaker's Committee is also responsible for deciding any reappointment of members following a first term of service. Names and biographies of our commissioners John Pullinger CB Term: 1 May 2021 to 30 April 2025 John Pullinger is our Chair John is an experienced public servant who has held senior roles in a range of organisations in the UK and internationally. Until 2019, he was the UK's National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, developing and delivering a strategy to enhance the trustworthiness, quality and value of official statistics to support political debate and decisions at UK, devolved administration and local levels. He also served as President of the Royal Statistical Society and Chair of the United Nations Statistical Commission. Since completing his term as National Statistician John has held a number of non-executive and advisory roles including Trustee of the Nuffield Foundation, President of the International Association for Official Statistics and Board member of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data. Between 2004 and 2014 John was Librarian of the House of Commons where he was responsible for broadening the range of information and research services available to MPs, particularly backbench Members. He also led work to improve the connection between Parliament and its Committees and the public. As well as his work in the UK, he chaired an International Parliamentary Union conference on informing democracy and was involved in parliamentary strengthening projects in Iraq, Myanmar and elsewhere. Alex Attwood Term: 1 February 2021 to 31 January 2024 Alex Attwood was a Social Democratic and Labour Party Member of the Northern Ireland Assembly from 1998 until 2017. He also served as Minister for Social Development in the Northern Ireland Executive from February 2010 until May 2011, and as Minister of the Environment in the Northern Ireland Executive from May 2011 until July 2013. The selection process for Commissioners is conducted by the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission within the UK Parliament. The Commissioner representing smaller parties is a 'nominated commissioner', which means the appointment is made from candidates put forward by the smaller political parties. As the UK Parliament has approved the motion to appoint Alex Attwood, the proposed appointment will now be submitted for royal assent by Her Majesty the Queen. Dame Sue Bruce Term: 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2023 Dame Sue Bruce is our Commissioner with responsibility for Scotland. Sue Bruce is a non-executive director with SSE PLC; Chair of Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO); and is a Deputy Lieutenant of the City of Edinburgh. She is also a

member of the Audit Committee of the University of Strathclyde, and a former Chair of Young Scot. Sue Bruce served in Local Government for almost 40 years, finishing in 2015. Her most recent post was as Chief Executive of The City of Edinburgh Council having previously served as Chief Executive at Aberdeen City Council and Chief Executive at East Dunbartonshire Council. Amongst her noteworthy achievements was the turnaround of the Edinburgh Tram Project, the establishment of the Edinburgh Guarantee and prior to that, the performance improvement of Aberdeen City Council.

Sarah Chambers Term: 31 March 2018 to 30 March 2022 Term: 31 March 2022 to 30 March 2026 Sarah Chambers was formerly the Chief Executive of the mail industry regulator, Postal Services Commission, between 2004 and 2008. A former civil servant, Sarah has a wealth of experience in the regulatory and policy fields, having been a board and committee member of a number of public organisations, including the Competition and Markets Authority, Bar Standards Board and Judicial Appointments Commission. Sarah is currently Chair of the Legal Services Consumer Panel. Lord Gilbert of Panteg Term: 1 November 2018 to 31 October 2022 Term: 1 November 2022 to 31 October 2026 Stephen Gilbert is one of the four commissioners appointed under S.3 (a) of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. This section provides for four Commissioners to be appointed after having been put forward by a political party. Stephen Gilbert was put forward by the Leader of the Conservative Party. Lord Gilbert of Panteg (Stephen Gilbert) is a Conservative peer who entered the House of Lords in 2015. He chairs the House of Lords Communications Select Committee. He has held several senior positions in the Conservative party. These have included Head of Campaigning, Director of Campaign and Deputy Chief Executive as well as Political Secretary to the Prime Minister. Roseanna Cunningham Term: 1 October 2022 to 30 September 2026 Professor Dame Elan Closs Stephens CBE Term: 13 March 2017 to 12 March 2025 Professor Dame Elan Closs Stephens CBE is our Commissioner with responsibility for Wales. Elan Closs Stephens is Emeritus Professor of Communications and Creative Industries at Aberystwyth University. She has specialised in cultural and broadcasting regulatory policy, chairing the Stephens Review into the Welsh Arts Council and serving as Chair of the British Council in Wales, as a Governor of the British Film Institute and, for two terms, as Chair of S4C, the Welsh Fourth Channel. For the last six years until the end of the Charter, she has been the Wales Trustee on the BBC's governing body, the BBC Trust. She has been a Non Executive Director of the Permanent Secretary of Wales's senior Board and has chaired the Board's Audit and Risk Committee since 2008. She also chaired the Recovery Board for the Isle of Anglesey County Council. Elan is a first language Welsh speaker from the Nantlle Valley in North Wales and a graduate of Somerville College, Oxford. She was awarded a CBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2001 for services to broadcasting and the Welsh language. She served as High Sheriff of the three counties of Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion 2012-13. Rob Vincent CBE Term: 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2023 Rob Vincent served as Chief Executive of Kirklees Council from 2004 until 2010 and was a non-executive Director of DCLG from 2008-2010. Between 2010 and 2012 Mr Vincent led the intervention into Doncaster Council, at the request of the Secretary of State. Most recently he has acted as an adviser to the Department of Health on the transition of the public health function from the NHS to local government. Chris Ruane Term: 1 November 2022 to 31 October 2026 Dr Katy Radford Term: 1 September 2021 to 31 August 2025 Dr Katy Radford is a social anthropologist who currently serves on the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and works at the Commission for Victims and Survivors. She recently completed terms as Vice Chair of the Arts Council for Northern Ireland, and as a Member of the Commission for Flags,

Identity, Culture, and Tradition convened by The Executive Office. From 2011–2020, Katy was Acting Director of the Institute for Conflict Research. Katy was awarded an MBE in 2011 for her contribution to community relations in Northern Ireland. Related content Electoral Commission Board Find out about our Electoral Commission board, and read the minutes of past meetings Selecting our Commissioners Find out about the selection process for our Commissioners Interim corporate plan 2020/21 - 2024/25 Our interim corporate plan was published following the 2019 UK Parliament general election. It has now been replaced by our 2022/23 to 2026/27 plan. Our Executive Team Meet our Executive Team, and find out more about them

at the May 2023 local elections in England: interim analysis | Electoral Commission Search at the May 2023 local elections in England: interim analysis You are in the Our research section Home Our research Currently reading: of 5 - Show page contents On this page Awareness of the voter ID requirement Impact of the voter ID requirement on polling day Views on the voter ID requirement Next steps Background background At local elections in England on 4 May, voters needed to show photo identification (ID) to vote in polling stations. These were the first elections in Great Britain where this requirement was in place. Elections took place in 230 areas in England and around 27 million people were eligible to vote. Our interim analysis provides information and evidence currently available about how the new voter ID requirement was implemented and how voters found taking part. We have looked at evidence from large-scale public opinion research carried out before and after the elections, and polling station data collected from the majority of local authorities that held polls this year. There are several areas where further analysis is necessary to establish a clearer and fuller picture and they are highlighted through the report. We will publish our report on the May 2023 elections in September and that will include this additional analysis. Our September report will also draw on a wider range of information sources, including feedback from candidates, Returning Officers, polling station staff, election observers, charities and civil society organisations, and the police. If you would like to find out more about the Electoral Commission's views on our interim research, you can read our press release . Summary Awareness of the need to bring ID to vote at a polling station was high Our research found that immediately before polling day, 87% of people in England (excluding London, where there were no elections) were aware that they needed to show photo ID to vote at a polling station. In the research we carried out immediately following the poll, this was 92% of people in areas with elections. Awareness varied across the population and was lowest among younger age groups (82% for 18 to 24-year-olds), Black and minority ethnic communities (82%) and those who said they never vote in local elections (84%). Awareness was significantly lower among people who said they did not have an accepted form of ID (74%) compared with those who did have ID (94%). While overall awareness levels were high, some groups of people were significantly less likely to know about the requirement. This means that some people may not have known that they needed to show ID until they arrived at the polling station. Those people who did not have any of the accepted forms of ID would not have been able to obtain ID (for example the Voter Authority Certificate) on polling day itself. Awareness and take-up of the Voter Authority Certificate was low Approximately 89,500 people applied for a Voter Authority Certificate before the deadline on 25 April. Around 25,000 certificates were used as a form of ID on 4 May. In May 2023, awareness of the Voter Authority Certificate was 57% both among the overall population and those who said they did not already have photo ID. The overall number of Voter Authority Certificates applied for and used was low compared with estimates of the number of voters who might not have any other accepted ID (250,000 to 300,000). At least 0.25% of people who tried to vote at a polling station in May 2023 were not able to because of the ID requirement Data collected in polling stations shows that at least 0.25% of people who tried to vote at a polling station were not issued with a ballot paper because of the ID requirement. At least 0.7% of people who tried to vote at a polling station were initially turned away but around two-thirds of those people (63%) returned later in the day and were able to vote. 0.25% of polling station voters at these elections is approximately 14,000 voters who were not issued with a ballot paper because they could not show an accepted form of

ID. However, this is an underestimate, partly as a result of data quality issues but also because some people will have been reminded of the ID requirement before they could be recorded in the data. Around 4% of all non-voters said they didn't vote because of the voter ID requirement. Some people who would have wanted to vote at a polling station may have decided not to try, because they realised they did not have accepted ID before attempting to vote. To understand the broader impact of the voter ID requirement, we carried out a representative public opinion survey across the areas with elections in May. Our survey asked people if they voted in the elections and, if not, why they had chosen not to do so. We found that 4% of people who said they did not vote in these elections gave an unprompted reason related to the ID rules – 3% said they did not have the necessary ID and 1% said they disagreed with the need to show ID. The proportion of non-voters giving an ID-related reason rose from 4% to 7% when survey respondents were selecting from a list of reasons. There is evidence that some people found it harder than others to show accepted voter ID, including disabled people and the unemployed. However, further data collection and analysis are needed to establish a clearer picture and we will include additional information in our full report in September. The UK Government and the wider electoral community should work to improve the collection of data at polling stations. We recommend that the UK Government should ensure that Returning Officers are able to collect and report monitoring data on the impact of voter ID at future elections, and work is also needed to improve the quality and reliability of data collected at polling stations in future. Levels of voter confidence and satisfaction were similar to previous elections. There were high levels of satisfaction with the process of voting, in line with previous comparable elections; 89% of polling station voters said they were very or fairly satisfied. Voters were significantly more likely than non-voters to say that voting is safe. 90% of all voters said voting in a polling station is safe compared to 79% of non-voters. These results are also similar to those recorded after previous comparable elections. Awareness of the voter ID requirement Background Parliament approved the legislation for the new voter ID requirement on 22 December 2022. We delivered a public awareness campaign about the requirement across England which ran from 9 January to polling day. Awareness of the need to bring ID to vote at a polling station was high. Our research found that immediately before polling day, 87% of people in England (excluding London, where there were no elections) were aware that they needed to show photo ID to vote at a polling station.¹ In the research we carried out immediately following the poll, this was 92% of people in areas with elections.² This was a significant increase on the 23% that were aware in December 2022, before the start of our public awareness campaign. In our post-election research, awareness was higher among older age groups with 98% of over-65s aware in May 2023 compared to 82% of 18 to 24-year-olds. There was also a difference between white respondents (93%) and those from Black and minority ethnic communities (82%). We will be looking at these results for specific ethnicities in more detail in our September report in order to explore any patterns. These differences in awareness had become more marked closer to the poll. This may be related to the variable level of turnout among different demographic groups, with some being more engaged with the polls and therefore more likely to be interested in or to recall communications about the election as it approaches. Our research found that overall awareness of the requirement was significantly lower among people who said they did not have an accepted form of ID (74%) compared with those who did have ID (94%). We also found that those people who said they always or sometimes vote at local elections had higher levels of awareness (94%) compared with those who do not

tend to vote (84%). While overall awareness levels were high, some groups of people were significantly less likely to know about the requirement. This means that some people would not have known that they needed to show ID until they arrived at the polling station. Those people who did not have any of the accepted forms of ID would not have been able to obtain ID (for example the Voter Authority Certificate) on polling day itself. Awareness and take-up of the Voter Authority Certificate was low. Voters who did not have one of the accepted forms of ID could apply for free voter ID (called a Voter Authority Certificate) from 16 January until 5pm on 25 April.

Research that we carried out in early 2023 found that: 4% of the population in Great Britain either did not have any photo ID (3%) or did not have ID where they thought the photo would be recognisable (1%) 1% said they did not know whether they had any of the forms of photo ID we asked about. Based on these figures and expected levels of polling station turnout at local elections, we estimated that between 250,000 and 350,000 applications for a Voter Authority Certificate might be expected. The overall number of certificates applied for before the deadline on 25 April (around 89,500) was low compared with these estimates of the number of people who might not have any other accepted ID. In May 2023, awareness of the Voter Authority Certificate was relatively low among the overall population and those who said they did not already have photo ID (both at 57%). This means that just under half of people who did not have any other accepted ID did not know that they could have applied for a form of ID to enable them to vote on polling day. There is limited data available on the demographics of people applying for a Voter Authority Certificate. However, applicants were more likely to come from older age groups. Our public opinion research found that 84% of those that applied for a Voter Authority Certificate said the application process was easy. 3 Approximately 25,000 Voter Authority Certificates were used as a form of ID on 4 May. It is not clear why a significant number of people applied for a certificate but did not use it on polling day. We will continue to analyse the available evidence to identify any patterns that might help to explain this. Impact of the voter ID requirement on polling day Background Polling station staff at the ballot issuing desk collected data on the number of people that could not be issued with a ballot paper because they did not provide accepted ID. They also recorded if any of these people returned later, and whether they were then able to show accepted ID and vote. The figures in this report are based on data received from 226 of the 230 local authorities with elections in May. At least 0.25% of people who tried to vote at a polling station in May 2023 were not able to because of the ID requirement. The data provided to the Commission indicates that at least 0.7% of people who tried to vote at a polling station in May were initially not issued with a ballot paper because they did not have an accepted form of ID. Just under two-thirds (63%) of these people returned later in the day with an accepted form of ID and were able to vote. By the close of poll, 0.25% of people who tried to vote in person had not been issued with a ballot paper. The proportion of people who were not issued with a ballot paper varied across local authorities from 0.02% of those who tried to vote at a polling station through to 1.04%. We intend to publish detailed local authority data alongside our September report. We will also be looking at the patterns of higher and lower levels of people turned away across local authorities in order to identify any trends. 0.25% of polling station voters at these elections is approximately 14,000 voters who were not issued with a ballot paper because they could not show an accepted form of ID. Returning Officers were required to separate out data for polling stations with and without staff acting as greeters. Where that data could be provided it shows that polling stations with greeters recorded that a

smaller proportion of people were initially turned away (0.55%) compared to those without greeters (0.8%). Overall, the data shows that 38% of polling stations had a greeter. Among those recorded as being turned away from a polling station, 68% had not brought any ID and 28% brought a type of ID that was not accepted. The remainder were refused a ballot paper where the photo on their ID was not recognisable, the polling station staff suspected the ID was forged or where the person had failed to answer the statutory questions which can be used to ask a voter to confirm their name and address. Any voter showing ID could ask to have their identity checked in a private area of the polling station. Approximately 2,250 voters were recorded as having asked to have this check done in private. Recommendation Recommendation: Polling station staff should continue to collect data on the impact of voter ID at future elections Analysing data from the first scheduled elections where this requirement has been in place can help to improve the experience of voters and polling station staff at future polls. There is no legal duty or explicit power for Returning Officers to report data for future elections until the next UK Parliamentary general election, which must be held by January 2025. It would be a significant missed opportunity to learn and identify further improvements if Returning Officers did not collect and report data at the scheduled May 2024 elections, which will cover all areas of England and Wales. The UK Government should ensure that Returning Officers are able to collect and report monitoring data on the impact of voter ID at future elections, including specifically at the scheduled May 2024 elections and at any UK Parliament by-elections held during 2023 and 2024. The data from polling stations underestimates the impact of the new rules on voters for two reasons. The data from polling stations underestimates the impact of the new rules on voters for two reasons. Firstly, not all people who wished to vote in person will have got to the ballot issuing desk and been recorded by staff before realising they did not have accepted ID. For example they may have been put off by polling station staff who greeted voters and gave them information about the requirement before they got to the ballot issuing desk. Secondly, some of the data returned to the Commission is incomplete or inaccurate. The most common issues we found are: data returns being completed incorrectly, for example polling stations with more people returning to vote than were initially turned away missing individual pieces of data, for example on the reason why a voter was turned away missing returns from polling stations, for example where some stations in a local authority did not submit a data return blank returns from polling stations where it is unclear if a blank is equivalent to zero. This was the first time data on photo ID needed to be captured. Issues with data quality and consistency were inevitable across some 20,000 polling stations and a larger number of staff. It is not possible to quantify the level of inaccuracy in the data but, overall, these types of errors would result in an underestimate of the impact of the ID requirement. Recommendation Recommendation: The electoral community should work to improve the collection of data at polling stations for future elections Accurate data recording and reporting is essential to ensure there is a clear and reliable picture of the impact of the policy. This is needed to support informed debate and help identify areas for improvement. However, initial feedback from Returning Officers, polling station staff and observers suggests that some polling station staff found it difficult to record this additional data. We will work with the UK Government, Returning Officers and electoral administrators to review the data collection forms and guidance for polling station staff so they are clear and user-friendly. We will also work with local authorities and their training providers to make sure the ballot paper issuing procedure and data recording

processes are fully explained to polling station staff. This should include guidance for polling station staff on the appropriate role of greeters and tellers. Data about the impact of Around 4% of all non-voters said they didn't vote because of the voter ID requirement Some people who would have wanted to vote at a polling station may have decided not to try, because they realised they did not have accepted ID before attempting to vote. To understand the broader impact of the voter ID requirement, we carried out a representative public opinion survey across the areas with elections in May. Our survey asked people if they voted in the elections and, if not, why they had chosen not to do so. We found that 4% of the people who said they did not vote gave an unprompted reason that was related to the ID rules – 3% said they did not have the necessary ID and 1% said they disagreed with the need to show ID. Overall, the most common reasons given for not voting were a lack of time (15%) or a lack of interest (13%). We also asked all non-voters a further prompted question (where they were given a number of answers to choose from) to understand whether the ID requirements had played a role in their decision not to vote. In response, 7% of non-voters indicated that the ID requirement was the reason they did not vote. Of those who told us they voted in a polling station, 98% said they were able to vote the first time they went. 2% said they brought either no ID or the wrong type of ID the first time but later returned. There are challenges in using these estimates to give an accurate, absolute number of people who were unable or chose not to vote in May. Survey data is an estimate which can be subject to two separate errors. One is sampling error. This is limited by the robust, representative sample we have used particularly for the population as a whole but it can be more of an issue for sub-groups of the population (such as non-voters). The second issue is non-sampling error. This includes respondents not answering a question and/or not answering it accurately. We can see one of the impacts of this in the difference between the unprompted and prompted question responses, where respondents may be less likely to give an unprompted answer (even if it would be true) and more likely to give a prompted one (where choosing from a list can invite a response which may or may not be true). The public opinion survey findings are therefore most useful for giving us a more rounded view of the likely impact of the ID requirement than the data from polling stations provides alone. The figures support our assessment that the polling station data underestimated the impact. Data on overall levels of turnout in May is not yet available and will be included in our full election report in September. This full report will look at how turnout in 2023 compares to previous local elections so we can see if it is possible to attribute any impact to the ID requirement. There is evidence that some people found it harder to show accepted voter ID We know from our previous research that some people were less likely to have photo ID and would therefore have faced more of a barrier to voting than those with accepted ID. However, it was not possible to capture reliable demographic data on people who were not able to vote because of the ID requirement; electoral registers do not record any demographic information, and electoral law did not allow polling station staff to collect demographic information about individuals who were turned away. The small overall proportion of people who said they did not vote because of the ID requirement also means that it is difficult to say definitively, from our public opinion survey, if the ID rules were more likely to deter specific groups from voting than others. However, the public opinion research does suggest that disabled people and those who are unemployed were more likely than other groups to give a reason related to ID for not voting. As set out above, our research on levels of awareness of the ID requirement also showed variation across different groups. Where the relevant data is

available, from a few local authorities, there is some correlation between the numbers turned away and specific socio-demographic factors, including ethnicity and unemployment. This evidence is also consistent with the findings from the 2018 and 2019 voter ID pilot schemes . We also know that other organisations, such as the accredited observer organisation Democracy Volunteers , highlighted concerns that there was a disproportionate impact for some groups of voters at the May 2023 elections. Further data collection and analysis are needed to be able to explore these and other concerns; we will include additional information in our full report in September. This will include consideration of information and data provided by charities and civil society organisations. The majority of people were able to use their preferred method of voting One potential impact of the new ID rules could have been that more people chose to vote by post instead of at a polling station. We do not know if that was the case, as data on levels of postal voting at these elections is not yet available. We will include an assessment of any change in our full election report in September. However, in our public opinion survey we did ask voters if they had voted using their preferred method. The vast majority (95%) said they had. Views on the voter ID requirement Background After each election we ask people who were eligible to vote for their views on voting and elections. This helps us understand if views have changed since the last comparable set of elections. Levels of voter confidence and satisfaction were similar to previous elections Our research with the public found that more than two thirds of people (68%) were confident that the May elections were well run. This is slightly higher than the level recorded after the last set of comparable elections in 2019 (64%) but slightly lower than the most recent elections in 2022 (73%). We asked respondents why they did or did not feel confident and it is clear that the ID requirement had positive and negative impacts: among those who said they were not confident, the most common reason selected (by 46%) was that “some people were unable to vote due to the ID requirement”. among those who said they were confident, 30% selected the reasons that the requirement to show ID had “reassured me about the safety of the voting system”. There were high levels of satisfaction with the process of voting, in line with previous comparable elections; 89% of polling station voters said they were very or fairly satisfied. Satisfaction with the process of voting varied across different demographic groups, with the highest seen among the oldest age groups. We cannot make any link between this variation and the new ID rules, however, because the patterns are in line with the results we have seen after previous polls. We also asked voters to rate the ease of participation in the poll on a scale from one to five. Nearly nine in ten polling station voters (88%) rated it as easy (four or five). Again, there is clear variation in the level of ease reported by different groups but no indication that this is different to previous polls. Voters thought the elections were safe and secure Our survey of the public asked everyone who said they had voted to rate the security of voting in the election on a scale from one to five. 84% of polling station voters rated it as secure (four or five). We also asked polling station voters how safe they felt polling station voting was from fraud – 94% said it was safe. Voters were significantly more likely than non-voters to say that voting is safe. 90% of all voters said voting in a polling station is safe compared to 79% of non-voters. These results are similar to those recorded after previous comparable elections and should not be directly linked to the introduction of the voter ID requirement. In our full report in September we will explore further the demographic differences we see in the data on public attitudes. No cases of personation in polling stations were reported to police Early data from 26 of the 37 police forces

in England where elections took place in May 2023 shows that no allegations of polling station personation fraud were reported following polling day. Police forces identified one public order incident relating to the voter ID requirement that led to an arrest. This was where a person who could not show accepted ID was arrested after allegedly assaulting a member of polling station staff. We will provide updated data on allegations in our September report. Next steps As highlighted throughout this report, there are areas where we have more work to do in order to understand the impact of the new voter ID requirement, and which will be covered in our September election report. These include how the implementation of voter ID: may have differently affected people across society who wanted to vote and what actions can be taken ahead of the next set of elections to address these issues. This includes looking at varying levels of awareness of the ID requirement, patterns in the numbers of people being turned away from polling stations and demographic / socio-economic differences in the data we have collected through our public opinion research impacted on the administration of the polls. This will incorporate views from Returning Officers and their teams responsible for planning the elections, as well as the polling station staff responsible for managing the processes on 4 May changed how parties and candidates approached their campaigns for these elections Background Elections held on 4 May 2023 On 4 May, local elections took place in 230 councils in England, covering almost 5,000 individual wards. The areas holding elections included: 152 district councils (out of 164 in total) covering largely rural areas and cities or larger towns in areas that also have county councils 46 unitary authorities (out of 62 in total) covering cities or larger towns in areas without county councils 32 metropolitan district councils (out of 36) covering predominantly urban areas in Greater Manchester, Merseyside, South Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear, the West Midlands and West Yorkshire Local mayoral elections in Bedford, Leicester, Mansfield, and Middlesborough. Scheduled elections did not take place in several areas of England in May 2023, including both London and Birmingham. Timeline for in Great Britain The Elections Act 2022 introduced a new requirement for voters to show an accepted form of photo ID to vote in person at a polling station for certain types of elections in Great Britain. The requirement applies at local elections in England, Police and Crime Commissioner elections in England and Wales, UK Parliamentary by-elections and recall petitions. From October 2023, it will also apply to UK Parliamentary general elections. May 2018: pilot schemes trialling a voter ID requirement held at local elections in five areas in England May 2019: further pilot schemes trialling a voter ID requirement held at local elections in 10 areas in England July 2021: Elections Bill introduced in Parliament April 2022: Elections Act received Royal Assent 22 December 2022: Parliament approved the detailed secondary legislation specifying how the new requirement should be delivered 9 January 2023: Electoral Commission public awareness campaign started 16 January 2023: Online Voter Authority Certificate application service available 25 April 2023 (5pm): Deadline for Voter Authority Certificate applications 4 May 2023: Polling day 7am-10pm 1. Figure from survey carried out by YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 1,714 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 26 April – 2 May 2023. ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. Figures on public awareness are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 3,705 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 5 – 22 May 2023. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all adults within electing areas (aged 18+). ■ Back to content at footnote 2 3. All figures on people's experiences of the elections are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 3,225 adults (aged 18+) who are eligible to vote. Fieldwork was undertaken between 5 – 24 May

2023. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all adults within electing areas (aged 18+). ■ Back to content at footnote 3 Page history First published: 19 June 2023 Last updated: 23 June 2023 Related content Elections Act about the UK Government's Elections Act and what it means for voting and campaigning Raising awareness of the new voter ID requirement With a month to go until the elections on 4 May, the Commission is in the final stages of its campaign to raise awareness of the new requirement to show photo ID in polling stations. Accepted forms of photo ID Learn about the different types of photo ID that will be accepted at elections that require photo ID Report on the May 2022 local elections in England Read our report on the May 2022 local elections in England

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Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Who was at the meeting Apologies and welcomes Declarations of interest Minutes of the previous Board meeting Commission Board action tracker Forward Plan of Board business 2021/22 and 2022/23 Elections Bill Performance report quarter two 2021/22 Supplementary Estimate Update from the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo) Chair Update from the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) Chair Data on investigation timescales Annual review of risk Chief Executive's update First published: 21 March 2022 Last updated: 13 May 2022 Meeting summary Date: Wednesday 1 December 2021 Time: 9:30am to 12:40pm Location: In person and by video conference Date of next scheduled meeting: Wednesday 19th January 2022 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Pullinger, Chair Rob Vincent Sue Bruce Alex Attwood Sarah Chambers Elan Closs Stephens Stephen Gilbert Alasdair Morgan Joan Walley Katy Radford In attendance: Bob Posner, Chief Executive Craig Westwood, Director, Communications, Policy and Research Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services Binnie Goh, General Counsel Zena Khan, Board Secretary (Senior Advisor, Governance) Tom Hawthorn, Head of Policy (item 6) Katy Knock, Policy Manager (item 6) David Bailey, Head, Strategic Performance and Planning (items 7, 10 and 12) Apologies and welcomes There were no apologies received. The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. It was noted that alternative Board document portals were to be considered to replace use of Objective Connect from the new financial year. Declarations of interest That the Board noted no new declarations received. Minutes of the previous Board meeting (EC 72/21) Resolved: That the minutes of the Commission Board meeting on 20 October 2021 be agreed. Commission Board action tracker (EC 73/21) Resolved: That the Board noted the progress against actions requested by the Board. Forward Plan of Board business 2021/22 and 2022/23 (EC 74/21) The Board noted that due to availability of some Commissioners for scheduled Board meetings in March and April 2022, and that the April 2022 Board meeting was scheduled a week before the Easter break and 3 weeks following the March meeting, it would be prudent to consider whether to cancel one of them and, possibly merge both March and April meetings. The Board discussed extending Board meetings when strategic deep dive topics were scheduled, in order to get the best out of the session. It was noted this could be considered closer to the time to build in flexibility. The Board noted further topics on fraud and intimidation and, continued reporting on elections and registrations to be scheduled. It was noted that a 'new look' Forward Plan would be produced, mapping the objectives of the Corporate Plan for each meeting. Resolved: That the Board reviewed and noted the Forward Plan of Board business for 2021/22 and 2022/23, scheduling further topics for the next few meetings. Elections Bill (Presentation) The Director, Regulation introduced a presentation, and was joined by the Head of Policy and the Policy Manager. The following areas were covered: Progress of the Bill Parliamentary activity on the Bill Our strategic priorities for the Bill Focus: Strategy and Policy Statement Our next steps The Board noted discussions to date, with the Minister of State, who has elections policy in her responsibilities, on the part of the Elections Bill on the government's proposed 'Strategy and Policy Statement' for the Commission and, discussions held at the Westminster Parliamentary Parties Panel. The Board further noted that the Chief Executive and the Commission Chair would be attending the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee next week, giving evidence, with a strong positive narrative, on the work of the Commission. The Board discussed areas of the Strategy and Policy Statement,

and Digital imprints, as well as exploring options. Resolved: The Board noted the presentation and associated discussions. Performance report quarter two 2021/22 (EC 75/21) The Chief Executive introduced the report updating the Board on performance in quarter two of 2021/22. The Board noted that staff retention and recruitment in some areas of expertise was becoming an issue. This could be consistent with the wider jobs environment. The Board noted that one of the areas showing as red was the IT systems. This was an area of concern due to infrastructure issues going back a few years. The Board noted that the Audit and Risk Committee would be focussing on areas of risk management and will be taking forward work streams following their meeting this week. Resolved: That the Board noted the delivery of the work programme and determined that the budget is being managed effectively. Supplementary Estimate (EC 76/21) The Chief Executive and Director, Finance and Corporate Services introduced the report, referring to circumstances that were not foreseeable in setting the original budget and that cannot be met through in-year budget management. The Board noted that this was a more robust forecast than in previous years. Resolved: That the Board reviewed and agreed the supplementary estimate. Update from the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo) Chair (Oral) The Board received an oral update from the Chair of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo) of their meeting held on the 23 November 2021. The Board noted that the Committee had received an update on the People Strategy, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) activities, were joined by the EDI Lead and Head of Projects, added to their terms of reference, and received updates on ways of working and pay remit. The Board noted that this would be the last RemCo meeting for the Head of Human Resources, Jennifer Hartland, as she would be leaving the Commission next week. RemCo thanked Jennifer for her work and support to the Committee. Resolved: That the Board noted the work of the Committee. Update from the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) Chair (Oral) The Board received an oral update from the Chair of Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) of their meeting held on the 29 November 2021. The Board noted that the Committee held an informal session on risk appetite on the 24 November, which will be brought to a future Board meeting for discussion as part of good governance and ethos of the Commission. The Board noted updates from their meeting on 29 November on internal audit reports, including the programme for 2022/23, the annual audit plan report 2021/22 including an increase in the annual fees, audit recommendations and meeting deadlines, noting one of the audits going forward is on IT and cyber security. The Board further noted the committee's terms of reference, annual risk framework, oral updates on ways of working and financial risks arising from devolved funding and, an update on the registers of interests, donations, gifts and hospitality. Resolved: That the Board noted the work of the Committee. Data on investigation timescales (EC 77/21) The Director, Regulation introduced the report providing the Board with data on investigation length, giving some wider context on the legal, evidential and other principles which apply to Commission investigations and affect their conduct and length. Resolved: That the Board noted the report. Annual review of risk (EC 78/21) The Director, Finance and Corporate Services introduced the report as part of the annual Board's risk assurance. The register is regularly reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee. The Board noted that the report will be reformatted to align with the strategic risks mentioned in the Corporate Plan. Resolved: That the Board noted the report. Chief Executive's update (Oral) The Chief Executive provided an oral update on operations and matters arising since the last Board meeting. The Board noted that the Commission had a virus incident that got into our IT systems which was managed effectively without harm being caused, but highlighted the ongoing potential risk of

losing data. The Board noted further updates on plans, Covid-19 and protocols, completion of staff survey and EC reputation. Further updates included the dissolution and calling of Parliament Bill Lords Second Reading. The Director, Regulation gave evidence for us to the Scottish Parliament Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee on aspects of the Elections Bill. There was a by-election for North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. The Wales Electoral Coordination Board met, and in Northern Ireland the first electoral register canvass since 2013 was near completion. The Board noted updates on the publication of Q3 donations, Electoral Lawyers Forum, Old Bexley and Sidcup by-election. The Commission Chair scheduled IFG interview, PACAC and Westminster PPP meeting, OPQs to be answered and North Shropshire by-election. The EDI strategy was out for consultation, Commissioner and Chief Executive recruitment. Resolved: That the Board noted the oral updates.

Permissible sources You are in the Donations and loans section Home Donations and loans On this page Permissible sources in Great Britain Permissible sources in Northern Ireland First published: 16 May 2023 Last updated: 16 May 2023 Summary Anyone can give a donation or loan to a political party, individual or other organisation. There is no limit on how much someone can give if they are a permissible source. It is up to the political party, individual or other organisation to check if the donation or loan is from a permissible sources, and if they can accept it or not. Permissible sources in Great Britain In Great Britain, permissible sources are: individuals registered on a UK electoral register, including overseas electors and those leaving bequests most UK-registered companies Great Britain registered political parties UK-registered trade unions UK-registered building societies UK-registered limited liability partnerships (LLP) that carry on business in the UK UK-registered friendly societies UK-based unincorporated associations that carry on business or other activities in the UK some types of trust and certain public funds Where someone pays for the reasonable costs of an overseas visit, they are deemed to be a permissible donor. Permissible sources in Northern Ireland In Northern Ireland, permissible sources are: individuals registered on a UK electoral register, including overseas electors and those leaving bequests most UK-registered companies UK-registered political parties UK-registered trade unions UK-registered building societies UK-registered limited liability partnerships (LLP) that carry on business in the UK UK-registered friendly societies UK-based unincorporated associations that carry on business or other activities in the UK Irish citizens (including bequests) most Irish-registered companies Irish-registered political parties Irish-registered trade unions Irish-registered building societies Irish-registered limited liability partnerships (LLP) that carry on business in the island of Ireland Irish-registered friendly societies Irish-based unincorporated associations that carry on business or other activities in Ireland some types of trust, and certain public funds Where someone pays for the reasonable costs of an overseas visit, they are deemed to be a permissible donor.

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Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Who was at the meeting Apologies and introductions Declarations of interest Minutes of the Commission Board meeting of 5 June 2019 (EC 38/19) Annual Review of Complaints 2018/19 (EC 39/19) Audit Committee annual report 2018/19 (EC 40/19 and 41/19) Remuneration and Human Resources Committee annual report 2018/19 (EC 42/19) Adoption of 2018/19 Annual Report and resources accounts (EC 43/19 and EC 44/19) Voter identification pilots (2019) evaluation (EC 45/19) Chief Executive's update (EC 46/19) Forward plan of Board business 2019/20 (EC 47/19) Action tracker (EC 48/19) Chair and Chief Executive's meeting and meetings of note in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland (EC 49/19) First published: 27 November 2019 Last updated: 27 July 2021 Meeting overview Date: Wednesday 26 June 2019 Time: 9:30am to 1.03pm Location: Boothroyd Room, 3 Bunhill Row, London Date of next scheduled meeting: Commissioner Day, Wednesday 17 July 2019 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Board members John Holmes (Chair) Alasdair Morgan Alastair Ross Anna Carragher (Videoconference) Elan Closs Stephens Joan Walley Rob Vincent Sarah Chambers Stephen Gilbert Sue Bruce (Videoconference) In Attendance: Attendees Role Bob Posner Chief Executive Ailsa Irvine Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Craig Westwood Director, Communications, Policy and Research Kieran Rix Director, Finance and Corporate Services Amanda Kelly Legal Counsel David Bailey Head of Strategic Planning and Performance David Meek Senior Adviser, Governance Petra Crees Performance, Planning and Governance Manager (for items 1 to 7) Phil Thompson Head of Research (for item 8) Tom Hawthorn Head of Policy (for item 8) Tracey Blackman Financial Controller (for item 7) Dan Adamson Head of Monitoring and Enforcement Niki Nixon Head of External Communications (for item 7 and 8) Billy Proudlock Communications Officer (for item 8) Rachel Stephenson Policy Advisor (for item 8) Katy Knock Policy Manager (for item 8) Mel Davidson Head of Support and Improvement (for items 8 and 9) Apologies and introductions Louise Edwards gave her apologies. Declarations of interest No new declarations of interest. Minutes of the Commission Board meeting of 5 June 2019 (EC 38/19) Resolved: That the minutes of the Commission Board meeting on 5 June 2019 be agreed. Annual Review of Complaints 2018/19 (EC 39/19) The Board heard about the additional resource needed to address the high volume of complaints that had been received recently. At the time of the European Parliamentary Election, the Commission received a large number of complaints. The majority of these complaints were from European Union citizens resident in the UK who were unable to complete their registration in advance of the election and were thus unable to cast a vote. A significant number of these complainants used a standard template developed by a third party to lodge their complaint. The Board heard that experienced staff drafted a common response to these complaints. Where the standardised response did not answer all the issues raised in the original complaint, additional wording was added. Kieran Rix provided an overview of how responses to complaints were developed and the sign-off process that they went through before a response was issued. He advised the Board on work to develop an approach to addressing repeated, offensive, and vexatious complaints. There was ongoing work with other teams across the organisation to ensure a smoother working practice when responding to complaints in a timely manner. The Board acknowledged the hard work of the staff in ensuring that we responded to this large volume of complaints within our 20-day deadline. The Board were assured that complaints were not investigated by the person being complained about. The Board heard that there was

contingency for either the Chair of the Board or the Independent Adviser to the Audit Committee to conduct a review of the complaint if it was about the Chief Executive. The complaints policy would be updated to ensure that this process was clear. Action: Include more detailed information on any complaints that were not responded to within the 20 working day deadline in future reports. Update complaints policy to clarify the role of the Board Chair or the Audit Committee Independent Adviser in, where appropriate, reviewing complaints about the Chief Executive. Resolved: That the paper be noted. Audit Committee annual report 2018/19 (EC 40/19 and 41/19) Sue Bruce, Chair of the Audit Committee, introduced the item and drew the attention of the Board to the key areas of work undertaken by the Committee. There was agreement that appointing an independent adviser rather than an independent chair had benefited the Committee. Some comments from the National Audit Office needed to be added to the final report, as well as the assurance report details. The Audit Committee agreed to add an additional audit meeting in the new financial year to ensure that the workload of the Committee remained balanced. There was a discussion about changing the remit of the Committee to an audit and risk committee, and extending its scope to include areas such as environmental performance. The Chief Executive noted that the number of days that the internal auditors spend auditing the Commission had been stable for a number of years, and suggested that this might need to increase to reflect the increased breadth of the Commission's work. Kieran Rix added that this might also involve a change so that the internal auditors provided more advisory work. Action : Kieran Rix to amend the report to incorporate the comments from the National Audit Office and the assurance report details. Resolved: That the paper be approved, subject to final changes being made by Kieran Rix working to the Chair to the Audit Committee, and approved by the Audit Committee by correspondence. Remuneration and Human Resources Committee annual report 2018/19 (EC 42/19) Rob Vincent, Chair of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo), introduced the paper, and noted the high-quality support provided to the Committee by staff. He highlighted the key areas that the Committee had considered during the year, including staff turnover and the pay awards. In the coming year, the Committee would focus on equality and diversity, increase its involvement with the staff survey, and support better talent management. The Chief Executive restated that previous assumptions regarding recruitment had been reversed; all positions would be filled permanently unless there was a persuasive business case for a fixed-term contract. The turnover of permanent staff was higher than we would like, but only slightly outside the range of what was expected. The Board discussed the low level of sickness absence, which had dropped dramatically since the start of the year, as a relevant indicator of positive staff engagement and care. The Commission's levels of sickness absence were below the public and private sector averages. Kieran Rix provided a brief overview of the pay award for this year. The Chief Executive explained why the salary for some positions was market-based, and how, as the organisation grew, we had recruited new skills, which required reviewing the salary offered. This trend was likely to continue and was similar to the approach taken by other regulators. The Board discussed whether it should be made aware sooner and receive a note of, the cost of living award. The Chief Executive suggested that as part of the RemCo consideration, the Board could be informed. Action: The Director of Finance to consider the pay award report being brought to the attention of the Board as part of the RemCo consideration. Resolved: That the paper be agreed. Adoption of 2018/19 Annual Report and resources accounts (EC 43/19 and EC 44/19) The Chair introduced the item and the Chief Executive gave a brief overview of the document. Kieran Rix confirmed that the National Audit Office's

draft opinion was unqualified, and that they had a few minor recommendations. He then explained the final stages necessary before sign-off, with the intention that the report be presented to Parliament on 18 July. The Board suggested improvements to the wording of the foreword, and some of the explanations around the performance measurements. The Board also discussed adding further information to the foreword to emphasise the further changes to electoral law that we would like to see made. The Board suggested emphasising that this had been a challenging year for the Commission, and adding more information in areas where the performance standard had changed during the year. Kieran Rix explained the accounts in greater detail, noting that they were consistent with the management accounts, and subject to a small number of minor amends. The accounts showed an 8.5% underspend. This underspend was overwhelmingly due to unused contingency funding for the European Parliamentary Election.

Action: That the Chief Executive and Chair reflect the comments made by Commissioners during the course of this item in the final version of the Annual Report to be laid in Parliament. Resolved: That the paper be agreed, subject to the amendments discussed and final agreement with the National Audit Office.

Voter identification pilots (2019) evaluation (EC 45/19)

The Chief Executive introduced the item and reminded the Board that we had a statutory duty to evaluate the voter identification (ID) pilot schemes that ran across ten local authorities on 2 May 2019. The data was still being analysed, so the final picture might still change. The Board heard that the 2019 pilots were better-designed schemes, and covered a greater range of constituencies. Phil Thompson provided more context on the findings of the research. He explained that the percentage of voters who were refused a ballot paper for not having suitable ID and did not subsequently return to cast a ballot, ranged between 0.03 – 0.7%. It was noted that this number, while small, could still affect the outcome of an election. The Board noted that the turnout at local elections was different to a United Kingdom Parliamentary General Election (UKPGE), and there was a risk that the proportion of people unable to provide sufficient ID would increase at a UKPGE. The pilots did not collect evidence of why people did not return after being turned away. This data would be difficult to collect and would require researchers to insert themselves into the process in a more active way. We also had no evidence to determine if there was an increase or decrease in personation in the pilot areas, as we had no strong evidence of the number of personations outside of the pilot areas to compare any data against. The research found high levels of reported awareness that the trials were taking place, which was similar to previous pilots, although there was a lower level of awareness among people from demographic groups that are typically less likely to vote. There was some evidence within these pilots of a potentially negative impact on turnout among some populations, but the findings were inconclusive. The Board discussed the evidence that indicated an increase in the number of people polled who felt that electoral fraud was a less serious problem than before the trial period. While there was no strong evidence of impact on reducing voter fraud, there was evidence of a shift in perception of the strength of the system. Part of our analysis was informed by findings from a security analyst who assessed the different types of voter identification used. This analysis found that bank cards did not offer any additional assurance over a poll card. However, the analysis did recommend that changes could be made to the poll card to strengthen its security. The trials also identified areas where polling station procedures could be strengthened to provide greater assurance, including changes to the ordering of the process of issuing ballot papers to electors. The security analyst confirmed that photo identification would provide the greatest assurance. About 7.5% of voters would

not currently be able to provide any form of acceptable photo ID if this was a requirement. The Board discussed the merits of recommending issuing photo ID free of charge. The Board also asked if evidence from Northern Ireland, where photo ID had been required to vote for some time, would be used to inform the report to the government. Further evidence was required to determine whether the level of security offered by voter ID cards would be better than that offered by poll cards. The balance between security and accessibility is relevant in this regard. The Board noted that one potential draw-back of requiring polling cards is the time delay between when polling cards were issued and polling day, which could be as long as three weeks. The Board was interested in assessing the money spent on voter ID cards against addressing the other known vulnerabilities in the system. Sarah Chambers left the meeting at this point.

Action: That the Head of Research ensure that the final report to the Government include the key points raised in the discussion by the Board. That the Head of Research circulate the report to all Commissioners for comment. That the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair have final say over the wording of the report.

Resolved: That the paper be noted.

Chief Executive's update (EC 46/19) The Chief Executive introduced the item, and began by noting the significant agenda in Scotland and Wales where there are positive signs that some of our policy recommendations would be reflected in legislation. He also provided an update on system upgrades that were being developed, including the website and the PFR (Political Finance Regulation) online system. Ailsa Irvine provided an update on the different pieces of legislation that were being taken forward by the Scottish Government and the Welsh Government. This included legislation relating to any future referendum in Scotland, as well as legislation extending the franchise. Dan Adamson provided an update on the monitoring of parties that had filed late returns, and those that had not yet filed returns. We are evaluating the monitoring of the European Parliamentary Election, particularly the advert libraries that social media companies created. The Board heard that we had, with the police, issued guidance for candidates on how to handle intimidation. The Board received an update on the various different litigation cases in which we were involved. Craig Westwood updated the Board on the high profile events happening in July, including appearing before the UK Parliament's Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee on their electoral law inquiry, as well as the All Parties Parliamentary Group on electoral campaigning transparency. The new Commission website was expected to launch in late July. Kieran Rix provided a brief update on the Bunhill Row lease negotiations, which had begun. Joan Walley asked if we would extract issues about environmental reporting during the lease negotiations. Kieran Rix confirmed that we would raise this in the negotiations.

Actions: That Kieran Rix will raise the issue of environmental reporting in the lease negotiations

Resolved: That the paper be noted.

Forward plan of Board business 2019/20 (EC 47/19) The Chair reminded Commissioners that the 17 July meeting would be in the afternoon, followed by a reception in the State Rooms, Speaker's House, House of Commons, to celebrate the 2019 Four Countries' Conference.

Resolved: That the paper be noted.

Action tracker (EC 48/19)

Action: The Executive Team to schedule all of the actions.

Resolved: That the paper be noted.

Chair and Chief Executive's meeting and meetings of note in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland (EC 49/19)

Resolved: That the paper be noted.

Impact on electoral administration You are in the May 2018 voter identification pilot schemes section Home Our research Voter identification pilots May 2018 voter identification pilot schemes First published: 24 July 2019 Last updated: 24 July 2019 Impact on electoral administration The Returning Officers and their staff who were responsible for the May 2018 elections successfully ran the pilot schemes in all of the five pilot areas: Polling station staff told us that they had no difficulty checking people's identification They were confident that they could do this again at a future election Across all areas, additional staffing and training were required for the pilot Impact on electoral administration These schemes were run at polls with a low turnout, with fewer people voting and showing identification in polling stations. As shown below there are clear lessons that can be learned for future polls where turnout is higher with more people voting in polling stations. Delivering the identification requirement has specific implications for the administration of the poll and these are set out in more detail in our individual reports on each pilot scheme. We have considered the administrative impact across four aspects of delivery of the polls below. Overall findings from the pilot schemes Staffing and training All of the areas increased their staffing in order to deliver the pilot. There were varying approaches to this, ranging from employing ten extra polling station inspectors in Swindon to using one third more polling station staff in Bromley. Clearly there were also additional costs associated with increased staffing. For example, across the pilots the additional staff and training costs ranged from very little to a third of the usual costs at local elections. However, in feedback after polling day the pilot areas told us that this increase in staffing would not be required to administer voter identification at future local elections. This is because additional pilot elements, such as the collection of data on polling day (required to inform the evaluation), would not need to take place. A few areas also did not think they would need additional staff at every polling day, even for a higher turnout poll such as a UK parliamentary general election. More and/or longer training sessions were also required to support staff in delivering the pilot. However, feedback from electoral administrators in the pilot areas indicated that, while this training required planning and preparation, it did not present a significant challenge for them in running the pilot. We also know that the training was delivered well. Our survey of polling stations staff found that, on average, 94% rated the training they received as good or excellent. Close to 100% of polling staff also told us they were confident about the process they had to follow in order to check voters' identification. Local identification The 2018 pilots offered a limited test of the process and cost of issuing local identification to electors. Three pilots (Bromley, Gosport and Woking) offered a form of local identification but only Woking needed to issue any. This is likely to be because Woking had a narrower identification requirement where electors were slightly more likely to need to use a local option. Woking issued 63 local elector cards and their feedback indicates that this process was manageable for them to deliver. However it did incur some additional costs associated with the production and delivery (where needed) of the cards. Gosport did raise a concern in their feedback about their ability to resource the local identification route if it had been significantly used. This was mainly because, as a small local authority, they would have limited flexibility in drawing on resources from other teams. The impact of IT Swindon and Watford both used IT in the polling stations to scan QR codes on electors' poll cards. In both pilots the systems worked well and there were no notable issues on polling day related to the

IT. Also, the systems provided Returning Officers with useful, live information on turnout at polling stations that they would not normally have access to. However, planning and setting up these IT systems required a significant amount of time and resource commitment from the electoral administration teams, the software suppliers and Cabinet Office. This commitment of time and resource stems largely from the level of security needed to run these systems, which hold significant personal data, as well as the level of assurance and resilience needed to ensure no problems arise on polling day. While much of the work was associated with the development of the software, and would not necessarily be needed in the future, there would still be a sizeable level of commitment needed from software suppliers to support any local authorities sites using these systems at future polls. There would also be ongoing costs which local authorities would need to meet in order to use these systems. These include software licensing, hardware (tablets/scanners) and additional staff training. Given the cost and time needed to support the use of these systems, the merits of including any IT- enabled pilots in future schemes needs to be weighed against the ability to scale up these systems across Great Britain. It is also not clear from these pilot schemes that additional IT in polling stations (for example to scan barcodes or QR codes) is absolutely necessary to support the use of the poll card as a form of identification. Polling day Feedback from Returning Officers and their staff indicate that delivering the identification requirement on 3 May did not present significant challenges. In response to our survey, 77% of polling station staff said they were very satisfied with how polling day went. This agrees with the feedback we received from Returning Officers which said that few issues had arisen on polling day and that they had received few or no negative responses from the public. These findings also agree with the observations made by Electoral Commission staff on polling day across the five areas. We saw few issues and largely observed processes working well. A high proportion of staff (69%) also agreed with the statement that asking voters to prove their identity had little or no impact on their work on polling day. This also suggests that the variation in identification requirements did not make the task in polling stations notably easier or more difficult. Staff in Swindon and Watford (using poll card scanning) were more likely to agree there was little impact but there was little difference across the other areas. The difference in the quantity of different acceptable identification types between Bromley/Gosport and Woking do not, for example, appear to have made a significant difference to staff. We also asked polling station staff if they would feel confident about replicating the requirement to show identification at a future poll and 97% said they would be confident in doing so. Beyond the pilots: the impact on administration at future elections The evidence we have gathered shows that the polls in the pilot areas on 3 May were well run and that the administrative challenges presented by the voter identification requirement were met by the Returning Officers and their staff. Looking beyond the pilots, there could be different administrative challenges which these pilots have not tested, including the need to process and deliver significant volumes of local electoral identification cards/letters. The impact and risks for people running the elections could be different at elections with higher turnout with more people voting and showing identification in polling stations, such as a general election. Turnout at the May 2018 elections, as is usually the case for local government elections, was relatively low, meaning that the pilots were run on a different scale than might be the case at a UK parliamentary general election. At these local elections between 20-30% of the electorate voted at a polling station whereas at a UK parliamentary election over 50% often vote at a polling station. For

example, staff in some polling stations in Watford said that scanning the poll card caused delays and queues which could be longer with more people voting. In areas such as Woking, which had a more limited choice of identification, more local elector cards may need to be processed and issued putting pressure on local authority election teams. No applications were made in Bromley for the certificate of identity or in Gosport for the electoral identity letter, which means that the pilot did not test the resources required to process applications and issue certificates or letters. The Returning Officers and their staff in Bromley and Gosport told us that if the list of acceptable identification was reduced they would expect the number of applications for certificates and letters to increase. They had some concerns about the pressure this could put on an already stretched elections team. This was particularly true for Gosport which, as a smaller authority, has less flexibility in the size of the elections team and their ability to draw on resources from elsewhere in the council. One particular issue which the pilots in 2018 were ready to test was how to ensure privacy for voters who show photo identification but need to remove, for example, a head scarf to allow polling station staff to confirm their identity. However, several of the pilot areas do not have significant British Asian populations. In Woking, which does have a significant Asian or British Asian population, no-one requested to show their identification in private. In Watford, where some wards also have a significant British Asian population, the availability of poll cards as part of the identification requirement meant that people may have been less likely to need to use this facility. Ensuring voters have the privacy they need could be a more significant administrative challenge in some areas and that should be a consideration for future testing. Related content Register to vote All you need to register to vote is 5 minutes and your National Insurance number. Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Party registration decisions View our decisions on political party names, descriptions and emblems Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run

Accuracy in Great Britain You are in the Accuracy and completeness of electoral registers section Home Our research Accuracy and completeness of electoral registers On this page Type of errors Demographic characteristics First published: 3 September 2019 Last updated: 26 September 2019 Key findings The local government registers in Great Britain were 89% accurate, and the parliamentary registers were 89% accurate.

In December 2018, 11% of entries had major errors and 9% of register entries had minor errors Type of errors Both the local government registers and parliamentary registers in Great Britain were 89% accurate. Type of errors In analysing the accuracy of the electoral registers, a number of different types of error can be identified. These errors are then categorised as either a 'major' or 'minor' error.

The major error category is comprised of the following: entries which refer to individuals that no longer live at address entries which may prevent an individual casting their vote at a polling station (for example, an incorrect name); those errors that would mean that someone could vote when they are not eligible to do so (for example, an incorrect date of birth for someone under 18). Minor errors are those which would not prevent someone from casting their vote. For example, an entry with a spelling error. In total, 11% of entries had a major error (up from 9% in 2015). The most common being that no corresponding name was collected through our survey at that address (10%). This refers to register entries for individuals who no longer live at the property. 9% of register entries had minor errors. The most common was for a middle name to be missing from the register which was the case for 6% of register entries. Here is a breakdown of the types of errors used to calculate the accuracy of the local government registers. Accuracy errors, Great Britain, 2015 and 2018 December 2015 December 2018 Major errors total 9.4% 11.2% Major errors-(a) 8.8% 10.4% No corresponding name taken at address Major errors-(b) 0.3% 0.7% First name and/or surname wrong on register 0.1% 0.4% First name and/or surname missing on register - 0.0% UK/Irish/Commonwealth marker present 0.2% 0.3% Major errors- (c) 0.3% 0.5% Name on survey corresponds to ineligible name on survey 0.1% 0.2% Attainers- DOB missing or wrong 0.1% 0.1% EU citizens marker missing 0.1% 0.2% Accurate with minor errors 10.4% 9.1% First name and/or surname on register misspelled 1.0% 1.2% First name/surname on register incomplete 0.5% 0.5% Middle name missing from register 7.8% 6.4% Middle name or initials misspelled or incomplete on register 0.1% 0.0% Middle name or initial wrong on register 0.1% 0.1% Person does not have a middle name but middle name on registers (respondents only) 0.2% 1.3% Surname is/assumed to be previous surname 0.5% 0.3% First/middle/surname in different order on register 0.1% 0.1% DOB earlier on register for attainer 0.0% 0.0% Demographic characteristics Demographic characteristics Examining the demographic nature of inaccuracy on the electoral registers is more challenging. It is not possible to record demographic details for register entries which are not matched to a resident during an interview.

Nor is it possible to take into account properties which are derelict or entirely vacant. In order to provide some guidance to the patterns of accuracy by different household characteristics, the analysis below takes into account household data where a resident was interviewed. However, this data still only presents a limited picture and so must be treated with caution. Tenure Accuracy by tenure follows a similar pattern to completeness, with owner-occupier households the most likely to have accurate register entries (95%). Households where the home is being bought on a mortgage (or through shared ownership), or rented from a social landlord have a similar level of accuracy (91-95%), while private rented households have a lower level of accuracy, at 81%. Social grade Social grade is also calculated at the

household level, based on the occupation of the chief income earner. Here again, the pattern of accuracy is closely related with completeness with a slight gradient by social grade, with AB households the most accurate and DE households least. However, all are within five percentage points of each other. Accuracy of local government registers by social grade, 2018 Great Britain AB 94% C1 93% C2 93% DE 89% Length of time at address Accuracy follows the same pattern as completeness when looking at how long households have occupied their accommodation. Accuracy is similar for all households who have been at their present address for at least one year, at 93% or higher, but is much lower for households where the current resident has been living for less than a year (56%).

Standing for election in the United Kingdom: Report and recommendations | Electoral Commission Search Standing for election in the United Kingdom: Report and recommendations You are in the Our consultations section Home Our consultations On this page Qualifications and disqualifications Deposits and subscribers Candidate use of descriptions Candidate benefits Procedural issues Download our full report First published: 13 January 2015 Last updated: 13 January 2015 Overview The Electoral Commission is an independent body which reports directly to the UK Parliament. We regulate political party and election finance and set standards for well-run elections. We report to the relevant Governments on recommendations for change that we have identified. We have a strong interest in simplifying and updating the procedures used by candidates to stand for election in the UK. We last reviewed the rules around standing for election in 2003, after which a number of recommendations were taken forward by the UK Government. This report gives an updated view of these issues, including reporting on responses to a new consultation paper published in September 2013. The following aspects of standing for election were within the scope of the consultation document: Qualifications and disqualifications Deposits and subscribers Candidate benefits, including candidate mailings, broadcasts, access to the register, free use of rooms, descriptions and emblems Procedural issues, including the use of candidate photographs on ballot papers, delivering and objecting to nomination papers. We sought views from a range of people and organisations including elected representatives, political parties, electoral administrators and candidates who have stood for election. Around 100 responses were received from a range of individuals, organisations and groups. The responsibility and entitlements of those standing for election are set out in law, and they vary depending on the election. Many of these rules have been in place for many years, and questions have been raised about whether they are still appropriate. Some of these have been highlighted in the Commission's statutory reports on elections, including: the value of the subscribers system (also known as signatures or assenters); the size and variation in deposits; the rules on access to the electoral register; the clarity of qualification and disqualification criteria; and the prohibition on independent candidates using descriptions on the ballot paper. While the rules on standing for election are of most direct interest to potential candidates and political parties, they are also important for voters since they help determine the range of candidates available to them. The rules should also inspire confidence in elections amongst voters, candidates and parties. To assess the robustness of the laws and procedures relating to standing for election, we have used the following set of principles: Clear election law – the rules on standing for election should be clear, straightforward and unambiguous. Encourage participation – processes should be accessible and transparent to promote the widest participation. There should be no unnecessary barriers to standing for election. Fair and equal treatment – fair and equal treatment should be ensured between all candidates, save where differences are genuinely justified. Trust – rules should inspire confidence amongst voters. Consistency of approach – as far as possible the rules on standing for election should be consistently set so they are easy to understand and any differences between them should reflect conscious policy choices by the relevant legislature. Up to date – the rules on standing for election should reflect current technology and the expectations of candidates, agents, political parties, voters and those administering elections. We used these principles to assess the appropriateness of the current arrangements, drawing on the evidence submitted through the consultation. During the review we have been able to identify some areas where

relatively straightforward changes to the law could be made. However, in some other areas the issues and law relating to standing for election are very complex. Our recommendations make clear where this is the case and it will be important for further work to be done by the relevant policy makers before any changes are made to the law.

Qualifications and disqualifications To stand for election in the UK, a person must be qualified and also not be disqualified. A core set of qualifications relating to age and nationality apply to all elections. Additional qualifications relating to demonstrating a local connection apply at local elections. Similarly, certain individuals are disqualified from standing for election, with different sets of criteria applying at different elections. In addition, some people are disqualified from standing in some elections because of a post that they hold.

Respondents to the consultation were of the view that qualification and disqualification criteria should be clearly set out. There was consensus that the rules could be simpler with greater consistency between elections. Specific queries were raised about particular aspects of the qualifications and disqualifications rules. We agree that the qualifications and disqualifications criteria require review, and that candidates would benefit from increased clarity in the rules. We do not think however that it would be appropriate or possible to have one set of criteria applying to all elections, since there are good reasons for qualifications and disqualifications to vary depending on the election. This is a complex area and it will be important for a range of issues to be taken into account before any changes to the law are proposed by the relevant policy makers. Consultation with representatives of local government, electoral administrators and Returning Officers on the detail of any changes will be particularly important.

Qualifications and disqualifications: Recommendations

We recommend that the relevant Governments should clarify and update the law relating to the qualifications for local government elections including those relating to being a local government elector for the area, occupying as owner or tenant, principal or only place of work being in the area, and residence in the area (or within three miles at parish or community elections). We recognise that the qualification about continuing to be a local government elector for the area of the authority is different from the other three qualifications, since it must be satisfied throughout the whole of a councillor's term of office. This qualification does not apply in Scotland or Northern Ireland. We also note that enforcing this qualification is not practical since there is no requirement for nomination papers to be held (and where they are held it is not normally beyond one year). We therefore recommend that the Government considers whether this qualification is still appropriate. We recommend that the law in England, Wales and Northern Ireland is changed to make a clear distinction between offices or employment which would prevent someone standing for election, and those which would prevent someone from holding office if elected. A suggested framework of questions is put forward in this report to help establish whether a particular postholder could stand, but it would be up to the relevant Governments to determine how these should apply when reviewing the law. This reduction in restrictions on potential candidates would enable wider choice for voters. We recommend that the law is changed so that voters, voting in person in polling stations (and where practical those voting by post), are informed that a candidate had either been disqualified or no longer wants to be considered for election but has not withdrawn their candidature within the time allowed. This will ensure that the voter can make a more informed choice. Deposits and subscribers Deposit and subscriber (also known as signatures or assenters) requirements are the two main barriers to standing for election. Under a deposit

system, anyone who wants to stand for election must lodge a specified amount of money with the Returning Officer. The subscriber system requires anyone standing for election to gather the signatures of a set number of supporters, who must be registered electors. Deposit and subscriber requirements vary between elections. Political parties expressed mixed views about deposits. Larger parties were generally of the view that paying a deposit required a candidate to demonstrate proper intent, and that deposits deterred 'non-serious' candidates. On the other hand, smaller parties and independent candidates said that deposits could be unaffordable and therefore they restricted their ability to participate in elections. Similarly, some political parties said that the subscriber system should be retained because it helps validate the nomination process. Some electoral administrators expressed the view that the subscriber process was not particularly meaningful, and that it just added to the administrative process. Many respondents made the point that the variation in subscriber requirements between elections was not logical and was confusing for candidates. Without either deposit or subscriber requirements, there is a risk of large numbers of candidates (especially in high-profile elections) which could potentially lead to ballot papers that are unwieldy for voters, undermine the credibility of the election, and are difficult and costly to administer. The other side of this argument is that reducing these barriers could mean an increased range of candidates standing for election, which would mean greater choice for voters. In the case of deposits, it does not seem reasonable to have a barrier to standing for election that depends on someone's financial means. We do not think that the ability to pay a specified fee is a relevant or appropriate criterion for determining access to the ballot paper. We therefore recommend that deposit requirements are abolished. The argument for subscriber requirements seems to carry more weight, in that they act as a proxy for support from the electorate and are an indication that candidates are genuinely contesting the election. Having said this, in practice subscriber requirements may test administrative ability rather than support from the electorate. Given that we are recommending abolishing deposits, on balance we have concluded that subscriber requirements should be retained. There is however a need to review subscriber requirements to ensure that they are proportionate to the type of election and also where possible to increase consistency. In considering these recommendations, it will be important that Governments look at subscriber and deposit requirements together for each election. We also recognise that different arrangements and solutions may be appropriate in different parts of the UK.

Deposits and subscribers: Recommendations

We recommend removing the requirement to pay a deposit at all elections, as we do not consider that there should be a financial barrier to standing for election. We recommend that subscribers should be retained to maintain trust that elections are being contested by serious candidates and avoid ballot papers that are unwieldy for voters and difficult to administer. The number of subscribers should be reviewed for each election to ensure it is proportionate to the post for which the candidate is standing.

Candidate use of descriptions: Only registered political parties are permitted to use a description on the ballot paper (with the exception of parish and community council elections). Candidates that are not standing on behalf of a party are allowed to use the word 'Independent'. In the consultation, respondents expressed mixed views about whether independents should be allowed to use descriptions. Independents themselves felt strongly that they should be allowed to use descriptions, and that this would add clarity for the voter about what the candidate stood for. Larger parties said that descriptions should continue to be restricted to registered political parties, with some saying that allowing

independents to use descriptions would undermine the system of party registration. During the European Parliamentary elections in May 2014, there were several issues with party descriptions that were felt to be offensive or could cause confusion with other parties. In the light of experience at the May 2014 elections and our previous recommendations on party descriptions, the Commission has reiterated the case for reforming the rules on party descriptions, including their use on ballot papers and the maintenance of the central register. We have discussed some of these issues with Government. Although it appears that the UK Government is prepared to consider addressing this issue in the medium term, there is no prospect of changes to the current legislation on party registration before the UK Parliamentary General Election. Given this wider context of the need to review the purpose and use of the central register of descriptions for parties, at this stage we are not making any recommendation about the use of descriptions by independents. We will be monitoring the use of descriptions on ballot papers at the 2015 elections and will report on the issue in our post-election report after the May 2015 polls.

Candidate benefits

Candidates who stand for election have significant benefits, which might include a free mailing of campaign material, the free use of rooms for meetings, and a copy of the electoral register. Candidates from registered parties also have the opportunity to use a description (as set out above) and party emblem on the ballot paper. Parties may also qualify for party election broadcasts. A number of political parties expressed strong support for retaining free candidate mailings as they were the main vehicle for communicating with the electorate. Concern was raised about free candidate mailings not being available for PCC elections. While there was some support for online candidate addresses, concerns were raised about not everyone having access to the internet. We are not recommending changing the right to a postal mailing to a right to display information online. Any move to online candidate communications should take account of internet use and the likelihood of the information being accessed online.

Candidate benefits: Recommendations

We recommend that the law should be changed to ensure that electors are sent printed information about candidates standing for election as PCCs in their police area. This should take the form of a booklet with addresses from each candidate sent by the relevant Police Authority Returning Officer to every household in the police authority area. This was done on a trial basis for the PCC by-election in West Midlands in August 2014. The Home Office will be evaluating the effectiveness of this trial. We recommend that the legislation around free candidate mailings be amended to allow candidates at combined elections to use a single election communication covering both elections if that is their choice, but only where there is a right to a free mailing in respect of the elections referred to in the mailing.

Candidate benefits continued

We believe that the criteria for party election broadcasts (PEBs) are working well. However, there is some uncertainty about whether the law allows independent candidates who can demonstrate sufficient support to qualify for a PEB, and in our view it does not. In the case of candidates standing for Mayor of London this may disadvantage independents compared to party candidates. (This is only currently relevant in London since it is the only area where in practice broadcast areas and electoral boundaries are sufficiently aligned to have made this a possibility.) We think it is important that this is addressed at the earliest legislative opportunity. We also appreciate the clear problems expressed by the broadcasters in making provision for separate PEBS in different regions, and believe that broadcasters should keep under review technological developments that may make such provision possible in the future.

Candidate benefits: Recommendations

We recommend that the legislation is changed to

enable independent candidates to have party election broadcasts where this is feasible (in practice this is only at London Mayoral elections at present). The criteria that regulators and broadcasters use to award broadcasts should, for those elections where this is relevant, identify what levels of past and current support an independent candidate would need to receive a broadcast. Broadcasters should keep under review technological developments that may make the provision of regional PEBs in England a more viable option in the future to ensure better access to voters by those that can demonstrate significant electoral support in a particular area.

Candidate benefits continued There was support for independent candidates having access to the electoral register at an earlier stage. Such access would enable independent candidates to campaign on a more equal basis with candidates from political parties. Candidate benefits: Recommendations We continue to recommend that the law is changed to allow all candidates to get earlier access to the register for electoral purposes. Candidate benefits continued There are strongly held views on both sides of the debate about whether independents should be allowed to use an emblem on the ballot paper. The case in favour is based on the argument that the current position is unfair as it provides an advantage to party candidates who are allowed emblems. On balance our view is that the use of emblems should remain a facility reserved for political parties, to help protect the identities of parties and preserve an incentive for registering a party. There was support for retaining free use of rooms for candidates, although awareness of this entitlement was low.

Candidate benefits: Recommendations We recommend that Returning Officers should ensure that the information they make available to potential candidates includes information on their entitlements, including what facilities are available and the likely cost of hiring them. Procedural issues This section covers a number of procedural issues around standing for election, including: alphabetical listing on ballot papers; photographs of candidates on ballot papers; submitting nomination documents; and objecting to and determining the validity of nominations. Alphabetical listing on ballot papers The law says that the names of candidates appearing on the ballot paper should be placed in alphabetical order by surname (or party name where parties stand for election). It has been suggested that this discriminates against candidates and parties with names starting with letters towards the end of the alphabet because they appear lower down the ballot paper. The views of political parties varied on this issue. The majority of parties did not see any need to move away from alphabetical listing, pointing out that any alternative could create problems for voters in finding names on the ballot paper. A small number of respondents said that there was clear evidence of an alphabetical effect. Our view is that there is some evidence that candidates with names nearer the start of the alphabet do better in elections. Switching away from alphabetical listing could however lead to voters having problems finding candidates on the ballot paper. There is no strong argument to justify any particular alternative ordering method, and there are likely to be practical problems associated with each option. However, this is something that should be considered further and we will do so as part of our future review of electoral modernisation. Positive abstention In the consultation we asked whether a positive abstention option (e.g. 'none of the above') should be included on ballot papers. Respondents were roughly equally split in their views.

Political parties were strongly opposed, but a more mixed range of views was given by elected representatives, candidates and electoral administrators. Our view is that while including a positive abstention option might increase participation, it could also undermine the electoral process (the purpose of which is to elect a candidate to

elected office) by discouraging engagement with the candidates standing for election. We are therefore not recommending that positive abstention be included as an option on ballot papers. Photographs of candidates on ballot papers Some countries use colour photographs on ballot papers. We asked in the consultation whether there was a case for introducing these in the UK and whether this would be beneficial for voters. The majority of respondents were against having colour photographs on ballot papers. They said that there was no demand for them, that there were no clear arguments in favour, and that there would be practical problems producing the images. A small number of respondents were in favour of introducing photographs to help voters identify candidates. We are not recommending that photographs are used on ballot papers. Submitting nomination documents At all elections nomination papers and some other documents relating to the candidate can only be delivered to the Returning Officer in person. In the consultation we sought views on whether more flexible arrangements, including fax, email, online or mobile device app, should be introduced for the receipt of nomination papers. We also asked whether the delivery of nomination papers should be standardised for all elections. All the political parties who responded said that they supported the submission of nomination documents in different formats. There was agreement that whatever process was agreed it should be standardised for all elections. Electoral administrators were also in favour of modernisation but stressed the need for any change to the legislation to be precise about the new requirements. We support the modernisation of the process around submitting nomination papers and other related documents

Procedural issues:

Recommendations We recommend that the law is changed to allow nomination papers, consents to nomination, withdrawal notices, certificates of party authorisation and emblem requests to be submitted by post, email and fax for all elections in the UK, in addition to hand delivery. This would update this area of law, making standing for election more accessible. We recommend that consideration is given to allowing nominations to be submitted via an online system.

Procedural issues: Continued Objections to nominations and determining the validity of nominations At UK Parliamentary elections the following persons are able to attend the proceedings for the delivery of nomination papers and may inspect those papers and also raise objections to their validity: A candidate who is validly nominated, The election agent of a candidate who is validly nominated, or The proposer or seconder of a candidate who is validly nominated In the consultation we sought views on whether the objections procedures should be revised and replaced with a more consistent and transparent scheme and how such a scheme would work in practice. We also wanted to establish if the current timeframes set for objections were sufficient to meet the needs of candidates and electoral administrators alike. Most responses on this topic expressed support for simplifying the rules around objections to nominations. We agree that there is a need to simplify these provisions to make the process more easily understandable and transparent. We also support the argument that there should be a standard consistent objection system for all elections. This should include consideration of amending the law to allow for objections in elections where there is currently no objections procedure. In addition, we do not think it is appropriate that the right to inspect and object is reserved to a small group of persons associated with a validly nominated candidate. Many respondents were keen that Returning Officers should be able to decide that a nomination paper is invalid if a candidate is not qualified or is disqualified. Our view is that consideration should be given to changing the law so that objections can be made on the grounds that a candidate is either not qualified or disqualified, and that the Returning Officer be

required to hold a nomination paper to be invalid where the Returning Officer finds that the candidate is not qualified or is disqualified. It appears to us to be an unsatisfactory situation that an obviously ineligible candidate should be allowed to stand for election and be able to serve out their full term of office unless someone was willing and able to challenge the eligibility of the elected person in the courts. While this case is strong, we accept that the principle that the Returning Officer has no role in determining whether a candidate is qualified or disqualified (except under the RPA 1981) is well established and any change to this would be a fundamental change to electoral law and the role of the Returning Officer. There would be a need to ensure that the change to the law produced a system that worked in practice and did not produce inconsistency in how it was applied by Returning Officers, and in particular that any changes could be implemented within the election timetable. Any proposals for change would therefore require careful consideration and consultation with the electoral community, especially with Returning Officers.

Procedural issues: Recommendations We recommend that the legislation should be amended to clarify and simplify the process of objecting to nominations for all elections in the UK. This includes ensuring that the system is easy to understand. This reform will help to increase the transparency of the standing for election process. We recommend that consideration is given to allowing objections to nominations on the grounds that a candidate is not qualified or is disqualified and, if satisfied that that is the case, requiring a Returning Officer to hold a nomination paper to be invalid. This would help to ensure the integrity of the process. Download our full report Standing for election in the United Kingdom: Report and recommendations - January 2015 Related content Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Public funds View data about public funds received by parties 2017 electoral fraud data about electoral fraud in 2017 and view the data Response to consultation feedback on the Codes of Practice on spending by candidates and political parties at Senedd elections

Report on the May 2021 elections in England | Electoral Commission Search Report on the May 2021 elections in England You are in the Police and Crime Commissioner elections section Home Police and Crime Commissioner elections Currently reading: of 3 - Show page contents On this page Voting at the elections Campaigning at the elections Delivering the elections Introduction This report looks at how the May 2021 elections in England were run, how voters and campaigners found taking part, and what lessons can be learned for the future. On 6 May Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) took place in England. Most local authorities had local government elections and some areas had Combined Authority Mayor and local mayoral elections. In London, people could vote for the Mayor of London and London Assembly members. Many of these polls had been postponed from 2020. This was one of the most complex sets of polls held in recent times, with the additional challenges presented by the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. Even with these challenging circumstances people had high levels of satisfaction with the process of registering to vote and voting, and were confident that they were well run. Turnout across the different elections in May 2021 was similar to comparable elections in previous years, suggesting that concerns about Covid-19 did not stop voters from taking part. Changes that were put in place by electoral administrators and the Government helped to support and reassure voters. People were confident that they could vote safely at the elections, and the overwhelming majority were able to vote using their preferred method. They adapted their activities in response to public health restrictions and were able to communicate with voters face-to-face, online and through printed material.

Transparency about who is responsible for producing campaign material online remains important for voters, and new digital imprint requirements will help voters understand who is paying to target them online at elections in the future. The experience of these polls has again highlighted concerns about the resilience and capacity of electoral administration structures in the UK, which are coupled with the challenges of delivering elections within an outdated and increasingly complex electoral law framework. We will work in partnership with the electoral community, the Government and local authorities to develop and deliver proposals to support resilient electoral services for the future.

Voting at the elections

The experience of voters at the May 2021 elections

Most people were confident that the elections were well-run, even though they took place in unprecedented and challenging circumstances. People were highly satisfied with the process of registering to vote and casting their vote.

Changes that were put in place helped to support and reassure voters. People were confident that they could vote safely at the elections, and the overwhelming majority were able to vote using their preferred method. New rules allowed people who were required to isolate to appoint a proxy to vote on their behalf as late as 5pm on polling day. This positive change helped to provide a safeguard for anyone whose circumstances changed close to the polls, and should continue to be available if people are required to self-isolate as part of the public health response to Covid-19. There was a notable increase in the proportion of ballot papers that were rejected at the Mayor of London election because people had voted for too many candidates. Good ballot paper design is essential to help voters understand how to cast their votes without making errors. Possible alternative design options for ballot papers should be tested ahead of future Mayor of London elections.

Voting at the elections

summary

This was one of the most complex sets of polls held in recent years, with the additional challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic. In March 2020, due to rising concern about the Covid-19 pandemic, the UK Government postponed the local elections that had been scheduled for May 2020, until May 2021. This meant

that on 6 May 2021 there were: Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) elections across England (except for London, Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire) Local government elections in most areas of England Combined Authority Mayor elections in some areas Local mayoral elections in some areas Mayor of London and London Assembly elections in London Some voters had multiple elections using different voting systems. In Bristol and Liverpool, for example, there were four different scheduled elections using two different voting systems. In both areas, local elections used the first past the post voting system, and PCC, Local Authority Mayoral and Combined Authority Mayoral elections used the supplementary vote system. A number of authorities also needed to hold by-elections and local referendums on the same day, adding to the complex picture for voters in those areas. During the summer and early autumn of 2020, the Electoral Commission worked with and consulted electoral administrators, political parties and governments across Great Britain to identify a shared set of high-level objectives for delivering successful elections in the current public health environment . These objectives were used to assess and test different options for supporting voters, campaigner and electoral administrators, and to identify and manage significant risks to successful delivery of the elections. We have also used them to inform our research, analysis and reporting on these polls. Returning Officers put in place new procedures in polling stations based on guidance from public health bodies and the Electoral Commission to comply with public health regulations and guidelines and to ensure that voters could be confident that they could vote safely. Voters who didn't want to vote in person at the polling station could also choose to cast their vote by post or appoint a proxy. To make sure everyone knew about the different voting options available to them and to reassure people that voting in person would be a safe experience, we – along with local authorities – took a lead role in communicating these messages before the elections. This covered a range of topics including how to find your polling station, options for casting your vote and how to get help at the polling station. Our voter registration campaign ran from 9 March until the application deadline on 19 April. Our ads directed people to the gov.uk/registertovote service and were promoted across TV, video on demand, radio, digital audio, out-of-home billboards, social media and digital display. In England, there were 852,830 applications to register during our campaign between 9 March and 19 April. A total of 18.3 million people were registered to vote in the local elections and 14.5 million in the county council elections in England. There were 32.1 million people registered for the PCC elections and 6.2 million for the Mayor of London elections. Voters continue to have positive views about how the election was run People had high levels of satisfaction with the process of registering to vote and voting, even with the challenging circumstances of these polls taking place during the Covid-19 pandemic. Our research shows that: 87% of people across England 1 and 88% of people in London were satisfied with the process of registering to vote. This is consistent with levels of satisfaction reported by people after the most recent comparable elections held in 2016 94% of people across England and 92% in London were satisfied with the process of voting. This is an increase from 2016 when satisfaction ranged from 82% at PCC elections to 86% in London more experienced voters are more confident and satisfied with registering to vote and voting than first time voters Three-quarters of people said they were confident that the elections were well-run; however, at least one in 10 were not. Although this is similar to the 2016 PCC elections in England (73%), it is lower than the proportion of people in 2016 who were confident that the local elections (82%) and elections in London (85%) were well-run. When we asked people why

they were not confident that the May 2021 elections were well run there were some differences between voters in England and London, with voters in London more likely to identify concerns about Covid-19 and dislike of the voting system used. Reasons given by voters in England who were not confident elections well-run Reasons given by voters in London who were not confident elections well-run Wasn't enough information about the candidates (29%) Do not think it was safe for people to vote at polling stations because of Covid-19 (27%) [Information] about the elections (19%) Wasn't enough information about the candidates (21%) Candidates didn't canvass/have contact with people (18%). Don't like the voting system (20%) Did not trust that the votes were counted accurately (17%), Wasn't enough information about the elections (20%) Did not think it was safe for people to vote at polling stations because of Covid-19 (16%) Did not think there was enough information about alternatives to voting at a polling station (16%) We also saw that views about whether electoral fraud is a problem, and about the safety of voting, were consistent with other recent elections. Just over a quarter of people across England (28%) see electoral fraud as a problem, rising to 34% in London. This compares to the 26% of people across the UK who saw it as a problem after the 2019 UK general election. Voters continue to have positive views about how the election was run: breakdown The pandemic does not appear to have stopped people from turning out to vote Although the level of turnout at these elections was low, this is consistent with previous elections. In 2021 there was a slight increase in turnout for the local and county council elections compared to the last comparable polls. This suggests that Covid-19 restrictions or concerns did not stop people turning out to vote. Turnout at the PCC elections was also higher than in 2016. However, this is likely to be at least partly due to the combination of different types of elections in 2021. The postponement of some elections from the previous year, meant that more areas in England held local elections alongside their PCC elections compared with 2016. Local election turnout tends to be higher than standalone PCC election turnout. In London, turnout was lower than at the previous Mayoral and Assembly elections in 2016. However, we have no evidence that Covid-19 was a significant factor in that. Turnout in May 2021 compared to most recent comparable election County Council 2017 35.0% 2021 36.6% Local 2017 33.8% 2021 35.6% PCC (England only) 2017 26.0% 2021 33.0% London Mayoral 2017 46.1% 2021 42.9% People were most likely to tell us that they didn't vote because of a lack of information or lacking trust in politicians, rather than because of Covid-19. This further illustrates that the pandemic does not appear to have played a role in whether someone voted or not. England London There was not enough information/media coverage (10%) That they don't trust politicians (11%) Lack of information (10%) Lack of information (10%) That they don't trust politicians (10%) That voting takes too long (10%) That voting takes too long (9%) Forgetting/missing the deadline (8%) Illness (9%) 2 Illness (7%) You should be able to vote over a few days (6%). You should be able to vote over a few days (7%). People were confident that they could vote using their preferred method Although public health restrictions were in place at the time of the elections, people had a choice of how they cast their vote. They could choose to vote in person, by post or by proxy (asking someone to do so on their behalf). Most people who voted were able to use their preferred method: 93% of people who voted across England and 91% of those who voted in London said they were able to use their preferred method of voting first time voters and younger people aged 18 to 34 were less likely to say they were able to use their preferred method 6% of voters across England and 8% in London said that they were not able to vote using their preferred method. Among this group, around a quarter said this was due to reasons

related to Covid-19 (such as being worried about going to the polling stations and having to self-isolate), rising to around a third amongst those who generally prefer to vote in polling stations. Voters in polling stations were confident that they were safe places to vote. Across England and London, a number of different measures were in place to make sure that voting and working at polling stations was as safe as possible during the pandemic. To support and advise on what changes should be made to voting in polling stations, we worked with public health experts across the UK to provide guidance for electoral administrators. We also produced resources for local authorities designed to help: reassure the public that voting in person would be a safe experience, highlight the other ways to vote, for those vulnerable or concerned encourage voters to start thinking about their preferred voting option early. Voters in polling stations were confident that they were safe places to vote: breakdown

Polling stations were set up and managed to minimise public health risks	How safe voters at polling stations felt with the safety provisions in place.
London	Very safe 56%
Across England	64% Fairly safe 39%
33% Fairly unsafe 3%	2% Very unsafe 1%
0.5% Don't know 1%	0.23% 77% of polling station voters said that they had enough information about safety measures to cast their vote safely across England, first time voters were slightly less likely to feel safe than people who had experience of voting before.

Half of voters across England who said they felt unsafe said there was nothing more that could have been done to make a difference. Almost all (99%) polling station voters said that they noticed at least one of the various safety provisions that had been put in place. People were most likely to notice Hand sanitiser provided on exit and entry Cleaning of pencils (where single use pencils were not used) Staff wearing face coverings Cleaning of booths A one-way system with floor markings Polling station staff also felt that polling stations were safe places to work (96% of staff responding to our survey agreed), and that the safety of voters was adequately provided for by the changes introduced (95%). The new safety measures meant that voting took longer for some people. The combination of polls, where voters had more than one ballot paper to complete, may have also contributed to this: just under four in 10 people who regularly vote in polling stations thought that voting took longer than usual as a result of Covid-19 safety provisions. Half thought that despite the measures, voting took them about the same amount of time as usual. Some voters had to queue outside their polling station before they went to vote. Electoral administrators and polling station staff told us that in most instances people were prepared to queue, and understood that it was because of the additional public safety measures that had been put in place: There were short queues at polling stations all day, staff were more concerned about this than the electors were. "The one in, one out policy in such a small cabin, coupled with three ballot papers all with different criteria which were too complicated for a lot of voters and had to be explained, meant that there were long queues all day. People who didn't want to go to a polling station had options for voting remotely. People who don't want to vote in person at the polling station can apply to cast their vote by post or appoint a proxy. If their situation changes close to an election due to work or disability, people can appoint an emergency proxy up to 5pm on polling day to vote on their behalf. The law was changed ahead of these elections so that anyone who had to self-isolate close to polling day because they had tested positive for Covid-19, or had been in close contact to someone who had tested positive, could also appoint a proxy. Remote voting information Most people knew what other options they had if they didn't want to vote

in a polling station Most people found it easy to find information about how they could cast their vote either in person at a polling station or remotely by post or proxy. Our research showed that: three-quarters of people said that they found it easy to get information about the different methods of voting that they could choose from similar proportions of people who normally vote in polling stations said they found it easy to get information about different methods of voting (76% for elections across England and 80% for London) around a third of first time postal voters told us they chose to vote by post as they didn't want to go to the polling station because of Covid-19 related safety concerns, or because it was convenient a further 30% of first time postal voters across England and 27% in London said they were prompted by information from their local authority informing them they could register for a postal vote. A fifth across England said they saw similar advertising from us, rising to a quarter in London electoral administrators from over three-quarters of local authorities said that they did some form of campaign encouraging residents to apply to vote by post Most people who didn't want to vote in a polling station found it easy to apply to vote by post or appoint a proxy There was a small increase in the proportion of voters choosing to vote by post at these elections, compared with the most recent comparable polls. Percentage of electorate that chose to vote by post County Council 2017 16% 2021 19% Local 2016 17% 2021 21% PCC (England only) 2016 16% 2021 18% London Mayoral 2016 15% 2021 19% Our public opinion research found that there were many new postal voters at these polls with: just under a third of people who voted by post across England said that it was the first time they had voted by post nearly half of people who voted by post in London said they were first time postal voters Most people who voted by post for the first time found it easy to understand how to apply: almost all of these first time postal voters (92%) said they found it easy to understand what to do to complete and return their postal vote application People applying for a proxy also said they found it easy to understand what to do: nearly three-quarters of people who voted by proxy said it was the first time they had done so almost three-quarters of proxy voters across England said they found it easy to understand how to appoint a proxy, although a quarter said they found it difficult to understand what they had to do to complete the application People who needed to isolate because of Covid-19 could appoint a proxy to vote on their behalf The changes to the provision for emergency proxies meant that anyone who had tested positive for Covid-19 or had to self-isolate could still vote in these elections. Across all the elections more than 2,800 voters were able to appoint a proxy to vote on their behalf using these new rules. There was no increase in the overall level of proxy voting despite the new proxy provisions: for the local elections 0.01% of the electorate appointed an emergency proxy to vote on their behalf (including 2,313 voters at the PCC elections, 1,069 county council election voters, and 1,611 voters at other the local elections) for the London Mayoral election 0.02% of the electorate (1,160) people appointed an emergency proxy this was comparable to the percentage of electors (0.02%, or 8,518 people) in England who appointed an emergency proxy at the 2019 UK general election Administrators recognised the benefits of the changes to emergency proxy rules for voters. This change was not announced until late February 2021, and only came into effect six weeks before polling day on 24 March 2021. Some administrators found it difficult to update their plans to reflect the change in time to promote this option to voters. The extension of the emergency proxy provisions in relation to Covid and the updated application form were issued at a late stage which was problematic for planning. Most people who voted by post were confident they knew how to vote without making a

mistake Almost everyone who voted by post said they knew how to complete and return their postal vote. Our research showed that: more than nine out of ten people said it was easy to complete and return their postal vote, compared to 6% across England and 8% in London saying it was difficult first-time voters, people who had voted by post for the first time and those aged 18-34 were more likely to say it was difficult to understand what was needed to complete and return their postal vote compared to other voters the most common reasons for saying it was difficult across England were not being clear which envelope to return the completed ballot(s) in (39%); not being clear what information to provide (30%); and receiving more ballot papers than expected (29%) Despite more people voting by post for the first time we did not see an increase in the number rejected compared to previous elections. Data from electoral administrators shows: 2% of returned postal votes were rejected at the County Council and London mayoral elections 3% of returned postal votes were rejected for the local and PCC elections The most common reasons for postal vote rejection were where personal identifiers (signature/date of birth) didn't not match, which was similar to the last time each of these elections took place. Rejected postal votes by election County Council 2017 2% 2021 2% Local 2016 4% 2021 3% PCC (England only) 2016 4% 2021 3% London Mayoral 2016 4% 2021 2% % of postal votes rejected because of mismatched personal identifiers County Council 2017 52% 2021 48% Local 2016 50% 2021 46% PCC (England only) 2016 47% 2021 44% London Mayoral 2016 66% 2021 63%

Recommendation 1 Recommendation 1: Retain an emergency proxy option for isolating voters Legislation introduced for these elections to allow emergency proxy votes for anyone who tested positive for Covid-19 or had to self-isolate helped to provide a safeguard for anyone whose circumstances changed close to the polls and ensure that they were not prevented from participating. Although the provision was not widely relied upon in practice, it was nevertheless an important safeguard to make sure that no one lost their ability to vote. We recommend that the Government should ensure this option continues to be available if people are required to self-isolate as part of the public health response to Covid-19. Voters in some areas found it harder to complete their ballot papers Around nine in 10 voters said that it was easy to fill in their ballot paper, but some people said that they found it difficult. People who told us it was difficult said it was due to: unclear instructions the ballot paper being complex/confusing confusion caused by voting in multiple elections too many candidates A quarter of people who had difficulties filling in their ballot paper in areas holding both local government and PCC elections said it was confusing that the elections used different voting systems. A third of people voting in London said that they found the two voting systems confusing. The percentage of rejected ballot papers at those elections using the supplementary vote (SV) electoral system in May 2021 was higher than at those elections using first past the post: 0.8% for the local government elections compared to 2.7% for the PCC and 4.3% for Mayor of London. This is consistent with the experience at previous polls. Voters in some areas found it harder to complete their ballot papers: breakdown Rejection rates for Mayor of London ballot papers were higher The number of rejected ballot papers for the Mayor of London election was notably higher than it had been at previous elections or at other elections held using SV in May 2021: in total, 4.3% of first preference votes were rejected, compared with 1.9% in 2016 most of these were rejected because voters had voted for too many candidates (over 87,000 ballot papers, representing 76.4% of all rejected first preference votes) at the PCC elections which also use SV in England in May 2021 the first preference rejection rate was 2.9 % The most significant difference for the May 2021 Mayor of London election was that a new ballot paper

design was used, compared with previous London elections and other elections using the SV system. There was a record number of 20 candidates for the Mayor of London election. The arrangements for electronic counting meant they were required to be a certain size and format to be able to be scanned correctly. This meant that the length of the paper could not be extended to include all the candidates, so for the first time it was split to present candidates across two columns rather than one continuous list.

Recommendation 2

Recommendation 2: Ensure new ballot paper designs are tested before they need to be used by voters Good ballot paper design is essential to help voters understand how to cast their votes without making errors. User testing with the public can help to identify potential usability problems and improve the design of ballot papers. We recommend that the Greater London Returning Officer should test possible alternative design options for ballot papers for future Mayor of London elections, including two-column designs. We stand ready to provide technical support to this work, drawing on our extensive experience of user testing ballot papers and other voter-facing materials.

Campaigning at the elections

The experience of campaigning at the May 2021 elections Changing public health regulations and restrictions during spring 2021 caused uncertainty for campaigners, who had to adapt their plans as official guidance changed before and during the campaign period. Campaigners were able to communicate with voters face-to-face, online and through printed material, even though restrictions remained in place during the campaign. However, people in areas with PCC elections found it less easy to get information about the role of the elected office or the candidates or parties standing for election. Transparency about who is responsible for producing campaign material online remains important for voters, and new digital imprint requirements will help voters understand who is paying to target them online at elections in future. Changes to reduce the number of subscribers required for candidates to be nominated for these elections were well-received by many candidates and electoral administrators. The Government should review whether the range of current subscriber requirements are still proportionate for different elected offices.

overview

There was a record 20 candidates for the Mayor of London election, and 249 candidates stood for election to the London Assembly. This was more than at the last elections in 2016, when there were 12 and 205 candidates respectively. A total of 145 candidates contested the PCC elections in England, less than in 2016 when there were 169 candidates. Campaigners communicated with voters about a complex range of elections held in May 2021, including polls that had been postponed from the previous year. They also adapted their activities in response to public health restrictions because of the pandemic. Some candidates and agents get support from local or regional groups of their political party. This year, these local political party associations supported campaigns across a bigger range of elections than usual. This added a further layer of complexity as associations helped manage a wider range of campaign messages, spending limits and rules than they would normally do in one campaign period. All of this meant it was not straightforward for campaigners to plan and deliver their activities at these elections. The changing public health context caused uncertainty for campaigners Some changes to legislation were made close to the start of the election period but most candidates considered they were well-informed about them The Government made several changes to the law to support those campaigning in the elections: In December 2020, legislation was changed to make inflation-based increases to local council candidate spending limits. The Government argued that the pandemic could mean more emphasis on postal and digital campaigning and that this added to the case for limits to be increased in March 2021, legislation was changed

to reduce the number of signatures required to nominate candidates, in order to reduce the travel and contact involved in completing nomination forms Given the changing context of the pandemic, it was understandably more difficult for the Government to ensure changes to legislation were in place at least six months before campaigners or electoral administrators needed to comply with them. Most candidates who responded to our post-election survey said they felt well-informed about legislative changes before these elections. However, some changes were made very close to when they would affect campaigners, and this added to uncertainty and risk for candidates and electoral administrators. The changes to nominations were announced in mid-February and came into effect on 10 and 11 March, which was less than a month before the deadline for nominations. Some prospective candidates had already started using old nomination forms before the change to the rules, which meant their forms were out of date. After the changes took effect, some electoral administrators told us that they found it challenging to quickly update their plans and prepare nomination packs which reflected the new rules. The main issue on the nomination process was the lateness in the change of legislation, but the change was welcome and did speed up the processing." "The main challenge was the change to the number of people could nominate a candidate. This came incredibly late and meant that we couldn't produce the nomination papers as early as we normally would, it meant that we had to change our candidate and agent training fairly late in the day and the guidance came fairly late. The discussions on what legislative changes there should be came too late and hampered the running of the election. Official guidance on campaigning activities changed during the campaign period People across England were placed under new lockdown restrictions from early January 2021. This meant that campaigners had to adapt their plans for activities to reach voters. They had to comply with general public health restrictions, and the UK Government also published specific guidance on campaigning for elections in England at the end of February: The Government said its guidance meant that up to 8 March, door-to-door campaigning and leafleting by individual campaigners were not allowed under the lockdown regulations, and leafleting was only allowed to be carried out through existing commercial delivery services From 8 March, the Government changed the lockdown regulations to support door to door campaigning activity by people who were campaigning for a specific electoral outcome. This included anyone who had been asked by a candidate, party or campaign organiser to participate. Hustings and public meetings could only take place remotely From 29 March six people, or two households, were able to meet outside to plan or deliver campaign activities, but campaigners were told not to enter voters' homes In April, campaigning was also briefly suspended as a mark of respect following the death of HRH, Duke of Edinburgh. When we conducted in-depth interviews with candidates who stood in the PCC and London elections, the majority of participants said they did not feel well-informed about these changes. While many candidates noted that changes to the restrictions were reasonable and necessary, this added to the complexity and the frustration that they reported. I think it was very difficult to know what was a regulation and what was advice. I don't think they were at all clear. And it didn't help that we were getting, what I certainly perceived as, mixed messages from different parts of the government about what you could and couldn't do [...] In terms of delivering literature. Whether we could put leaflets out with volunteers or whether we had to use paid delivers or whether we couldn't do anything. That was an absolute mess trying to work out what we were meant to do and what we were not meant to do. Some candidates also expressed concerns about the role of the governing party in deciding what campaign activity should be allowed ahead of

the elections, although others considered that the Government would need to have this role during a pandemic. Our guidance to candidates, parties, and non-party campaigners about the regulated period included advice on the spending and donation rules, as well as the reporting rules , following the postponement of the May 2020 elections due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Our guidance also reflected legislative changes made as a result of Covid-19. We also asked parties and candidates for their feedback to better understand their questions and concerns about how spending could be affected by the pandemic, and updated the support on our website in response to this. s were able to engage with voters while following public health regulations and guidance s used a range of digital, print and in-person campaigning to communicate with voters Despite the initial restrictions on in-person campaign activities in early 2021, voters continued to receive information about candidates and parties at the elections from a range of different sources, and in a variety of formats. The most common ways voters reported seeing information on parties and candidates are shown in the following table: England London on a leaflet or flyer, either from a candidate/political party (40%) or another source (23%). On a leaflet or flyer from a candidate/political party (33%) In newspapers (14%) The household booklet about the London Assembly and Mayor of London elections (25%) On their local council website (13%) Newspapers (24%), News websites (10%) Leaflets or flyers from another source (22%) Social media (10%) on a news website (19%) Word of mouth (10%) Younger age groups and first time voters were more likely than older age groups and repeat voters to have seen information about the elections on social media, and less likely to have seen information on a leaflet or flyer from a candidate/political party or another source. Candidates told us that digital campaigning was particularly important during early 2021, when in-person activities were less manageable and they were unsure how voters would react to door-knocking and face-to-face campaigning. PCC candidates were most likely to have said that they used digital campaigning, where the geographical size of police areas made it impractical to deliver leaflets to every voter. However, other candidates told us that relying on social media to campaign restricted opportunities to get their views across to voters. They felt that social media didn't have the same reach as leaflets and that the audience for posts was often limited to those who were already engaged with local politics or who were their supporters. Some candidates said they were not able to campaign effectively Candidates generally agreed that it was clear what campaigning was and was not allowed in line with public health restrictions, although some candidates did not think it was clear. We also saw differences between PCC and London candidates as to whether they felt able to get their views across to voters. Candidates standing in the London elections were more likely to agree that they could get their views across compared to PCC candidates, and the majority of those who responded to our survey said they were satisfied the booklet was an effective way to communicate with voters. In interviews, some PCC candidates said that: the PCC elections were not well publicised and they struggled to reach all voters in the police area, and this meant that some voters didn't know that the elections were happening there should be a London-style household candidate booklet delivered to all households, as well as the existing choosemypcc voter information website Our research with voters also found that people in areas with PCC elections were less likely than people in London to say that they found it easy to get information about the role of the elected office. Almost six in ten people (57%) said it was easy to get information on the role of a PCC, compared to almost eight in ten of people (77%) who said it was easy to get information on the role of Mayor of London. People in PCC areas were also the least likely to say they found it easy to

get information on the candidates or parties standing. People in London were most likely to say this information was easy to find and that they had enough information to make an informed decision. How many people found it easy to get information and had enough information to make an informed decision Found it easy to find information on the role Found it easy to get information about parties / candidates Had enough information to make an informed decision PCC 57% 59% 49% London Mayor 77% 77% 62% London Assembly n/a 74% 62% Local govt. (excl. mayoral) n/a 72% 52% Local govt. (mayoral) n/a 73% 54% Transparency about who is responsible for producing campaign material online remains important for voters The Government has proposed legislation that would require most campaigners to include information to identify themselves as part of their online campaign material in future. This change has also been recommended in our policy reports and by parliamentary select committees. A new digital imprint requirement will help voters understand who is paying to target them online at elections and referendums in future. Our research after the election confirmed that people continue to value transparency about who is responsible for political campaign activity online at elections with: seven in 10 people across England and in London (70% and 72% respectively) agree that it is important for them to know who has produced the political information they see online. This was consistent with our findings after the 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election six in 10 people across England and in London (62% and 60% respectively) said they would trust digital campaigning material more if they knew who produced it Younger voters appear to be more confident that they can scrutinise the trustworthiness of political information they find online with: six in 10 18-34 year olds across England and London (57% and 59% respectively) agreed that information available online about politics is trustworthy, compared with just under half of 35-54 year-olds (43% and 49%) and around a third of people aged over 55 (37% and 34%) The differences in trust across England and London were also reflected in people's confidence in finding the sources of political information online with: similar proportions of 18-34 year olds (60% and 58% respectively) agreed that they can find out who has produced the political information they see online, compared with 35-54 year-olds (44% and 54%) and people aged over 55 (33% and 29%) Processes for submitting nominations prioritised access and safety Changes to nomination processes to minimise public health risks were welcomed and candidates agreed the process was well-run While completed nomination forms were still required to be submitted by hand, electoral administrators made changes to their processes to minimise risks to candidates, agents and their staff: candidate and agent briefings were often held using video conferencing tools informal checking of nomination forms was more frequently offered using email arrangements for safe hand delivery of nomination forms ensuring social distancing measures were in place These new measures were generally welcomed and feedback we received from candidates was that the nomination processes were well-run. Both candidates and electoral administrators noted in their feedback that many of these practical measures should be retained for future elections, regardless of the public health situation. We devised a system where candidates emailed their nomination form to us for an informal check. This worked really well as they were only allowed to deliver them when they were correct, we will definitely be using this system going forward. However, some candidates thought that further improvements could still be made to make the process more accessible, such as by accepting nomination papers electronically, or by allowing electronic signatures to be used on nomination forms. Candidates and administrators had mixed views about changes to subscriber requirements To minimise travel and contact involved in completing

nomination forms, the Government legislated to significantly reduce the number of subscribers required by candidates to stand in the elections. For example, candidates standing to be Mayor of London needed to collect 66 signatures from registered voters instead of 330, while PCC candidates needed to collect the equivalent of two signatures per local authority in the police area instead of 100 in total. Overall, candidates and their agents said that the reduction in the number of subscribers needed made it easier for them to stand as a candidate. Some candidates in London said they would not have been able to stand in the elections without the reduction:

Yes if I had been required to get 100 signatures it would have been a significant challenge under Covid. We faced some challenges with securing nomination signatures in the context of COVID, and whilst it helped to have to get fewer signatures this year it didn't mitigate the difficulties entirely. The process for checking and delivering nomination papers with London Elects was very efficient and well run. Some candidates did however express caution about the precedent the changes may set and keeping the reduced requirement for future elections, because they said that subscribers demonstrate that candidates have a certain level of support before standing: I think it should go back to having more people to be honest, there's a reason why you have a hundred when you've got 1.4 million in your electorate.

Electoral administrators told us that the reduction in subscribers helped them process nominations more efficiently, and they also recognised the benefits for campaigners. However, some expressed reservations about the possibility of retaining the new number of subscribers for future elections: The reduction in the number of subscribers certainly helped me in dealing with nominations and also the candidates who were only required to get a reduced number depending on the election. The nominations process was fine, and the reduction in the number of signatories for principal council elections helped us as well as candidates. That said, I would not favour it permanently as the requirement for ten signatures does in my view strike a balance in the sense of demonstrating a (minimal) level of support for candidature.

Recommendations

Recommendation 3: Review subscriber requirements for nominating candidates

The requirement to collect signatures from subscribers ensures that candidates have some level of local support, and is intended to deter frivolous candidates. The number of subscribers required should be proportionate to the degree of risk relating to different types of elections and elected offices. We recommend that the Government should review whether the range of current subscriber requirements are proportionate for different elected offices, taking into account evidence from this year's polls and conclusions from our Standing for Election review in 2015.

Regulators strengthened collaboration during the election period. For the May 2021 elections, we worked with regulator partners to run an online public awareness campaign and encourage voters to find more information from a new section of our website. The campaign aimed to encourage people to think more carefully about political campaign adverts they see online, and it provided information about which regulators or other organisations they could contact if they had concerns. Evaluation of the campaign showed that over 7.6 million people saw our adverts on websites and social media platforms. The number of people who clicked through to find more information from the adverts was encouraging, and provides a good foundation for further awareness-raising activity at future elections.

A group of representatives from 3 met regularly throughout the election period to share issues. This initiative built on a regulators' forum that we have co-ordinated since 2016. Regular discussions during the campaign period allowed the regulators to develop a greater understanding of their roles in helping to support public confidence in elections. We

will continue to work with other regulators during election periods to strengthen this type of collaboration for future polls. Delivering the elections The experience of electoral administration at the May 2021 elections These polls were well-run, despite the complex range of elections taking place and the significant challenges presented by the pandemic. Returning Officers and electoral administrators faced considerable challenges securing polling station venues, and finding and training staff to work on polling day. Also, although many electoral administrators were satisfied with the support provided by their suppliers, some experienced significant problems. The particular circumstances that led to the development and introduction of legislative changes in February and March 2021 were unprecedented and unavoidable, but the timing of these changes close to the start of the election period created additional challenges and risks for the delivery of the elections. The experience of these polls has again highlighted concerns about the resilience and capacity of electoral administration structures in the UK, which are coupled with the challenges of delivering elections within an outdated and increasingly complex electoral law framework. We will work in partnership with the electoral community, Government and local authorities to develop and deliver proposals to support resilient electoral services for future elections. Delivering the elections introduction Our evidence shows that the May 2021 polls were well-run. Voters and campaigners reported high levels of satisfaction and confidence, and there were only a small number of issues that had an impact on their experience in some areas. Our research shows: 94% of people across England and 92% in London were satisfied with the process of voting three-quarters of people said they were confident that the elections were well-run nine in 10 candidates were confident the elections were well run For Returning Officers and electoral administrators, however, these elections presented unique and difficult challenges, and their considerable effort and commitment enabled the polls to be delivered successfully. The capacity and resilience of electoral administration teams and suppliers are significant risks for future polls The challenging circumstances of these elections highlighted the limited capacity of some local electoral services teams Electoral administrators' ability to plan and deliver their work for these elections was impacted by Covid-19 restrictions in the months leading up to them: 95% said that the Covid-19 restrictions had made their job more difficult, with the same proportion saying that their workload increased because of the Covid-19 restrictions during the elections 63% said that they were concerned for their own health because of Covid-19 Some electoral administrators told us that they weren't able to rely on support from other parts of their local authorities in the way they would normally, and that they had seen a significant impact on the capacity and wellbeing of their teams: Project management was extremely difficult in these circumstances. The usual assistance from others in my council was limited due to them not being in the office or being under similar pressure in their area of the business. Our organisation just did not have the capacity to work in the way we usually do, and more work was left to a stretched elections team." "This election almost failed. Without the extended overtime hours worked by core staff it would have failed. The local authority did not have resources available during a pandemic. Every task took longer and we had to fight all the way to make it happen. Administrators also highlighted the difficulty they had finding suitable venues to use as polling stations. Covid-19 restrictions meant it was harder to contact people to make bookings, and in some venues there were issues with the facilities as they had been shut down for long periods in advance due to lockdowns. Confirming polling station bookings was very difficult as venues had been closed for a year. Many venues were

unsure if opening for an election was legal under lockdown restrictions. Many venues were reluctant to allow us to use social distancing floor and wall signs." "We had to change 40 polling station venues due to Covid, and supply things like water to others – where the premises had been shut and only reopened for our purposes and water supplies were not back on." "We did have issue with polling stations as a result of COVID. We had a number of buildings closed, or staff running sites being furloughed, so unable to make contact to arrange. This resulted overall in 29 new stations being used this year. Complex combinations of polls increased the risk to the successful delivery of the polls in some areas. The elections that were postponed from May 2020 meant that there were complex combinations of polls taking place in some parts of England. In many areas of England PCC elections were held at the same time as elections to County, Borough or District Councils, and parish council elections were also held in some areas. Four different types of elections were held on the same day in Liverpool, Bristol, Cambridge and Hartlepool, including mayoral elections and a Parliamentary by-election. Electoral administrators told us that the scale and extent of combination increased the risks to the successful delivery of the elections: The complexity of the combination of the polls led to errors on ballot papers which would just not occur under usual election conditions. Although these were rectified and did not lead to any greater issues the combination of polls did mean that there was a greater risk of error." "The combination of city and county elections caused the biggest challenge, particularly in relation to postal vote openings and the verification process. We had to design new procedures and systems, which took significant time and while they worked, the human element in implementing them did cause some problems. We were able to resolve them, but it was very labour intensive. In some cases, in delivering the particular combination of polls in May 2021, errors arose which meant that voters didn't receive the service they should be able to expect. For example, one local authority 4 issued postal vote packs without the political party emblems that should have been shown alongside the candidate names on the ballot paper for the local election, an error which has led to them being assessed as not fully meeting the Commission's performance standards. While recognising the pressures faced by Returning Officers and their teams, errors like these directly impact on voters' experience and can affect people's confidence in well-run elections. Finding staff to work on polling day was a key challenge for Returning Officers and electoral administrators. Finding staff to work in polling stations was a challenge for most administrators, although support was provided by the Cabinet Office and other organisations to help address this issue. Many local authorities employed extra staff as 'Covid-19 marshals', to help support social distancing in any queues and to make sure people knew about the restrictions inside polling stations. This meant more staff were needed than usual and our research suggests that a quarter of polling station staff at the May polls had not worked in a polling station before. Additionally: 83% of administrators responding to our survey said that they had difficulties recruiting polling station staff over a quarter of gaps were filled by members of the civil service (29%), while other areas relied on staff from the council, students, the national citizen service and private companies. Staffing was the biggest issue – it was a nightmare. Many of our usual staff simply declined right from the start. This meant finding new staff and having to appoint a couple of POs who had never worked in a polling station before." "Staffing polling stations is always difficult and the older age profile of many of our staff meant that many were not prepared to work this year. Over a third of the staff we eventually used had not done polling duty previously, which was an uncomfortably high

level. Reliance on key suppliers is a critical risk to the delivery of well-run elections. Electoral administrators continue to be dependent on a small marketplace of expert suppliers of electoral management software and specialist election print services. Administrators also faced new challenges identifying reliable suppliers for personal protective equipment. Although many electoral administrators were satisfied with the support provided by their suppliers, others told us that they experienced significant problems: Suppliers had changed their own production techniques because of Covid and there were some issues arising as a result of this. It was also clear that there was overall pressure on the system as a result of the number of complex combination polls across the country." "It was apparent that our print supplier, who had previously had an exemplary record in terms of customer service and accuracy, was under strain and we encountered some quite serious problems which was no doubt caused by the coincidence of the complexity of the polls and the pandemic. We are aware that there were some instances of delays to supplier delivery of materials, with local authorities not receiving the ballot papers they expected and needed on time, and some not being delivered until very close to polling day. As well as introducing additional risk by reducing the time available to deal with any issues with delivered material before the opening of polls, these delays meant that administrators needed to invest significant time and energy in managing these issues at a crucial time in the election timetable, inevitably taking their focus away from other parts of the process. The impact on electors was minimal in that polling stations ultimately had the ballot papers they needed in time on this occasion, but the timing of the despatch of postal vote packs to voters was affected in some areas.

recommendation 4

Recommendation 4: Build resilience and capacity for electoral administration

We have repeatedly highlighted concerns about the resilience and capacity of electoral administration structures in the UK, which are coupled with the challenges of delivering elections within an outdated and increasingly complex electoral law framework. We will work in partnership with the electoral community, the Government and local authorities to develop and deliver proposals to support resilient electoral services for the future. Through the Electoral Advisory and Coordination Board, which includes senior Returning Officers, electoral administration professional bodies and government officials, we will establish a programme of activity to gather evidence about the challenges facing electoral administration teams and identify solutions to address them.

Late confirmation of legislation and interventions made it harder for Returning Officers to plan in some areas. On 8 February 2021 the Minister for the Constitution confirmed the Government's formal position that these elections would go ahead in May. The Cabinet Office delivery plan for the elections was published in early February and included £31 million funding to support Returning Officers to secure venues and staffing and run Covid-19 secure elections. It also highlighted the Government's plans to legislate to extend the availability of proxy voting for people who were required to self-isolate and to simplify nomination requirements for candidates at the May polls. In addition to our usual core suite of guidance and resources to support administrators with the delivery of elections, we worked with public health bodies, the UK Government and the electoral community to develop and publish supplementary guidance to support the delivery of Covid-19 safe elections. The guidance was issued on a rolling basis from September 2020 and was informed by both the requirements of administrators and the latest expert advice from public health bodies. It was kept under review throughout the election period, and was updated to reflect the legislative changes to the nominations and proxy voting process as a result of Covid-19. Many electoral administrators said that they found

that uncertainty about the elections made it difficult for them to plan effectively. Just under nine in 10 administrators (88%) who responded to our survey after the elections said that they felt the initial uncertainty about whether the elections would go ahead made it difficult for them to plan. Waiting for legislation to be laid/enacted and then for corresponding guidance/documentation delayed plans and procedures being put in place to deal with those changes. This caused additional stress and uncertainty and added to an already heavy workload. The particular circumstances that led to the development and introduction of changes to electoral law ahead of the May 2021 polls were unprecedented and unavoidable. However, the timing of these changes created additional challenges and risks for the delivery of the elections. It affected when Electoral Commission guidance and resources to support the delivery of the polls, such as amended nomination forms, could be provided, and when electoral administrators could implement them. Issues with the use of schools as polling stations. Communications about the use of schools as polling stations in England caused significant problems for some electoral administrators. Administrators also highlighted significant problems caused by a letter from the Department of Education to Returning Officers and Head Teachers across England on 11 February 2021, asking for schools not to be used as polling stations at the May polls where possible. As a result, some schools went on to change their agreements or withdraw their consent to the use of schools as polling stations. This was just at the point that election teams were finalising polling station locations and printing poll cards, leaving some Returning Officers under pressure to find available and suitable venues at short notice. Administrators told us that this took their focus away from other parts of the process, impacting on their preparations for the polls more generally and further challenging capacity and resilience. The timing and content of the Minister's letter in relation to the use of schools as polling stations was very unhelpful as our polling stations were already booked and we were already working on producing poll cards. We did manage to move away from two schools but this created a lot of extra work for the team who were already under pressure. It would be helpful for such matters to be decided and communicated earlier in future."

"The DFE letter to schools in February was extremely unhelpful and we need clarity and consistency from Government about the use of schools as every year it gets more difficult. It is also frustrating that the process for designating venues in accordance with legislation requiring statutory polling district reviews can be undermined and overruled by government interventions such as these. Election teams updated count processes to support social distancing while maintaining transparency. In providing their feedback on the elections, electoral administrators told us about the challenges they faced in setting up and managing counts: 46% of administrators responding to our survey said they had difficulties recruiting count staff for the May 2021 elections. 42% either strongly agreed or agreed that the Covid-19 restrictions made it difficult for candidates and agents to observe at the count. We had to move count venues due to our current venue being used as a Vaccination Centre – that came with challenges to ensure the new venue met all the requirements. We had to operate two count venues to enable social distancing which made the count organisation massively more complicated and added to our workloads. Having to use less count staff in order to facilitate social distancing made the count process take much longer than normal. Given the need to comply with regulations and guidelines about social distancing that were in place in May 2021, Returning Officers and electoral administrators needed to adapt their plans and processes to maintain transparency at count venues. Changes included introducing Perspex screens in front

of count tables, agreeing with agents to limit the number of people attending the count, or providing video feeds of the count and adjudication processes for agents and observers to view away from the count tables. The adjudication of doubtful ballot papers was challenging due to the COVID restrictions. It was difficult to observe social distancing between the Returning Officer and agents whilst still allowing agents to see the ballot papers. Most candidates said they were confident that the elections were well run and content with the efficiency of the count and verification processes. However, some candidates were less satisfied with their ability to observe and scrutinise the count. We became aware of issues at three counts where errors were made which has led us to conclude that the Returning Officers 5 did not fully meet our performance standards: An error was discovered during the count for a directly-elected mayoral election. When counting second preference votes it was discovered that the votes of two candidates with the same surname and first initial had been reported the wrong way round at the end of the first count. This meant one candidate was recorded as having fewer votes than they had actually received and vice versa. The issue was identified prior to the result declaration, and it did not impact the final result. The second error was that the votes for two candidates in one ward were mixed up. This meant one candidate was recorded as receiving more votes than they had actually received and another less. The issue had no impact on the overall result. The third error also involved the mix up of results for two candidates, however in this case the error resulted in the incorrect candidate being declared as the winner. There has been a successful election petition in this case. While recognising the pressures faced by Returning Officers and their teams and the challenging circumstance of the combination of elections and changes to count arrangements due to Covid-19, it is important that voters, candidates and political parties can have confidence in the accuracy of election counting processes and results. Supporting Evidence Supporting Evidence England Public Opinion 2021 Full Tables Local and County Election administrative data May 2021 Police and Crime Commissioners electoral administrative data May 2021 London Mayoral Election Public Opinion Tables May 2021 London Mayoral Electoral Administrative data 1. In this report data presented for England excludes London but covers all other areas in England with PCC, local or mayoral elections ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. Although ‘illness’ was given as a reason by 9% of non-voters we cannot be sure what proportion of this related to Covid-19. Illness or medical reasons is also often given as a reason for not voting (6% of non-voters after the 2019 UK general election gave this reason). ■ Back to content at footnote 2 3. The regulator sub-group was attended by the Advertising Standards Authority, Electoral Commission, Equality and Human Rights Commission, Information Commissioner’s Office, Ofcom, UK Statistics Authority and Office for Statistics Regulation. ■ Back to content at footnote 3 4. Gosport Council ■ Back to content at footnote 4 5. Durham County Council, South Gloucestershire Council and Oxfordshire County Council ■ Back to content at footnote 5 Related content Report on the May 2021 elections in Wales Read our report about how the 2021 elections in Wales were run Report on the May 2022 local elections in England Read our report on the May 2022 local elections in England Report on the May 2022 elections in Wales Read our report on the May 2022 elections in Wales. Report on the May 2022 Scottish council elections Read our report on the May 2022 Scottish council elections.

Objectives for well-run elections in the current public health context | Electoral Commission Search Objectives for well-run elections in the current public health context You are in the Upcoming elections section Home Upcoming elections On this page Voters Candidates and campaigners Electoral administrators First published: 14 October 2020 Last updated: 17 February 2022 2021 elections Elections held in the coming months, including the important sets of polls scheduled for May 2021, are likely to be delivered against the backdrop of evolving public health restrictions. These will present complex new challenges for all involved in the electoral process.

Objectives

We have worked with and consulted electoral administrators, political parties and governments across Great Britain to identify a shared set of high-level objectives for delivering successful elections in the current public health environment. We encourage all those involved in supporting and delivering the elections to use these objectives: to assess and test policy options and implementation approaches to identify and manage significant risks to successful delivery of the elections to inform research, analysis and reporting on the polls.

Objectives for successful elections in the current public health context

Voters

should be able to participate in the polls safely and confidently, and

Campaigners and parties should be able to put their case to the electorate.

Voter objectives

Voters There should be reasonable voting options available to all electors that minimise the risk of transmission of the virus to them, or transmission by them to others. This should ideally include realistic voting options for people whose circumstances change at short notice close to polling day (for example, because of local lockdown requirements, or isolation by people or households with symptoms). This should also ensure that voters who may be especially vulnerable to the virus have opportunities to vote in a way which reduces the risk to their health. Within and across areas holding the same type of election, voters should be entitled to access the same voting methods and information regardless of where they live. Voters with disabilities should still be able to access the level of support they need and are currently entitled to receive in order to be able to vote with confidence. Voters should have clear and comprehensive information in advance about the options available, to help them plan how to vote safely. Applying to vote remotely (by post or by appointing a proxy) should be simple and accessible for all electors. Voters should have clear, accessible and comprehensive information to help them understand how to vote using their chosen method, particularly for those who are voting using that method for the first time.

Candidates and campaigner objectives in detail

Candidates and campaigners should have clarity about how the elections will be run and regulated, sufficiently far in advance of polling day and any regulated campaign periods to be able to put in place appropriate plans. Those who wish to stand for election should have access to reasonable options for completing and submitting the necessary nomination papers that minimise the risk of transmission of the virus to or by them. It should be possible for campaigners to put their arguments and give information to voters during the period before polling day in ways that minimise the risk of transmission of the virus to or by them.

Candidates, agents and parties should have a widespread understanding and acceptance of any changes to the administrative process necessitated by the public health situation.

Electoral administrator objectives in detail

Electoral administrators EROs and ROs should have clarity about how the elections should be run, sufficiently far in advance of polling day to be able to put in place appropriate plans. Election processes should be practically manageable and deliverable by EROs, ROs, electoral administrators and their suppliers, and appropriately resourced – particularly for any new or changed

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

Report: Regulation of campaigners at the independence referendum held on 18 September 2014 | Electoral Commission Search Report: Regulation of campaigners at the independence referendum held on 18 September 2014 You are in the Scottish Independence referendum section Home Scottish Independence referendum On this page About this report Funding the campaigns and campaign spending Casework and investigations Lessons for future referendums Recommendations Download our full report First published: 20 June 2019 Last updated: 6 August 2019 About this report On 18 September 2014, the people of Scotland voted in a referendum on whether Scotland should be an independent country (the independence referendum). In the months leading up to the day of poll, Scotland was energised by the debate and the voters engaged in the discussion around the referendum question. The question asked, to which voters were required to vote either yes or no, was: 'Should Scotland be an independent country?' This is the Electoral Commission's second report to the Scottish Parliament and fulfils our statutory duty to report to the Parliament, under the provisions of the Scottish Independence Referendum Act 2013 (SIRA), on the use of our investigatory powers and civil sanctions. This report also analyses the funding and spending of those people and organisations that registered to campaign at the independence referendum. Where appropriate, we make recommendations for the future based on the information campaigners were required to submit in their post-referendum returns. The recommendations are intended to inform the regulation of future referendums, not only in Scotland, but elsewhere in the UK. For further background and information on the wider context of the referendum on independence for Scotland, this report should be read in conjunction with our report published in December 2014 on the conduct of the referendum.

2 Funding the campaigns and campaign spending After the independence referendum, registered campaigners were required to submit a campaign spending return to us. The returns included details of the spending that the campaigners incurred campaigning at the referendum and all donations and loans they accepted over £7,500. 3 s were also required to provide a total figure of the donations and loans they received over £500 but below £7,500. Anything with a value of £500 or less was not counted as a donation or loan for the purposes of the referendum rules. In summary: 42 campaigners registered during that period, 21 indicating they supported the yes outcome to the question asked, 21 supporting the no side. Registered campaigners reported spending a total of £6,664,980 campaigning at the independence referendum and reported having received donations and loans totalling £7,318,545. Out of total reported spending of nearly £7 million, there was a difference of just over £400,000 in total campaign spending by registered campaigners on each of the two sides of the debate. In total, all those registered to campaign on each side of the debate reported spending over 70% of their total combined individual limits. Both designated lead campaigners reported spending almost exactly the same amounts campaigning at the independence referendum: Better Together reported spending £1,422,602; and Yes Scotland reported spending £1,420,800. Overall, political parties also reported spending relatively similar combined amounts in support of the two outcomes (around £1.3m), despite their different individual spending limits. Out of total reported donations of over £7 million, the donations to those that registered to campaign for the 'No' outcome amount to £4,327,677 and for the 'Yes' outcome to £2,990,868; 59% and 41% of total reported donations respectively. Both the UK and Scottish Governments also published information, including distributing public awareness booklets to all households in Scotland, in the lead up to the referendum. We commented on the activities of the governments and made recommendations for future referendums in our report published in December 2014

4 Casework and investigations We

aim to regulate in a way that is effective, proportionate and fair, in line with the principles of good regulation. Wherever possible, we use advice and guidance proactively for campaigners in order to secure compliance. We will however take enforcement action where it is necessary and proportionate to do so. SIRA gave the Electoral Commission the role of monitoring and taking steps to ensure compliance with the referendum campaign rules. To enable us to undertake that role, we had access to investigatory and sanctioning powers. We applied our usual, established casework procedures for casework in Scotland at the independence referendum - where there was evidence or information substantiating a potential breach of SIRA, we considered whether it was in the public interest to investigate, taking into account the potential impact of the breach on confidence in the referendum rules, the cost of investigating relative to the impact of the breach, and any other relevant considerations. We consulted with the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) in each case to establish whether they would take responsibility for investigating possible criminal offences or if they declined jurisdiction preferring for the Commission to investigate and impose sanctions in connection with referendum offences. Our powers under SIRA enabled us to effectively investigate matters. We have been able to obtain voluntary cooperation in obtaining information. We imposed one discretionary requirement, a variable monetary penalty of £500, on the Communication Workers Union for spending more than the registration threshold of £10,000 before registering with us as a campaigner. No fixed monetary penalties, or stop notices were issued, and no enforcement undertakings were offered or accepted. The existence of our stop notice power however, and our ability to indicate it would be used if voluntary compliance could not be achieved, was an important tool for us. Lessons for future referendums SIRA contained a number of rules drawn from those that applied at the 2011 referendums on increased powers for the National Assembly for Wales and the UK-wide referendum on UK Parliamentary Voting Systems (UKPVS). These rules clarified aspects of the regulatory controls, reduced burdens on those that wished to campaign, and ensured that voters had access to information to enable them to make an informed decision when they vote. Overall, the regulatory controls that applied at the independence referendum worked well and improved on the rules from previous referendums. We made a number of recommendations intended to improve the regulation and reduce the burdens on those that wish to campaign at future referendums in our first report published in December 2014. There are, however, further lessons that can be learnt from the information campaigners were required to submit in their post-referendum returns to further refine the legal framework in relation to: regulating campaigners that work together regulating loans reporting low-level spending reporting pre-registration spending late claims and payments, and the ability of campaigners to check the permissibility of donations and loans.

Recommendations The recommendation list continues from those we made in our previous report published in December 2014. All the recommendations in this report are intended to apply at future referendums, not only in Scotland but also those held across or in other parts of the UK. Recommendation 24: Regulating campaigners that work together The legislation for future referendums should include 'working together' provisions that enable campaigners to work together to promote a coordinated message to voters, but ensure there are appropriate and proportionate regulatory requirements to prevent evasion of the spending controls. The provisions should: be based on the working together rules that applied at the Scottish independence referendum in 2014, and require campaigners to set out information in their post-referendum return about the other campaigners they worked with and the

total amounts they each spent. This is information that campaigners should each already be compiling to ensure compliance with the rules and for inclusion in their own return. If the legislation for a future referendum includes a framework which allows for designating a lead body on one side only, it will be important that relevant governments consider the implications for the rules on how campaigners can work together alongside the overall package of benefits available to a sole designated lead campaigner. Recommendation 25: Regulating loans For future referendums not held under the PPERA framework, relevant governments should ensure that appropriate controls on loans to referendum campaigners, including credit facilities and guarantees, apply. We also recommend that the UK Government should bring forward the relevant secondary legislation to introduce loan controls for referendum campaigners at all future referendums held under the PPERA framework, as soon as practicable. Recommendation 26: Reporting low-level spending The legislation for future referendums should ensure that registered campaigners that spend less than the relevant registration threshold should only be required to submit a declaration that they have not exceeded that threshold, rather than complete a full spending return. Recommendation 27: Reporting pre-registration spending The legislation for future referendums should ensure that those registered campaigners that are required to submit a full spending return should include itemised information for all regulated expenditure, including spending that is incurred before a campaigner registers with us. Recommendation 28: Late claims and payments The legislation for future referendums should include improved controls for when campaigner invoices must be received and paid. It should provide that: the requirement to receive all invoices within 30 days and pay them within 60 days of polling day should only apply to amounts over £200 the responsibility for granting permission to pay invoices outside these deadlines should rest with the Commission where leave to pay is granted, the Commission should also have the ability to sanction the late receipt or payment of the claim in order to encourage compliance, but the Commission-based process should not apply to disputed claims as it would not be appropriate for the Commission to become involved in disputes over commercial transactions. Recommendation 29: Checking the permissibility of donations and loans The legislation for future referendums should ensure that campaigners are easily able to comply with the requirement to only accept donations and loans from permissible sources. Download our full report Scottish Independence Referendum report on the regulation of campaigners 2. Scottish Independence Referendum Report on the referendum held on 18 September 2014 December 2014 http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/179812/Scottishindependence-referendum-report.pdf ■ Back to content at footnote 2 3. s that are registered political parties are not required to report donations or loans during or after the independence referendum. Political parties report any donations or loans made to their campaign in their usual quarterly reports. ■ Back to content at footnote 3 4. Report on the referendum held on 18 September 2014 December 2014, paragraphs 5.146- 5.161, recommendation 15 http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/179812/Scottishindependence-referendum-report.pdf ■ Back to content at footnote 4 Related content Report: Scottish Independence Referendum Read our report about the Scottish Independence Referendum Our advice on the proposed Scottish independence referendum question Read our advice on the proposed Scottish independence referendum question Donations and loans reported by campaigners at the Scottish referendum View donations and loans reported by campaigners at the Scottish referendum Campaign spending at the Scottish referendum View data about campaign spending at the Scottish independence referendum

2. The Electoral Commission | Electoral Commission Search 2.
The Electoral Commission You are in the Corporate plan 2022/23 to 2026/27
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Key factors which guide and shape the work of the Electoral Commission Our purpose
Our strategic objectives Underpinning this work First published: 25 April 2022 Last
updated: 25 April 2022 Table summary The table below summarises the key factors which
guide and shape the work of the Electoral Commission. Key factors which guide and
shape the work of the Electoral Commission Vision People trust, value and take part
in elections Purpose We work to promote public confidence in the electoral system
and ensure its integrity. Key benefits Increased trust Increased value Increased
participation Strategic objectives Objectives: accessible registration and voting
transparent political campaigning and compliant political finance Resilient local
electoral services Fair and effective electoral law A modern and sustainable
electoral system Three key factors will help us achieve our objectives: we
demonstrate independence and integrity we are a skilled organisation where diversity
is valued we are a learning organisation where improvement is continuous and
resources are used effectively Values Engaged Authoritative Making an impact
Transparent Independent Our purpose We work to promote public confidence in the
electoral system and ensure its integrity. Our strategic objectives Our five
strategic objectives for the period April 2022 to March 2027 are: 1. Accessible
registration and voting Free and fair elections depend on all people who are eligible
and want to vote being able to do so. We will work to ensure: increased levels of
voter registration, especially amongst groups that currently have difficulty engaging
in the process the removal of barriers, especially those that affect people who
currently have difficulty trying to cast their vote We will achieve these outcomes by
working collaboratively with policy makers and other partners to identify barriers to
participation and propose solutions. We will directly support people who have
difficulty engaging in the process, with tailored accessible information and learning
resources, and targeted public awareness activity. We outline our plans to support
accessible registration and voting in Section 3 of this Corporate Plan. 2.
Transparent political campaigning and compliant political finance Parties and other
campaigners should be able to campaign without facing undue actual or perceived
barriers, while we continue to ensure political finance is transparent. This will
support voters to hear a range of campaign voices to help them take decisions when
voting. We will work to ensure: increased levels of confidence shown by candidates,
parties and other campaigners in their ability to understand, apply and comply with
the law on campaigning and political finance high levels of compliance with
registration, reporting and other political finance laws We will achieve these aims
by maintaining the official registers for parties and campaigners, and ensuring
political finance data is accessible, transparent and complete. We will provide
guidance and support for all types of campaigners and make regulatory decisions which
command the confidence of candidates, parties, campaigners, and voters. We outline
our plans for transparent political campaigning and compliant political finance in
Section 4 of this Corporate Plan. 3. Resilient local electoral services Local
electoral services need to be able to respond to increasingly challenging economic,
social and environmental pressures. We will support local authorities and electoral
administrators to deliver effective, sustainable and resilient electoral services,
ensuring that voters receive the service they should be able to expect. We will work
to ensure: sustained and consistent high performance in the delivery of well-run
elections increased levels of confidence shown by electoral administrators in the

resilience of the electoral system We will achieve these aims by setting challenging standards for electoral administrators, and providing guidance and support to ensure they are met. We will work collaboratively with local authorities, national bodies, governments and parliaments to build resilience into the electoral system. We outline our plans to ensure resilient local electoral services in Section 5 of this Corporate Plan.

4. Fair and effective electoral law It is essential for the electoral system that the laws which underpin it are fair, effective and well understood. Electoral law must also keep pace with other developments in our society, harnessing technology and working on a continual process of modernisation. We will work to: support governments and parliaments to reform electoral law to make it less complex reduce the risks and inefficiencies associated with electoral law which impact our electoral system We will achieve this aim by continuing to research and understand how electoral law could be reformed to help voters, campaigners, electoral administrators, and other organisations. We will also continue to provide expert advice on the practicability and impact of any changes to improve the electoral system. We outline our plans to work towards fair and effective electoral law in Section 6 of this Corporate Plan.

5. A modern and sustainable electoral system The electoral system needs to be resilient to the challenges that lie in and beyond the period of this plan. It needs to modernise to maintain and improve value for money, transparency, trust and compliance. And, it needs to reduce its environmental impact to be sustainable. We will work to ensure: data and technology are harnessed to meet the needs of voters, campaigners and electoral administrators the changing risks to the election system from the misuse of data and technology are understood and acted upon strong relationships and streamlined working practices with all bodies that are part of the electoral system are developed governments and the wider electoral community are supported to adopt a strategy and implementation plan which reduces the environmental impact of our electoral system We will achieve these aims by working with others to explore and implement new ways to use data and technology across the electoral system. We will also continue to monitor, advise and act on the misuse of data and technology. We will develop a strategy and implementation plan which reduces the environmental impact of the electoral system, to include innovative evidence-based solutions. We outline our plans to work towards a modern and sustainable electoral system in Section 7 of this Corporate Plan. We also outline our plans to make our organisation carbon neutral, consistent with governments' targets, in Section 8.

Underpinning this work Three key factors will make a difference to how we achieve these strategic objectives:

1. We demonstrate independence and integrity To fulfil its duties, it is essential that an electoral commission remains independent from governments, and acts impartially and with integrity. We will continue to demonstrate how we fulfil this by: taking decisions on the evidence and being transparent about the reasons for them basing our policy positions and recommendations on analysis of evidence effectively communicating our work and views providing responsive services to those we support maintaining effective governance arrangements
2. We are a skilled organisation where diversity is valued We work hard to ensure our people feel part of a diverse, inclusive and supportive workplace. In the next five years we will: implement refreshed working practices to reflect wider changes in our work environment and culture attract, retain and develop the people we need maintain and improve high standards of management, with a focus on developing our people further embed equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of our work
3. We are a learning organisation where improvement is continuous and resources are used efficiently We are committed to utilising technology, funding, time and

resources to deliver maximum value. We will invest in our systems and in reducing our environmental impact. In the next five years we will: procure and implement value for money technology that improves service delivery as appropriate maintain a sound prudent financial strategy continue to develop techniques to learn from experience, seek continuous improvement and become more efficient and effective develop a corporate environmental strategy that meets policy and legislative requirements

Navigation 1. The electoral system Section 1 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan

3. Putting voters first Section 3 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan

Report of investigation into the Conservative and Unionist Party - recording and reporting of payments | Electoral Commission Search Report

of investigation into the Conservative and Unionist Party - recording and reporting of payments You are in the Investigations section Home Investigations On this page Summary of report The investigation Our findings First published: 9 December 2021 Last updated: 9 December 2021 Summary of report Our investigation looked at whether any transactions relating to works at 11 Downing Street fell within the party finance regime regulated by the Commission and whether any such transactions were recorded and reported as required. The evidence showed that the Conservative Party received a donation of £67,801.72 from Huntswood Associates Limited in October 2020 – £52,801.72 of which was to cover the cost of three invoices relating to the refurbishment of Downing Street. £15,000 was reported as a donation in the party's Q4 2020 donation report; the remaining £52,801.72 was not. Our investigation concluded that the full amount of the £67,801.72 was a donation and should have been reported to the Commission. We also concluded that the reference to the payment made by the party for the refurbishment in the party's financial records was not accurately recorded. The investigation found that decisions relating to the handling and recording of these transactions reflected serious failings in the party's compliance systems. The registered treasurer had a responsibility to put in place systems appropriate to a party with a complex internal infrastructure and substantial sums of money coming into its accounts. However, in this instance, the payment was incorrectly described in internal records and the full value of the donation was not correctly identified and reported. Consequently, it was not included in our donation publication. The Commission considered other payments relating to the refurbishment works; they were not judged to be reportable donations, and so we found no offences in relation to those payments. For the offence of failing to accurately report the full value of the donation from Huntswood Associates, the Commission has imposed a penalty of £16,250. For contravening the requirement to keep proper accounting records, a penalty of £1,550 has been imposed. The investigation Opening of the investigation On 5 March 2021, the Conservative and Unionist Party ("the party") contacted the Commission seeking advice on an "urgent query relating to donations". This followed reports in the media about the funding arrangements for works at 11 Downing Street. The party did not initially provide detailed information. During March we sought and obtained further information from the party to establish the facts in order to provide advice. The information related to a specific amount, a payment of £52,801.72, made to the party on 19 October 2020. Throughout, the party said that this payment was not a donation to the party. It described it variously as a donation to the Prime Minister via the party; as a 'gift to the nation' rather than a donation to the party; as a ministerial matter; and as the repayment of a loan. On 29 March we informed the party that, based on the information it had provided to that point, we considered it had likely received a donation that had not been reported to us as required by law. The party then provided additional information to seek to support the position that the sum was the repayment of a loan and not a donation. However, the information provided was not in our view sufficient to support this position, and did not change our analysis of the evidence we had seen at that point. We reached the view on 28 April that there were reasonable grounds to suspect that an offence had been committed, on the basis that a donation had been accepted and not correctly reported. We also considered it in the public interest that we investigate the matter. We therefore opened an investigation. Scope of the investigation Under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA), regulated by the

Commission, registered political parties must identify and report donations they receive above a certain financial threshold. Reports must be made on a quarterly basis and delivered to the Commission within 30 days of the quarter's end, for publication. Our investigation concerned whether the £52,801.72, or any other transactions relating to the works at 11 Downing Street, fell within the political finance regime regulated by the Commission and, if so, whether the party complied with the legal requirements of that regime. The sum of £52,801.72 was part of a total sum of £67,801.72 paid to the party on 19 October 2020 by Huntswood Associates Ltd, a company controlled by Lord Brownlow, who has made a number of donations to the party in the past. The party reported £15,000 as a donation in its report for the fourth quarter of 2020. The balance was not reported. We expanded the investigation, on the basis of the information obtained during it, to consider whether the party had correctly recorded other transactions as per the requirements of the political finance regime. The registered treasurer of a party, in this case Mr Alan Mabbett, is the person legally responsible for compliance with the donation reporting regime for registered parties. As the subject of our investigation, he is identified by name in this report. Other officials referenced in this report are not named, but roles and areas of responsibility have been explained where relevant to our findings. Huntswood Associates Limited is named as it is identifiable as the donor, and Lord Brownlow as the person with sole control of that company. About donations A donation to a party is defined in PPERA as a gift of money or other property with a value of over £500. When parties receive a donation, they must check that they can accept it, record it, and report it to us if the value is over £7,500. The investigation (continued)

Engagement with the party and others We served a legal notice on the party requiring it to provide evidence to the investigation. We also served notices on Cabinet Office and Lord Brownlow (as the sole person with significant control of Huntswood Associates), as we believed that both held further relevant evidence. The notices required recipients to provide all information held relating to the financial arrangements and transactions for the funding of the works at 11 Downing Street. The scope of the notices was wide to ensure that any transactions involving the party, directly or indirectly, were covered. The material provided was analysed to determine what was relevant to the investigation, and only relevant evidence is referenced in this report. We received over 2,400 pages of evidence in response to the notices by the deadline we set. This included financial records such as invoices, bank statements, credit card bills, and communications including letters, emails, meeting minutes and WhatsApp messages. We subsequently sought explanations from the party in relation to aspects of the evidence, including any possible reasonable excuse for the apparent failure to correctly report a donation. We offered the registered treasurer the opportunity to discuss matters in person, though this was not taken up. The party requested and was granted extensions to some deadlines. Outline of the transactions In order to establish whether or not an offence had been committed, we needed to establish whether the party had accepted any donations which had not been reported as required by law. We therefore examined the series of transactions which occurred in relation to the works in Downing Street. We understand that costs for works to the private residence at 11 Downing Street are met by the Cabinet Office up to a sum of £30,000 per annum. On the basis of the evidence we obtained, we established the following sequence of events took place. 21 January 2020: the supplier of the refurbishment work provided to a senior adviser at 10 Downing Street a detailed proposal for works to the residential areas of 11 Downing Street. February 2020: officials from the Cabinet Office and 10 Downing Street considered options for how

these works could be funded, beyond or instead of the £30,000 annual public grant already available. The option settled on was for a trust to be set up using anonymous donations. 1 May 2020: Lord Brownlow was approached by a senior party official to lead the process of establishing a trust, subsequently known as the Downing Street Trust, and, once it was established, to be its Chair. Lord Brownlow agreed and met with Cabinet Office officials to begin the process. 11 and 12 June 2020: the senior party official, the senior adviser at 10 Downing Street, and Lord Brownlow spoke by telephone about work already being undertaken at 11 Downing Street and the bills arising from this. They agreed an arrangement that was then relayed to and agreed with Cabinet Office officials by email on 22 and 23 June 2020. The supplier would be told to send the outstanding invoices to Cabinet Office, which would pay them and be subsequently reimbursed by the party, on the basis that the party would then be refunded by the proposed trust once that was set up. 23 June 2020: the Prime Minister formally offered Lord Brownlow the role of Chair of the Downing Street Trust. 24 June 2020: the supplier sent Cabinet Office three invoices totalling £52,801.72. One of those invoices, for a deposit on items of furniture, indicated that a further invoice would follow for the balance. 29 June and 2 July 2020: Cabinet Office paid the three invoices on the basis of the arrangement that the party would then refund it. July 2020 onwards: a series of meetings and discussions took place involving Lord Brownlow and Cabinet Office officials, to progress work on the proposed trust. 20 July 2020: Cabinet Office invoiced the party for £52,801.72. 6 August 2020: the party made a payment of £52,801.72 to Cabinet Office. September 2020: Cabinet Office received a further invoice from the supplier for £12,967.20, for the balance referred to in the earlier invoice of 24 June. Cabinet Office forwarded this to Lord Brownlow, who then forwarded the invoice to the senior party official. There was then further correspondence between the senior party official, the senior advisor at No 10 Downing Street and Lord Brownlow regarding who would pay this invoice. 24 September 2020: at a meeting of the group working on setting up the Downing Street Trust, including Cabinet Office and No 10 Downing Street officials and Lord Brownlow, it was resolved that no more works were to be commissioned for the residence without prior authorisation by Lord Brownlow. 13 October 2020: Lord Brownlow emailed the senior party official, asking: "...could you advise me of the total that The Conservative Party has 'leant' The Downing Street Trust? I will then make a donation to The Party to clear the 'debt.'" A party finance officer advised Lord Brownlow that "£52,801.72 was processed on behalf of the Trust". 19 October 2020: Huntswood Associates, a company solely controlled by Lord Brownlow, paid the party £67,801.72. Lord Brownlow stated in his email notifying the party of the payment: "I will be making a donation to The Party today for £67,801.72. That includes the £15,000 you and I have agreed and £52,801.72 to cover payments The Party has made on behalf of the soon to be formed 'Downing Street Trust' of which I am Chairman." On the same day Lord Brownlow also paid £12,967.20 direct to the supplier for the invoice received in September. 19 October 2020: the party's finance team received the £67,801.72 and notified a range of party officers of this by email, including compliance staff under Mr Mabbutt and a senior officer in the fundraising team. £15,000 was identified as a donation. The balance was described as being for the "No10 fund" and by a senior finance officer as "funds for reimbursement". 22 October 2020: at a meeting with Cabinet Office officials relating to the proposed trust, Lord Brownlow confirmed that he had made the payment of £52,801.72 to the party and had paid the invoice for £12,967.20 directly to the supplier. 26 October 2020: in the course of an email chain relating to the payment of £67,801.72, a junior member of staff in the treasurer's department

of the party asked about the nature of the remaining £52,801.72 received from Huntswood Associates. They were told by a senior fundraising officer of the party that the £15,000 related to “events” and the balance was for “something else” and “don’t worry”. 29 November 2020: the Prime Minister messaged Lord Brownlow via WhatsApp asking him to authorise further, at that stage unspecified, refurbishment works on the residence. Lord Brownlow agreed to do so, and also explained that the proposed trust had not yet been set up but that he knew where the funding was coming from. 30 November 2020: Lord Brownlow confirmed to the senior party official his intention to cover the further refurbishment costs personally. December 2020: Lord Brownlow discussed further proposed works with the supplier, approved the work, and requested invoices. 6 December 2020: Lord Brownlow confirmed to the Prime Minister that he had approved further works. 18 December 2020: Lord Brownlow paid £33,484.80 to the supplier. Cabinet Office officials were informed of the payment by Lord Brownlow at a meeting regarding the proposed trust on 21 January 2021. 12 February 2021: Lord Brownlow paid a further £13,295.40 to the supplier. He sent a detailed update on the proposed trust to the Prime Minister. This brought the total sum paid by Lord Brownlow and Huntswood Associates combined to £112,549.12. £59,747.40 of this was paid directly to the supplier by Lord Brownlow and £52,801.72 was paid to the party by Huntswood Associates. 9 March 2021: a senior Cabinet Office official stated in an internal email that the Prime Minister has confirmed he has now paid all bills with the supplier personally. On that basis, the supplier was now £112,549.12 overpaid. Following discussion and agreement between Cabinet Office, 10 Downing Street, the party and Lord Brownlow, between 9 and 23 March 2021: the supplier paid Lord Brownlow £112,549.12, of which Lord Brownlow returned £52,801.72 to the supplier the supplier then paid £52,801.72 to Cabinet Office, the sum Cabinet Office had originally paid to the supplier Cabinet Office then paid the party £52,801.72, the sum the party had paid Cabinet Office originally the party paid £52,801.72 to Huntswood Associates The net effect was that Lord Brownlow, Huntswood Associates, Cabinet Office and the party had been repaid. Any payments between the Prime Minister and the supplier are outside the scope of our investigation. Our findings

Determination relating to the payment of £52,801.72 being a donation

The Commission is satisfied that the full amount of the payment of £67,801.72 by Huntswood Associates to the party on 19 October 2020 constituted a donation under electoral law. A donation is defined in the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) as “any gift to the party of money or other property”. ‘Gift’ has its usual common usage; that the giving is voluntary, without receiving anything of value in return and without enforceable conditions attached. The payment of £52,801.72 made by Huntswood Associates to the party meets this definition. The evidence includes multiple instances where, at the time, Lord Brownlow, as Director of Huntswood Associates, described the payment as a donation. The payment was reimbursing the party for money it had paid to Cabinet Office. He explicitly stated that the donation was to ensure the Downing Street Trust, when created, would not have a debt to the party to settle. The payment was made voluntarily, without receiving anything of value in return, and without conditions attached. It was a gift, and a donation. The party said that the transaction was a repayment from Huntswood Associates following on from an arrangement under which the party had lent £52,801.72 to the unformed Downing Street Trust, by way of a payment of that amount to Cabinet Office. The Commission therefore considered whether this payment was made in respect of a loan or other similar arrangement. The Commission is satisfied there was no loan to the proposed trust. Legally, a loan only exists where there is a lender and another

person who agrees to borrow money. In this case there was no such relationship. The trust did not exist as a legal entity and could not agree to borrow money, and there was no loan agreement. Further, whatever arrangement the party considered to exist did not involve Huntswood Associates. There was no evidence that Huntswood Associates received anything of value in return for its payment to the party. The Commission has therefore concluded that the payment of £52,801.72 was the voluntary payment to the party, by Huntswood Associates, of the sum the party had previously paid to Cabinet Office. The Commission is satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that the payment by Huntswood Associates was a gift of money, within the definition of a donation set out in PPERA. Determination regarding inaccurate reporting of the donation The Commission is satisfied that the registered treasurer of the party failed to report, without reasonable excuse, the full value of the donation of £67,801.72 from Huntswood Associates on 19 October 2020. Under section 65(4) PPERA, the treasurer of a registered party commits an offence if, without reasonable excuse, he delivers a donation report to the Commission which does not comply with any requirements of PPERA as regards the recording of donations in such a report. For cash donations from a company, the report must give the name and registered address of that company, the amount of the donation and the date it was accepted. The £67,801.72 from Huntswood Associates was received by the party as a single payment. But during processing by the party it was separated: £15,000 was treated as a donation, and the remaining £52,801.72 was not. It was not reported as required by law so the Commission considered whether there was evidence of a reasonable excuse for this omission. Mr Mabbutt, as the registered treasurer of the party, is responsible for reporting donations as part of his legal duties under PPERA. It is therefore his responsibility to ensure sufficient checks are made on any payments to the party so that all reportable donations are identified. Mr Mabbutt has consistently stated that he did not know at the time about either the payment to Cabinet Office on 6 August 2020, or the £52,801.72 part of the donation received on 19 October 2020. The evidence supports this. However, the Commission is satisfied that Mr Mabbutt's lack of awareness arose from the party having inadequate systems in place which, as those systems are within his control and form a part of his duty as registered treasurer, does not amount to a reasonable excuse. The burden is on those responsible under PPERA to put in place appropriate systems that are sufficiently robust and to maintain a control and oversight so that the systems are sufficient to ensure compliance with the regime. The registered treasurer is answerable for the system and acts done in their name. The mechanics of the systems will vary depending on the financial size and complexity of the party concerned, but must be effective. For a large party with a complex internal infrastructure and substantial sums of money moving through its accounts, these systems will need to be sufficiently robust to ensure compliance in that context. Therefore, in order to comply with his PPERA obligations, Mr Mabbutt must have systems in place that allow him to ensure that any sums of money received by the party that are reportable donations are reported in line with the law. That system must be appropriate and proportionate to his party. The evidence in this case was that the finance and fundraising staff of the party did not have the necessary knowledge to recognise that the full payment from Huntswood Associates was required to be reported under PPERA, and did not ensure that others with that knowledge, such as compliance staff, were asked for advice. A senior member of the party's compliance team was copied into the email of 19 October 2020 in which the £67,801.72 payment was referred to as being only in part a donation. However, there is no evidence to suggest that the compliance team took any steps at the time

the donation was made to query why only a part of the payment was being treated as a donation. When a more junior member of the treasurer's department did later query what the remainder was for, they accepted without further inquiry the statement from a senior member of fundraising staff that it was "something else". This is despite the fact that the role of that senior member of staff was in fundraising and not in ensuring compliance with PPERA. The compliance systems the registered treasurer had in place failed to ensure the necessary checks. The fact that Lord Brownlow clearly expressed his view that he was making a donation is a further reason why concerns should have arisen in this particular case. Mr Mabbott told us that as soon as he was alerted to the situation in March 2021 he contacted the Commission for advice, and the evidence supports this. By that stage though, any request for advice was too late to assist the party in deciding whether it needed to report a donation – the donation had been accepted and the relevant deadline for reporting had passed. Accordingly, the Commission has determined that there was no reasonable excuse for Mr Mabbott's failure to report this donation. Mr Mabbott failed to accurately report the full value of the £67,801.72 donation received from Huntswood Associates on 19 October 2020, and there was no reasonable excuse for this failure. The Commission is therefore satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that Mr Mabbott committed an offence under section 65(4) PPERA.

Determination relating to other invoices

The Commission is satisfied that the payment of other invoices relating to the refurbishment works were not reportable donations under PPERA, and so we found no offences in relation to those payments. Three further payments were made directly to the supplier by Lord Brownlow towards the costs of the refurbishment of 11 Downing Street. Money spent in paying expenses incurred directly or indirectly by a party is classified as a donation under PPERA. We considered whether these payments were meeting costs incurred by the party. The payment of £12,967.20 on 19 October 2020 was for the balance of an earlier invoice and was made by Lord Brownlow to the supplier, and the evidence did not support a conclusion that party had agreed to pay this invoice. In the case of the payments of £33,484.80 on 18 December 2020 and £13,295.40 on 12 February 2021, Lord Brownlow had previously made clear that his authorisation should be obtained before any further costs were incurred. His authorisation was sought and given, and he paid the invoices. There is no evidence of any agreement that these expenses were incurred by, or would be paid by, the party. The evidence does not support a conclusion that any of those further three payments made by Lord Brownlow met costs incurred by the party.

Determination relating to the recording of transactions

The Commission is satisfied that the party failed to keep accurate financial records in relation to the payment of £52,801.72 it made to Cabinet Office. Section 41(1) PPERA sets out the requirement that the registered treasurer must ensure accounting records are kept in respect of the party which are sufficient to show and explain the party's transactions. Those accounting records must show, with reasonable accuracy, the financial position of the party at that time. In particular, the records must contain entries showing from day to day all sums of money received and expended by the party, and the matters in respect of which the receipt and expenditure take place; and a record of assets and liabilities. There is no offence associated with failing to comply with this requirement, but the Commission may impose a penalty for non-compliance with it. The £52,801.72 payment made to Cabinet Office on 6 August 2020 was recorded in various internal party records as a "blind trust loan". We are satisfied that the payment to Cabinet Office was not a blind trust loan, the party had no legal right to repayment of the sum, and the recording of this by the party was materially inaccurate. Internal accounting records are

essential for ensuring that the party is able to comply fully with other statutory requirements. That is particularly the case for a party with a significant volume of financial transactions. The references to this transaction as a “blind trust loan” did not accurately reflect the circumstances. As a result, the party’s records indicated that it would be reimbursed when it had no guarantee of that, and therefore misrepresented its financial position. We are therefore satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that the party failed to keep accurate records as per the requirement of section 41(1) in respect of the payment to the Cabinet Office of £52,801.72 on 6 August 2020. We did not identify any further inaccurately recorded transactions amongst those in the evidence we considered. Sanctions For the inaccurate reporting of the donation of £67,801.72, the Commission imposed a penalty of £16,250. For failing to keep accurate financial records, the Commission imposed a penalty of £1,550. Before the final determination of the offence and contravention was made and the level of penalties was set, the party had the opportunity to make representations as to the Commission’s provisional findings and proposed penalty. We carefully considered those representations, and that consideration is reflected in the findings above. The Commission also noted that the party acknowledged some failings in its systems, and proposed some changes to those systems. We have offered to work with the party to support improvements. The penalties imposed reflect the seriousness of the offence and contravention. The Commission noted in particular that transparency in political finance relies on the accurate recording and reporting of donations by political parties, as does voters’ ability to understand how parties are funded. In this instance, the party conducted its financial affairs in a way which shows a lack of regard for the law that the party is bound to comply with. The Commission has a reasonable expectation that registered political parties will co-operate openly and effectively with the Commission to ensure that there is transparency in political finance. However, at various points before the investigation when communicating the situation to the Commission, the party described the payment as a loan, a commercial transaction and an agency arrangement. Similarly, at various times the payment was described as coming from either Lord Brownlow or Huntswood Associates, which are not the same entity. The party also made statements to the Commission which were not supported by the evidence subsequently obtained. It said that there was a written agreement between Huntswood Associates, the party and Cabinet Office that the Cabinet Office invoice cost would be covered by Huntswood Associates, and that the party’s finance team facilitated a transfer of funds from Huntswood Associates to Cabinet Office. Finally, this is not the first time the party failed to deliver an accurate quarterly donation report. Two penalties were previously imposed on the party in 2019 and 2020 for failures by Mr Mabbett to report donations, and there have been previous failures. Such repeat non-compliance risks undermining public confidence in the political finance regime.

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attitudes 2023 You are in the Our research section Home Our research First published: 25 May 2022 Last updated: 6 April 2023 Public Opinion Tracker 2023 Since 2007, the Electoral Commission has been tracking public attitudes towards different aspects of elections and democracy in the UK. Our most recent study was carried out online, across the UK, in February 2023. It had over 4,000 respondents. Summary of findings A majority of people remain confident that elections are well-run in the UK. Despite a slight decline in recent years, the long-term pattern is positive. There has been a long-term decline in the public's perception of the transparency of party and campaign finance. Although this decline has slowed in 2023, the perceived level of transparency remains low. There is an increasing trend in the proportion of people who perceive problems around various aspects around democracy. Younger people are less likely to consider as unacceptable behaviour that could be construed as bullying or abusive towards MPs, compared to older generations. People in Northern Ireland are less likely to see themselves as eligible to vote in a UK parliament election than other parts of the UK. There has been a decline in the proportion of people who believe that votes are counted accurately at elections in the UK. There is a significant decline in the proportion of people who perceive the Electoral Commission as independent, compared to last year. There has been an increased awareness of the need for voter ID since the Election Act became law. More people in the UK are dissatisfied with the way democracy works than are satisfied. Confidence and satisfaction with the electoral process A majority of people (73%) remain confident that elections are well-run in the UK. Despite a slight decline in recent years, the long-term pattern is positive. Similarly, 79% of people are satisfied with the process of voting. Both measures are in line with their long-term average. Party finance There has been a long-term decline in the public's perception of the transparency of party and campaign finance. Although this decline has slowed in 2023, the perceived level of transparency remains low. More people have a negative perception than a positive one. 24% of people believe party funding is transparent. Over twice as many people see it as not transparent (58%). As recently as 2019, more people saw the transparency of funding as transparent (41%) than not transparent (36%). There has been a decrease in the number of people who think that if a political party or another campaigner is caught breaking the rules, the authorities will take appropriate action (30% agree). This is less than the 39% who disagree that appropriate action will be taken. As recently as 2018, 57% of the population agreed that appropriate action would be taken, which was three times the number who disagreed (19%). Perceptions of the problems faced by democracy There is an increasing trend in the proportion of people who perceive problems related to UK democracy, with people on average selecting 4.3 problems from a list of 9. This has increased from 3.6 problems selected on average in 2021. The top three concerns are bias in the media (72%), lower voter turnout (66%), and inadequate regulation of political parties' spending (60%). Attitudes to negative behaviours towards MPs Younger people are less likely to see as unacceptable behaviour that could be construed as bullying or abusive towards MPs compared with older generations. The difference in attitudes is consistent across different behaviours, including social media posts, verbal threats in public, and the use of foul language. For example, 75% of those who are 75+ say that verbally threatening an MP in public is totally unacceptable compared to 32% of 18–24-year-olds. Perceived eligibility for UK parliament elections People in Northern Ireland are less likely to see themselves as eligible to vote in a UK parliament election than people in other parts of the UK,

with 62% of people in Northern Ireland seeing themselves as eligible compared to 91% in the rest of the UK. Separate qualitative research we have conducted in Northern Ireland suggests that because largely different parties are on a parliamentary election ballot paper in Northern Ireland compared to the rest of the UK, some people don't associate the elections with the UK Parliament. Perception that the vote is counted accurately There has been a decline in the proportion of people who believe that votes are counted accurately at elections in the UK, with 70% saying they are counted accurately in 2023, down from 85% in 2021. The decline is much greater among younger people. In 2021, 79% of those aged 18-24 agreed that this was the case, but by 2023, 52% agreed that this was the case. Perceptions of the Electoral Commission Of those people who have heard of the Commission and were able to choose a word to associate with us, the most commonly chosen word is independent. However, there has been a significant decline in the proportion of people who perceive the Electoral Commission as independent, with 19% of people believing this to be the case in 2023, compared with 26% in 2022. awareness There has been an increased awareness of the need for voter ID since the Election Act became law. At the beginning of February, 44% of people were aware that voter ID is required, while 39% believe that it is not needed. Satisfaction with Democracy in the UK More people in the UK are dissatisfied (39%) with the way democracy works than are satisfied (33%). There does appear to be a party political aspect to this, as those who support the Conservative Party are nearly four times more likely to be satisfied (61%) than dissatisfied (16%). Opposition party supporters are much more likely to be dissatisfied, led by SNP supporters, of whom 61% are dissatisfied and 19% satisfied. Very few of those people without any party affiliation (18%) are satisfied with the way democracy works in the UK. Tables Tables Public Opinion Tracker 2023 tables 2018-2023 Data table Public Opinion Tracker

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June 2016 Report: The costs of delivering the June 2016 referendum on the UK's
membership of the European Union Our role Our focus is on voters and on putting their
interests first. Our objectives for referendums are that: they should be well-run and
produce results that are accepted there should be integrity and transparency of
campaign funding and expenditure EU referendum result The final national totals for
the EU referendum were: Remain – 16,141,241 Leave – 17,410,742 Designating lead
campaigners A designated lead campaigner is the lead campaign group for one side of
the debate. It acts as the lead campaign group on behalf of those campaigning for
that outcome. On 13 April 2016, we designated The In Campaign Ltd as the lead
campaigner for the remain outcome and Vote Leave Ltd as the lead campaigner for the
Leave outcome at the referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union. Related
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Integrating electoral registration into public service transactions | Electoral Commission Search Integrating electoral registration into public service transactions You are in the Modernising electoral registration: feasibility studies section Home A modern electoral register Modernising electoral registration: feasibility studies First published: 26 July 2019 Last updated: 8 June 2021 Summary We examined the feasibility of options enabling simultaneous voter registration applications to be made alongside accessing other public services, thereby increasing the number of channels available to citizens and improving the accessibility of the process. Summary We developed several implementation options, each of which would involve information provided during the original transaction serving as the basis for an electoral registration application, should the citizen so wish. Our preferred option involved transactional data being saved to the source (e.g. DVLA) database and then transferred to the online registration website via a secure route. While this would involve some development work for the Government Digital Service (to redevelop the IER hub) and for each Data Source Organisation, the reforms are feasible from a technical perspective. Public service transactions We first reviewed existing attempts to integrate electoral registration into other services in the UK within the current legal framework. Public service transactions Integrating electoral registration into the student enrolment process. Sheffield City Council worked with universities in the Sheffield area to develop a student enrolment form that also included an invitation to apply for electoral registration. Students were asked to provide their NINo, date of birth, open register preference, voting method and declaration. This data was then passed to the ERO at Sheffield City Council, where the data was uploaded into the EMS and processed as an application. The scheme proved very successful, with a take-up rate of around 66% of eligible students. The Northern Ireland Schools Initiative programme This was an initiative run by the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland. It involved visiting around 180 schools with pupils in Year 14 (aged 17) to promote voter registration, encourage pupils to register by completing electoral registration forms and to take photographs for Electoral Identity Cards, which pupils could use as proof of age as well as to vote. Attending British citizenship ceremonies Some EROs and their staff attend British citizenship ceremonies to encourage new British citizens to apply to register to vote there and then. This has proven to be an effective way of targeting this group of electors. Website links Many local authorities and universities include links on their websites to direct potential electors to the UK Government voter registration website, as have several UK Government departments. This is a very basic example of how electoral registration could be more joined up with other public services. Summary These types of initiative have undoubtedly been successful and could be developed more widely. We will continue to pursue these in the short-term, such as through the sharing of good practice. However, we were also interested in the extent to which the electoral registration process could be integrated more completely into other online public services – for example, by allowing a person to apply to register to vote when making a driving licence or passport application. It was the latter level of integration that formed the principal focus of the feasibility study. Data and infrastructure Currently there is no real integration between electoral registration and other online public services. We examined various ways in which data from a source website (e.g. the DVLA online transaction web form) could be sent to the online registration website and from there pre-populate fields in the electoral registration web form. Our preferred option involved transactional data being saved to the source (e.g. DVLA) database and then transferred to the

online registration website via a secure route (API and IER hub). This would involve some initial development for each DSO, dependent on the current structure and environment of the source website and database. The type and format of data captured in DSO online forms would also be important considerations in developing an integrated system. Ideally, there would need to be an acceptable number of fields available from a DSO online transaction that could be reused in an online electoral registration application in order to justify integrating the electoral registration process with a particular service. The format of the reusable data from the DSO online transaction would also need to be compatible with electoral registration data formats. For example, if a citizen entered address data in a DSO online form that was then populated on the online electoral registration application form, the format of the address data in the source system would need to be compatible with the address format used for electoral registration. Integrating electoral registration into public service transactions: implementation scenarios We developed and tested two implementation scenarios that could potentially deliver a more integrated system of electoral registration system in the UK. We again considered models from other countries in developing the scenarios. For example, in Canada, most government forms feature an optional checkbox for eligible voters to share information with Elections Canada, while in the USA voter registration is integrated with driving licence application, renewal, and change of address processes. Both of the options we developed and tested could be implemented with some redevelopment of existing infrastructures (e.g. to allow for the secure pre-populating of an online electoral registration application form), including: establishing a link, e.g. API between DSOs and the IER hub; further development of the IER hub; and potential development of the DSO databases. Issues and challenges in integrating electoral registration with other public services Legal A suitable legal gateway would be needed to allow DSOs to integrate their systems with the online registration website. If a citizen chose to register to vote after completing another public service transaction, they would be invited to consent on the website to the reuse of their personal data, which would then be used to pre-populate an online electoral registration form. The implications of the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) would need to be considered if using external data to pre-populate an online electoral registration form. Operational A more integrated electoral registration process would require some resource investment by DSOs to develop and maintain the infrastructure, liaise with the IER hub team and provide technical support where necessary. Responsibility and accountability for the transferring of data and maintenance of the infrastructure would also have to be agreed between stakeholders. Scheduling Effective coordination, planning and communication would be required to develop and implement an integrated electoral registration solution across different organisations. Economic A comprehensive cost-benefit analysis would be required to understand the cost implications of developing the necessary infrastructure to transfer data from a source website to the online electoral registration web form or the IER hub. The cost would depend on the solution that would best fit within the current DSO infrastructures. It would also be necessary to understand the commercial arrangements involved in developing solutions for wider integration e.g. whether there would be transactional costs involved in sharing data and ongoing maintenance costs payable to each DSO with which the electoral registration process was integrated. As with the better use of data study, a detailed cost-benefit analysis would need to be completed on each integration scenario to further explore the cost-effectiveness of the reforms. This would require access to public data sources,

necessitating a legal gateway and incurring a cost. Related content Reforming electoral law Find out about electoral law and the changes we want to see A modern electoral register Find out about the changes we want to see to the electoral registration system in the UK Transparent digital campaigning Find out about digital campaigning and the changes we want to see of elections Find out about the accessibility of elections and the changes we want to see

Response: Online Harms White Paper | Electoral Commission Search
Response: Online Harms White Paper You are in the Transparent digital campaigning section Home Transparent digital campaigning First published: 25 October 2019 Last updated: 9 June 2021 Our response to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport 1 July 2019 Summary Campaigning is an essential part of well-run elections and referendums because it enables political parties and campaigners to communicate with voters. We also need transparency and other safeguards to maintain trust and participation in our democratic processes. The Electoral Commission's role includes making sure campaigners follow the UK's laws on election spending, funding and declaring who is running a campaign. We would welcome early discussions with the UK Government and the online harms regulator. The proposals to make social media companies provide transparency about political advertising will be more effective if they are well joined-up with election and referendum law. If designed well, these proposals could: support our aims for transparency and controls on election spending, assist political parties and other campaigners to comply with their responsibilities to follow election law and help voters to have greater trust that they know who is campaigning for their vote. It is essential that any UK regulator working in the digital sphere has the right enforcement tools to deal with activity online. We urge the Government to take steps to modernise electoral law and our powers at the same time as tackling online harms. We need the power to obtain information from social media companies and want better abilities to share information with other regulators. We are pleased that the White Paper confirms our 2018 policy report into Digital Campaigning is being considered as part of the online harms agenda and we look forward to seeing the UK Government's response to our recommendations.

Introduction Electoral Commission is the independent body which oversees elections and regulates political finance in the UK. . This includes using our expertise to make and advocate for changes to our democracy, aiming to improve fairness and transparency. This response comments on the consultation questions most relevant to our statutory responsibilities. It also sets out our views on the White Paper's proposals for increasing transparency of political advertising. Responses to specific consultation questions

Q1 Building a culture of transparency, trust and accountability

The White Paper references our role to regulate funding and spending by political parties and other campaigners, including their use of social media. It recognises that there are regulatory gaps in addressing online harms and challenges (para 2.5). An increasing proportion of election spending happens online via advertising on social media platforms, websites and search engines. s also fundraise through online payment facilities and crowdfunding sites. Election law already requires political parties and other campaigners to report their spending and donations. We have a close interest in the Government's proposals to impose a duty of care and obligations on technology companies. This is because the White Paper proposes to regulate companies that supply some of the advertising or communication services that help campaigners engage with the public online. We therefore want to see how the new online harms framework can assist us to deliver parts of our responsibilities more easily and effectively. We are pleased to see that the White Paper also proposes that the new model of regulation could include measures for improving the transparency of political advertising and helping meet any requirements in electoral law (para 7.28). There is a clear opportunity to design the new requirements for technology companies to ensure that voters and regulators can get a clearer picture of what is spent on election campaigns and we can ensure that campaigners comply with election law. We look forward to our experience and expertise

contributing to the development of these requirements and providing advice on the regulatory framework for election spending and funding. Q2 The role of designated bodies to bring ‘super complaints’ and other ways we may want to share information with the online harms regulator We may want to raise concerns if the technology and social media companies do not comply fully with the proposed obligations about transparency for political advertising. At the European Parliamentary Elections, we regularly used the ad libraries and reports that Facebook, Twitter and Google voluntarily published for election advertising in accordance with the EU Code of Practice on disinformation . In the future, it would support our work if the companies are formally required to run these kinds of libraries and reports. It is useful to have these additional tools for monitoring who is spending money on election and other political campaigning. If the tools become mandatory and the companies do not run or maintain these tools effectively, we could report problems to the online harms regulator. It could be treated as a ‘super complaint’ because any deficiencies would affect transparency for members of the public and would affect our monitoring role as regulator of political finance. We would also expect to work closely with the online harms regulator on operational matters where we have common interests. We recommend that the Government ensures we have appropriate information-sharing gateways with the online harms regulator. For example, we could share knowledge about the services that these companies provide to campaigners and assist the regulator with updating and future-proofing. We would also expect the online harms regulator to be equipped with sufficient powers to share information with us and other law enforcement bodies where appropriate. Q3 Other measures for users to raise concerns about specific pieces of harmful content or activity Election material that does not identify the source of a campaign is an example of potentially harmful content. It can affect voter confidence in election campaigners. It also affects our ability to enforce the rules on election spending by political parties and other campaigners. The Government should ensure that it is clear that concerns about election material without a clear explanation of its source will continue to be dealt with by us or the police and not by the online harms regulator. Election law requires campaigners to include an “imprint” on their election materials to identify the source. But these rules only apply to printed material and we have been calling for the law to be changed since 2003. We are pleased that the UK Government has recently announced its commitment to extending the imprint rules to digital election material. We will be responsible for enforcing these imprint rules on parties and some other campaigners when they are extended. The police are responsible for allegations about candidates and other local campaigners. If users raise concerns about digital material that does not contain an imprint, the online harms regulator should refer these concerns to us or to the police. Q18 Plans for education and media literacy The White Paper says that the government will develop an online media literacy strategy before the new regulator is set up and asks what role the online harms regulator should have in relation to education and awareness activity. Some countries are seeing public awareness-raising and the development of media literacy skills as being increasingly important to help the public engage with political campaigns. We are beginning to consider how we can contribute to this in a UK context, including discussions with the Government and with other regulators and public agencies. We have begun to discuss this with the DCMS and would be pleased to contribute to further scoping. Increasing transparency of political advertising and supporting electoral law This part of our response explains why we have a close interest in the White Paper’s proposals that social media and technology companies should be required

to improve transparency of political advertising. If these proposals are implemented as described, it will mean that UK law, which currently provides for regulation of campaign spending by political parties and other campaigners, will also extend to the online providers of the tools they use for advertising and communicating with the public. It will also mean that the overarching aim of transparency of election spending will be delivered by two regulatory regimes – one for parties and other campaigners and one for social media companies. It is essential that these two regulatory regimes dovetail together, and this aim should be carefully considered when designing the online harms regulator and the proposed Codes of Practice. The UK presently has electoral and political finance laws that provide the ‘rules of the game’ that underpin fairness, trust and confidence in our democratic processes. These laws aim to ensure the UK’s election processes and results are trusted and accepted as legitimate and that funding and spending at elections and referendums is transparent. They level the campaign playing field to ensure elections are not unduly influenced. But there are obvious gaps when it comes to digital campaigning. It should assist if the new online harms regulator addresses some of these gaps by placing new requirements on social media companies. Other gaps need to be tackled by making direct improvements to electoral law. We recently welcomed the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee’s inquiry into electoral law and highlighted the need for reforms. For example, voters should be able to see clearly who is spending money online to influence them at elections and referendums and changes should also be made to strengthen our powers to compel social media companies to disclose information. The online harms agenda and electoral reform are complementary and should come hand in hand to maintain voters’ trust and protect elections from undue interference. Increasing transparency of political advertising and supporting electoral law Public attitudes to digital election campaigning The White Paper sets out high level expectations of companies, including addressing disinformation. It says the online harms regulator will reflect these further in Codes of Practice and we are pleased to see the government’s expectation that “ companies will need to take proportionate and proactive measures to help users understand the nature and reliability of the information they are receiving ” (para 7.27). We can share research findings to assist the government and new regulator with scoping this work. More should be done to help the public to understand digital campaign material and advertising at elections and referendums. In 2018 we commissioned research into the public’s attitude to digital campaigning and political finance regulation. In general the participants tended to approach digital campaign content with a sceptical attitude. They did not anticipate that all information online is true or that all sources are credible. However, it was also clear that they were unlikely to be aware of the extent that they may be influenced by digital material. For example, the participants often did not recognise certain issues based digital content as being political, or as linked to a specific campaign. In addition, we recently published the findings of our annual research measuring public attitudes towards elections and the voting process. We asked people whether they think inadequate regulation of political activity on social media is a problem. We found that 46% respondents overall think it is a problem, nearly half of whom (21%) say it is a ‘serious problem’. Improving transparency of political advertising We also welcome the government’s expectation that the Code on disinformation could include measures about “ improving the transparency of political advertising, helping meet any requirements in electoral law ” (para 7.28). We want to see more information about targeting of activity on social media platforms so that voters, and we as the

regulator, can see why and where campaign messages are being targeted. It will assist our regulatory role if we know more about how adverts are targeted geographically and by which campaigners on behalf of others. The new online harms regulator should use this Code of Practice to ensure there are common standards and obligations on what the social media companies publish. There should also be significant sanctions if the companies do not publish meaningful information. The advert libraries/reports that Facebook, Google and Twitter ran for the European Parliamentary Elections were a positive first step and we had constructive conversations with the companies about their plans. We actively used the libraries and reports for our election monitoring work and they made it easier to identify who was paying to advertise on these platforms. From the user and voter's perspective, we think that some kinds of European election advertising were more clearly labelled than for past elections. But the companies should add better functionality so the links between candidates, parties and other campaigners can be clearly displayed. The companies should also do more to signpost users to the ad libraries and reports of top spenders. In future, there should be a more direct 'click-through' from election adverts to the reporting tools. This would help voters to access and understand the information that is provided and provide greater transparency. From our perspective as regulator, the approaches to publishing information about targeting and the level of detail were inconsistent across the three companies. For example: The definitions used by the three companies to identify political campaigning did not fully align with those used in electoral law. Significantly, this meant that in some cases the transparency libraries and reports did not identify advertising that is defined as election material under UK law, for example issue based campaigns paid for by non-party campaigners. The libraries provide information about who viewed the adverts, but they do not provide meaningful information about how adverts were targeted, such as a breakdown of the geographical areas used. The libraries and reports will only give real transparency if the companies increase the amount of information that they publish about targeting of advertising, and ensure greater consistency across different platforms. We are continuing to evaluate their policies and how the tools worked in practice and will share our conclusions in the autumn.

Political advertising and election campaigning

It will assist with scoping the proposed Code on disinformation if the differences between election campaigning as defined in electoral law and other forms of political campaigning are well understood. Political campaigning could have a wide variety of aims, including influencing public opinion or the opinions and decisions of politicians. It can happen at any time. Election campaigning is a sub-set within political campaigning. Election law covers campaigns that are intended to influence how people vote. Election or referendum spending rules only apply during a period of time ahead of a vote, known as the 'regulated period'. We can assist the online harms regulator to understand these differences and design the requirements in the Code accordingly. That should make the aims clearer to companies, campaigners and the public and make the operation of the Code more effective. As the Code will be legally enforceable and impact on electoral law, we recommend that the online harms regulator should be required to formally consult us when developing or amending it. This would be consistent with election law, where the UK's governments must consult us before making statutory instruments, and with the general practice of governments to involve us when drafting electoral reforms. The White Paper refers to political advertising, but not all election campaigning is done through formal paid advertising. Election campaign material can also be displayed or circulated by political parties, candidates and other campaigners via their websites

or social media profiles. This material can be shared onwards by others. We think that all election campaigners should have to identify themselves on their campaign material, including where they have spent little or nothing on creating and distributing the message. Voters should be able to see who is trying to influence them so that they can make informed decisions about whether to trust different sources. We recommended this in our response to the Cabinet Office's consultation on extending the imprint rules and it would be consistent with the current law that requires imprints on all kinds of printed election material. We are awaiting details of the UK Government's approach to extending the imprint rules. We recommend that the Cabinet Office and DCMS consider the relationship between their respective proposals for imprints on digital election material and for a Code to increase transparency of political advertising. The timing of these two initiatives brings an opportunity for complementary proposals that increase transparency for voters about election and political campaigning, including paid advertising and other forms of content. We would be happy to contribute our expertise to these discussions.

Supporting requirements in electoral law

We welcome the government's expectation that the Code of Practice on disinformation could include measures about " helping meet any requirements in electoral law " (para 7.28). We also note that " the regulator will be expected to incorporate insights from law enforcement and other relevant government agencies to ensure the codes are adequately addressing the threat " (para 6.8). We would be pleased to provide expert advice to the regulator with scoping how a Code could ensure that companies help meet requirements in electoral law. This could include requiring companies to:

- Ensure that campaigners who are using their online services to advertise or campaign can clearly label them with the source and who has paid for the campaign. This would help campaigners meet requirements for 'imprints' and to help us enforce the spending limits for different types of
- campaigner Publish information about how adverts are targeted. This would also help us ensure the spending limits are followed by campaigners
- Ensure that a person/organisation paying for election advertising is based in the UK. This would help meet one of the overall objectives of UK election law, that campaigners and their funding are from UK based sources
- Provide information to us about the services they provide to election campaigners. This would allow us to deal with compliance issues in real time, and for example, require social media companies to give us information about the source of an online campaign that is running anonymously. These recommendations are set out in further detail in our Digital Campaigning report. We would welcome further discussions with the DCMS and Cabinet Office about how these proposals could be taken forward.

Helping meet requirements in electoral law – potential measures to prevent foreign spending and donations on social media and technology platforms

The proposed Code of Practice on disinformation could be used to set standards about how social media and technology companies and online payment providers design their software. Political parties and other campaigners already use crowd-funding sites and online payment systems to raise donations. We also note that Facebook is reported to be developing an online currency called Libra . We would expect to talk with the online harms regulator about how it sets, monitors and updates standards for companies about helping meet requirements in electoral law. For example, companies could be encouraged or required to design systems that help campaigners to comply with rules on spending and funding. It would still be a campaigner's responsibility to follow the law and we would continue to regulate that. Companies could assist by ensuring their functionality is easy to configure and includes the right features that campaigners need, such as full information about an

online donor to check if the donation is from a permitted source. Powers to obtain information from social media and technology companies It is essential that any UK regulator working in the digital sphere has the right enforcement tools to deal with activity online. The UK Government should therefore consider strengthening the powers of UK regulators, including the Electoral Commission, so they are equipped to deal with future challenges. We note that the Cabinet Office is planning a consultation on improving electoral integrity in political finance. We also would welcome discussion with Government about whether the Online Harms Bill or Codes of Practice could be a suitable vehicle to enhance our powers to obtain information from social media and technology companies and online payment providers. Related content Transparency in digital campaigning: response to Cabinet Office technical consultation on digital imprints Report: Digital campaigning - increasing transparency for voters Read our report about digital campaigning Response to the UK Government policy consultation: Protecting the Debate Read our response to the consultation about three proposed changes to electoral law to protect candidates and voters from intimidation Register to vote All you need to register to vote is 5 minutes and your National Insurance number.

Summary of identification requirements | Electoral Commission Search
Summary of identification requirements You are in the May 2018 voter identification pilot schemes section Home Our research Voter identification pilots May 2018 voter identification pilot schemes First published: 24 July 2019 Last updated: 24 July 2019 Pilot areas Bromley Voters in Bromley had to take either one piece of photo identification or two pieces of non-photo identification to be able to vote at their polling station. Photo identification a passport issued by the United Kingdom, a Commonwealth country or a member state of the European Union a photocard driving licence (including a provisional licence) issued in the United Kingdom or by a Crown Dependency, or by a member State of the European Union an electoral identity card issued under section 13C (electoral identity card: Northern Ireland) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 a biometric immigration document issued in the United Kingdom in accordance with regulations made under section 5 of the UK Borders Act 2007 an identity card issued in the European Economic Area an Oyster 60+ London Pass ■ a Freedom Pass (London) a PASS scheme card (national proof of age standards scheme) Non-photo identification a valid bank or building society debit card or credit card a poll card for the poll a driving licence (including a provisional licence) which is not in the form of a photocard. a birth certificate a marriage or civil partnership certificate an adoption certificate a firearms certificate granted under the Firearms Act 1968 the record of a decision on bail made in respect of the voter in accordance with section 5(1) of the Bail Act 1976 a bank or building society cheque book a mortgage statement dated within 3 months of the date of the poll a bank or building society statement dated within 3 months of the date of the poll a credit card statement dated within 3 months of the date of the poll a utility bill dated within 3 months of the date of the poll a council tax demand letter or statement dated within 12 months of the date of the poll a Form P45 or Form P60 dated within 12 months of the date of the poll People in Bromley who did not have any of the identification listed above could apply to the Returning Officer for a Certificate of Identity which could be shown to vote at their polling station. Gosport Voters in Gosport had to take either one piece of photo identification or two pieces of non-photo identification to be able to vote at their polling station. Photo identification UK or EU passport (UK, Commonwealth, EEA) photocard driving licence, full or provisional (UK, crown dependency or EU) Northern Ireland electoral identity card biometric immigration document European Economic Area identity card Disclosure and Barring Service certificate showing your registered address MoD photographic identification card MoD Defence Privilege Card photo bus/travel pass from any Hampshire council Non-photo identification driving licence without photo birth certificate adoption certificate marriage or civil partnership certificate bank or building society debit/credit card Non-photo identification issued within 12 months of voting day financial statement, such as a bank or mortgage statement council tax demand letter or statement utility bill P2, P6, P9, P45 or P60 statement of benefits or entitlement to benefits People in Gosport who did not have any of the identification listed above could apply to the Returning Officer for an Electoral Identity Letter which could be shown to vote at their polling station. Swindon Poll card Voters in Swindon had to take their poll card to be able to vote at their polling station. Photo identification Voters who had lost their poll card or did not take it with them to the polling station could show one piece of photo identification: Passport (UK, EU, Commonwealth) (can be expired or unexpired) Photocard driving licence including a provisional licence (UK, Crown Dependency or EU) Northern Ireland Electoral Identity Card Biometric Immigration Document EEA

Identity Card Attestation People in Swindon who did not have any of the identification listed above could bring someone with them to their polling station to confirm who they were. This person had to be registered to vote at the same polling station and have already voted themselves or could vote by showing their poll card or other form of identification. Watford Poll card Voters in Watford had to take their poll card to be able to vote at their polling station. If someone lost their poll card or forgot to bring it with them to the polling station they could show: Valid British, European or Commonwealth passport UK or EU photo-card driving licence (full or provisional) Valid credit or debit card Biometric Residence Permit EEA Identity Card Northern Ireland Electoral Identity Card Woking Photo identification Voters in Woking had to take one of the following types of photo identification to be able to vote at their polling station. Passport (UK, EU, Commonwealth) UK Photo Driver's Licence (full or provisional) EU Driver's Licence European Economic Area photographic identification card UK Biometric Residence Permit Northern Ireland Electoral Identity Card Surrey Senior Bus Pass Surrey Disabled People's Bus Pass Surrey Student Fare Card 16 - 25 Railcard Rail Season Ticket Photocard People in Woking who did not have any of the identification listed above could apply to the Returning Officer to be issued with a photographic Local Elector Card. Related content Register to vote All you need to register to vote is 5 minutes and your National Insurance number. Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Party registration decisions View our decisions on political party names, descriptions and emblems Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run

Focus on Northern Ireland You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 On this page Summary Canvass 2021 Northern Ireland Assembly election 2022 Looking ahead First published: 1 August 2022 Last updated: 1 August 2022 Summary Summary Our work in Northern Ireland over the last year has largely been dominated by the 2021 electoral registration canvass and preparations for the May 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election. Alongside this, we continued to work closely with the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland, political parties and the electoral community across Northern Ireland. Despite our team in Northern Ireland continuing to work from home in response to the Covid-19 pandemic we were still able to provide advice and support to our stakeholders on issues relating to electoral law, financial reporting, campaigning and voter registration. The Northern Ireland Assembly Political Parties Panel continued to meet and we began to develop new resources specific to Northern in support of our learning and partnership strategies. Canvass 2021 Originally scheduled for 2020, but delayed by a year as a result of the pandemic, the canvass took place between July and November 2021. This was the first canvass to take place in Northern Ireland since the introduction of online electoral registration in 2018. We supported the canvass through a multimedia voter registration campaign, which reminded everyone that the register was being updated and that they should not ignore the canvass - even if they had been registered before. Over 1.3 million people registered to vote during the canvass, representing 93% of the eligible electorate. In March we published our report on the canvass, which highlighted that the register was at its highest ever level. However, we also found that the canvass in its current format is not an efficient tool for helping to maintain an accurate and complete electoral register. As such, we are now calling on the Government to reform the canvass and wider electoral registration process in Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland Assembly election 2022 The Assembly elections on 5 May 2022 were the first elections to take place in Northern Ireland since the start of the pandemic. We provided advice and guidance to the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland on measures that could be put in place to protect voters, based on the experience of elections across Great Britain in 2021. As with all elections, we provided advice and guidance services to all of our stakeholders including candidates, agents, parties, campaigners and voters. New rules that extended imprint rules on printed campaign material came into effect for the first time at these elections. We updated and shared our guidance materials to promote compliance with these new rules. In partnership with the EONI and Royal Mail, we ran pre-election seminars for candidates and agents, including our first virtual seminar and our first face-to-face seminar since 2019. We also ran a new seminar specifically for political parties to help explain the reporting rules in place for them at this election. Our public awareness campaign began in March 2022 with a particular focus on reaching voters who had not responded to the canvass or whose details had changed since then. We also ran a digital campaign encouraging anyone who needed an absent vote to check that they had the required digital registration number when making their application. We also published our first suite of educational resources to promote political literacy in Northern Ireland. Looking ahead Our report on the Northern Ireland Assembly election will be published in autumn 2022. Preparations will also begin for the elections to the 11 councils across Northern Ireland in May 2023. We will continue to support parties and campaigners to comply with the law, while ensuring that political finance is transparent. We will also continue to provide support and guidance to the Chief Electoral Officer and EONI to

ensure the delivery of a well-run electoral service in Northern Ireland. We will build on our stakeholder engagement activity in Northern Ireland. Building on the work we have done so far to provide educational resources we will seek to establish new partners to promote and improve political literacy across communities less likely to be engaged in the democratic process. The implementation of the Elections Act, which received Royal Assent on 28 April 2022, will also have an impact on our work in Northern Ireland. Working closely with the NIO, the Chief Electoral Officer and other stakeholders we will seek to ensure that development and delivery of the changes made to the electoral process in Northern Ireland through the Act. This will include the implementation of relevant secondary legislation for Northern Ireland, updating and producing new guidance and promoting awareness of these changes to the electoral community in Northern Ireland. Navigation Previous Next Scotland (devolved) annual report Looking ahead to 2022/23

5. Impact on administration of the polls | Electoral Commission Search

5. Impact on administration of the polls You are in the May 2019 voter identification pilot schemes section Home Our research Voter identification pilots May 2019 voter identification pilot schemes First published: 12 July 2019 Last updated: 12 July 2019 Contents Overview Our findings Impact on voters: experience Impact on voters: confidence Impact on security Impact of administration of the polls Background to our evaluation Key findings As in 2018, Returning Officers and their staff who were responsible for the May elections ran their pilots successfully. There were no significant administrative issues in any pilot on 2 May. Polling station staff told us that they were satisfied with how polling day went and were confident that they could manage the process of people showing voter identification at a future election. Additional staffing and training across all pilots was needed to run the pilot. The IT-enabled pilots worked well, but any Great Britain-wide roll out would need a significant level of resourcing to ensure a smooth implementation. Intro Returning Officers (ROs) and their staff were responsible for running the elections and the pilot processes. We have considered how the requirements of the pilots affected their ability to do so. Public awareness For these pilots, as in 2018, ROs were responsible for delivering the public awareness activity. This was funded by the UK Government but delivered by each local authority. Significant time and cost, in each pilot, was devoted to making sure voters were aware of the ID requirement. ROs used information gathered through equality impact assessments to help identify the most effective ways to communicate the requirements to different groups of people in their areas. This is likely to be different if the requirement to show ID were rolled out nationally, when the Electoral Commission would assume responsibility for a national public awareness campaign. However, in that event it is likely that ROs would still carry out smaller scale public awareness activities locally, as they do currently to encourage people to register to vote. Issuing local ID/replacement poll cards In each pilot, ROs ensured the provision of a free and universally available acceptable ID. In the photo only and mixed model, electors could apply for a local identity document (until 5pm on the day before polling day). In the mixed and poll card model they could apply for a replacement poll card (up to 5pm and 9pm on polling day respectively). The 2019 pilot scheme offered a limited test of the process and cost of issuing local ID to electors as there was limited take up of this route. In the photo only pilots, Woking issued 24 and Pendle issued 70 photo ID cards. Feedback from Pendle indicated that additional staffing was used to manage these applications and that they were not evenly spread over time; most applications came in and needed to be processed in the two weeks before polling day. However, in the mixed model pilots very few local identity documents were applied for or issued; Broxtowe issued two and Braintree issued one. This lower take-up is likely to be partly a result of the wider ID requirement which offered greater choice for voters, compared to the photo only pilots, and partly because electors could also apply for a replacement poll card (between 4% and 9% of electors used a poll card as a form of non-photo ID). The number of replacement poll cards ranged from one in Broxtowe to 300 in Derby. Replacement poll cards were also issued to 69 electors in Watford and 40-50 in Mid Sussex. We have heard no significant concerns about this process beyond the additional costs of keeping the council building open for electors until 9pm on polling day. Overall, the feedback suggests this was a manageable process if appropriately resourced. However, some ROs and their staff did express concerns about the challenge presented by the potential for a much greater volume of either local ID applications or replacement poll cards ahead of a UK general election, particularly

with a high volume of applications coming close to the deadlines. These challenges could also have a significant impact on those people who apply for replacement poll cards close to the deadline, and their ability to show ID on polling day. Staffing and training ROs in each of the pilots made changes to staffing in order to deliver their pilot, although this varied significantly. The approaches ranged from a limited increase in central elections team resources (to support public awareness work or issue local ID) to deploying additional polling station staff on 2 May. For example: In Craven, the RO employed one additional presiding officer (out of a total of 30), seven additional poll clerks (out of 45) and three additional polling station inspectors (out of six) In Broxtowe, the RO added 12 poll clerks (out of a total of 103), two additional polling station inspectors (out of a total of eight) and two further staff in the central elections team In Watford, the RO (as they did in 2018) added two polling station inspectors (out of a total of six) In Pendle, the RO added two polling station inspectors (out of a total of seven) and three temporary, part-time staff in the central elections team There were no consistent patterns of how staffing was changed across the different pilot models; mostly changes were made based on the individual RO's assessment of the risk and issues locally. There was also no overall consensus on whether any increase in staffing at all would be required to administer voter identification at future elections with higher turnout. Some ROs expected that they would need additional staff in polling stations but others felt that it would be manageable at existing levels. Some areas that used additional staffing on 2 May said they would not anticipate using it again, even at elections with higher turnout. More and longer training sessions were required to support staff in delivering the pilots. To manage the additional training, some areas replaced online training with face-to-face sessions while others reduced the number of attendees per session. Our survey found that polling station staff thought that the training was delivered well across the pilot scheme. The majority of staff agreed that their training prepared them well for polling day and that the instructions on the types of ID that could be accepted were clear. Feedback from ROs again suggests that this was a manageable increase in work but highlighted that there was an additional resource requirement (e.g. in training fees for longer sessions). This variation in evidence from the pilot scheme means that, in the event of Great Britain-wide implementation, the UK Government would need to carry out a further, careful assessment of what the resourcing impact would be for ROs. Polling day Feedback from ROs and their staff indicate that they delivered their pilot on 2 May without significant problems. Across the pilot scheme, polling station staff were satisfied with how polling day went. In photo pilots 80% of staff were very satisfied, increasing to 81% in poll card pilots and 86% in mixed model pilots. This also reflects the experiences of Electoral Commission staff observers, who largely saw the process working well. A high proportion of all polling station staff agreed that asking voters to prove their identity had little or no impact on their work, although the extent to which they agreed varied across the pilots. Do you agree or disagree that asking voters to prove their identity had little or no impact on your work on polling day? Impact of ID requirement on work of administrators Staff in poll card pilots were more likely to agree that it had little or no impact, while staff in photo and mixed pilots were more likely to disagree than those in poll card pilots. This could be due to the quantity of the different acceptable identification types in these pilots or the additional work involved in recording information for the evaluation in the non-IT enabled pilots. The majority of polling station staff said that they would be confident in replicating the process at another election, with

almost three quarters across the pilots saying they were very confident. IT-enabled pilots Mid Sussex and Watford both used IT in the polling stations to scan QR codes on electors' poll cards. In both, the system worked well and there were no notable issues on polling day related to the IT. Electoral Commission staff who observed in these pilots also saw this on polling day, with staff appearing confident in using the tablets to scan poll cards and being able to resolve any issues. However, the planning and setting up of these systems did require a significant amount of time and resource commitment from the electoral administration teams, the software suppliers and Cabinet Office. The commitment of time and resource largely stems from the development of a system to provide the necessary level of assurance and resilience to ensure no problems arise on polling day, such as ensuring there were no issues as a result of connectivity problems in polling stations. ROs raised some concerns about whether the level of individual support provided for the pilots by the software supplier would be possible if a system was being used across Great Britain. We have not had access to final data on the overall cost of delivering this element of the pilots, which is likely to have been significant. As an indication, IT equipment costs for similar activity at the 2018 pilots were estimated at £332 - £659 per polling station, though anecdotal evidence suggests that relative savings were made for 2019. While the pilot costs do not necessarily translate easily into a cost if implemented across Great Britain, it is highly likely that a notable level of resourcing would be required to ensure a smooth implementation. Report navigation links Previous Next 4. Impact on security 6. Background to our evaluation Related content Register to vote All you need to register to vote is 5 minutes and your National Insurance number. Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run Party registration decisions View our decisions on political party names, descriptions and emblems

Public attitudes towards voting in Scotland in the context of COVID-19 | Electoral Commission Search Public attitudes towards voting in Scotland in the context of COVID-19 You are in the Public attitudes towards voting in the context of COVID-19 section Home Our research Public attitudes towards voting in the context of COVID-19 On this page Introduction Key findings Polling station voting Postal voting Other findings Background notes First published: 25 August 2020 Last updated: 26 November 2020 Introduction In February 2021, we asked a representative sample of eligible voters in Scotland about their attitudes towards voting during the pandemic. The questions covered attitudes towards postal voting and other options for the safe running of the election in 2021. This is a repeat of the work carried out in August 2020 and November 2020. In both August and November this research was requested by the Scottish Government under Section 10 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. This page provides a summary of the findings from the latest of these surveys conducted in February, making comparisons with the other surveys throughout. Key findings The key findings are consistent across August, November 2020 and February 2021 with voting in a polling place remaining the preferred option amongst a majority of voters although the results also indicate a likely increase in the proportion of voters opting to use a postal vote at the 2021 Scottish Parliament election compared to previous polls. Polling station voting Over three quarters (76%) of eligible electors and 82% of those who say they ordinarily vote in a polling station would feel safe voting there. This is not significantly different from what we saw when we asked these questions previously. When we explain the planned Covid safety measures for polling stations, based on Electoral Commission guidance, there is an increase in the proportion who see in-person voting as safe (84%). Among those who typically vote in a polling station 88% said they would feel safe. Of those who said they would not feel safe voting in polling stations, just under 9/10 (87%) said there was no measure that could be introduced to make them feel safe voting in person. While we are not able, from this research, to report specifically on BAME respondents in Scotland we can report for Great Britain as a whole. 61% of BAME respondents said voting in person was safe compared to 75% of White respondents. Once told about the Electoral Commission guidance around safety measures 73% of BAME respondents said they would feel safe voting in person compared with 84% of white respondents. Postal voting The same proportion of people, compared to November, said they would vote by post (38%) if an election were held now. The proportion of people who say they ordinarily vote at a polling station and would now choose to vote by post has remained consistent too with 22% saying they would vote by post (23% in November). While this should not be taken as a reliable indicator of the number of people who will actually vote by mail this does indicate that there could be a significant uplift in the number of postal votes compared with previous polls. Other findings There has been an increase in the willingness to vote if an election were to take place now. 90% said they would vote in February compared to 83% in November. Given a number of different options around how the May elections should be conducted the most popular option expressed was, again, for the Scottish Parliament election to be run with the same methods of voting as usual (42%). 28% would prefer polling stations to be open for more than one day, 10% wanted the election to be held as an all postal ballot and 12% preferred a short postponement. The proportion who thought the election should be postponed (by not more than 6 months) has increased from 5% in November to 12% in February. Those who were more inclined to think the elections should be delayed were also more likely to say that they think the elections would not be safe. They were also more likely to be

older. Just under a third of those who intend to vote in person (31%) said they would not know anybody who could vote by proxy for them if their household had to isolate due to covid-19. Just over half were sure they did know somebody who could vote for them (57%). 12% were unsure. Respondents from social grade ABC1 are more likely to know people in their local area who could act as a proxy for them (67%) compared to C2DE (46%) As in the previous research, around a half (50%) of all those surveyed would vote by post if encouraged to (including 58% of polling place voters). Once those already registered to vote by post are included this would mean around two-thirds of electors who would vote by post. When asked why they would not apply for a postal vote, the majority (65%) said they would prefer to vote in person at a polling station Background notes All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from work done for the Commission by YouGov Plc. For the February fieldwork, total sample size was 504 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 29th January and 20th February. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all adults in Scotland (aged 16+). For the August fieldwork, total sample size was 1,145 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 3rd and 7th August 2020. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all adults in Scotland (aged 16+). For the November fieldwork, total sample size was 1,089 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 6th and 10th November 2020. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all adults in Scotland (aged 16+) Full tables Scotland Related content Our research about our research, which helps inform our work and our policies Public attitudes Read our reports about public attitudes towards voting Analysis of electoral registration data Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run

Enabling activity: A learning organisation where improvement is continuous and resources are used efficiently | Electoral Commission Search

Enabling activity: A learning organisation where improvement is continuous and resources are used efficiently You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23 First published: 4 July 2023 Last updated: 27 September 2023 What we are working to achieve The world around us is changing rapidly. We need to adapt fast to be successful. In order to do this, we aim to be rigorous in learning from experience and seek continuous improvement in all that we do. With pressures on public spending set to continue, it is crucial that we continue to manage our costs and make effective use of our technology, funding, time and resources. We are working to: procure and implement value for money IT systems that improve service delivery maintain our financial strategy to keep the Commission within approved budgets continue to develop techniques to learn from experience, seek continuous improvement and become more efficient and effective develop a corporate environmental strategy that meets policy and legislative requirements for reduced environmental impact. Work done to achieve this aim We are on course to remain within the commitment we gave in the Corporate Plan to keep core spending – on regulatory activities, support for electoral administrators and overheads – flat in real terms over the course of the plan period. We regret that we were unable to complete the delivery of the new political finance online system as the project could no longer achieve its aims and would have required ongoing and costly support. We are currently in the discovery phase of our new approach, which is utilising previous work we had developed and consulted on. Like many public bodies, the Commission faces risks from cyber-attacks. To help protect against such attacks, we are investing in our systems. We have migrated our IT infrastructure to the cloud and invested in cyber-security, giving us a robust technology basis that will allow us to focus on key corporate systems. Prepared the Commission's budget for 2023-24, which was approved by the Speaker's Committee in March 2023. Ongoing and future work We will continue to move our guidance into a new more accessible format online, with all new guidance for the 2024 elections to be made available in this way. We remain committed to replacing the current political online system for registering political parties and reporting financial information and will continue to work with parties and campaigners on the next steps. We are undertaking a programme of training for internal budget managers and making systems improvements to provide budget managers with real time expenditure data to support better decision-making.

NAivgation Previous Next Enabling activity: A skilled organisation where diversity is valued Using our resources to support the delivery of our goals

Guidance for electoral observers in England | Electoral Commission Search
Guidance for electoral observers in England You are in the Guidance and feedback for observing elections section Home Observing elections and referendums Guidance and feedback for observing elections On this page What elections are taking place? Who does what at these elections? Postal voting Post vote opening procedure Observing at polling stations Observing the verification and count Submitting feedback First published: 14 April 2023 Last updated: 4 May 2023 Guidance for electoral observers in England This guidance is for electoral observers who have been accredited by the Electoral Commission. It includes information on the elections taking place and what to expect at the electoral processes you are entitled to observe. about becoming an accredited observer What elections are taking place? On Thursday 4 May 2023 there will be local council elections and local authority mayoral elections across England. This guidance is for accredited observers in England. Separate guidance is available for observers in Northern Ireland. What can I observe? As an accredited observer you are entitled to attend: the issue and receipt of postal ballot papers the polling stations the verification and counting of the votes We have published a Code of Practice for electoral observers. You must comply with the standards of behaviour set out in this Code. You do not need to tell electoral officials that you want to observe proceedings; by law you have a right to attend as detailed above. However, if you do tell them, they may be able to provide you with some relevant local and practical information, for example a list of polling stations or adaptations made to venues for accessibility purposes. You can still make unannounced visits or change your plans if you want to. Who can vote in these elections? A person can vote in these elections if they are: included on the electoral register at an address in England 18 years of age or over on the day of election a British, Irish or qualifying Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of the European Union What voting methods will be used? Local elections Local council and local mayoral elections in England use the first-past-the-post system. The ballot paper will list the candidates standing in that area. Voters can vote for as many candidates as there are vacancies in that area. Some councils have local elections every four years and elect all councillors at the same time. Other councils vote by thirds. This means that a third of councillors are elected every year over a three year period with no elections in the fourth year. Other councils vote by halves with half of the councillors elected every two years. There may also be by-elections taking place for other seats on the council that have become vacant. Some areas may also have town or parish council elections taking place. Who does what at these elections? Returning Officers Every county, district, unitary and metropolitan council in England is required to appoint an officer of the council to be the Returning Officer (RO) for the election of councillors to their local authority. They are usually a senior officer of the council, but independent of it in respect of their electoral functions. The person appointed as the RO for principal area elections will be the local RO for any mayoral elections in the local authority. Every district council in England must also appoint an officer of the council to be the RO for any elections of councillors of parishes within the district. This may be the same person as the RO for principal area elections, but does not need to be. You can contact the RO for the area in which you intend to observe through your local elections office. Find the contact details for election offices. The RO will offer briefings and training sessions ahead of the elections for candidates and for staff working on the election. You may be able to attend these sessions which will help you to understand the processes that you are entitled to attend and observe. If you wish to attend these briefings you should

contact the relevant elections office beforehand to arrange your attendance. The Electoral Registration Officer The Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) is responsible for maintaining the register of electors and absent voters' lists for their area. The ERO is normally a senior officer of a local authority and may also be the RO. Find the contact details for EROs. The Electoral Commission The Electoral Commission is an independent statutory body set up by UK Parliament. We register political parties and non-party campaigners, monitor and publish donations to political parties and regulate spending at certain elections. We also accredit observers to attend election proceedings. We do not run elections but have responsibility for providing advice and assistance on electoral matters to all those involved in elections. We also promote voter awareness. Our contact details are: The Electoral Commission 3 Bunhill Row London EC1Y 8YZ Tel: 020 7271 0500 Email: info@electoralcommission.org.uk Website: www.electoralcommission.org.uk Postal voting Electors can apply to vote by post. The RO starts to send postal voting packs to postal voters around two weeks before polling day. Voters can return their packs by post to their local council or hand them in to certain polling stations on polling day. Completed postal voting packs must be returned by 10pm on polling day. You are entitled to attend both the issuing of postal voting packs and postal vote opening sessions. You can also appoint a postal vote agent to attend on your behalf. The RO will be able to tell you when and where these sessions are taking place. What happens at a postal vote issuing session? There are likely to be several sessions for issuing postal votes. These could take place at an external printers. At the issuing session, postal voting packs will be put together. The packs will include: Envelope A – this is the envelope that the elector returns their ballot paper(s) in. It is marked with the letter 'A' and the words 'ballot paper envelope' Envelope B – this is the envelope that the elector will use to return the ballot paper envelope and the postal voting statement. It is marked with the letter 'B' and the address of the RO The postal voting statement – this contains the elector's name, the number of the ballot paper(s) issued to them, instructions on how to vote by post and space for the elector to sign and provide their date of birth The ballot paper(s) Postal voting packs will then be delivered to electors, either by hand or by post. If the election is combined with another poll, the RO may send the ballot paper(s) for each election together or separately. When will postal votes be opened? It is likely that there will be several postal vote opening sessions before polling day, as well as on polling day itself. You can contact the RO for details of these locally. There will also be a final opening session held after the polls have closed. Postal votes handed in to polling stations will be opened at this session. This session may be held at the count venue or in another location. What happens at a postal vote opening session? Postal voters must complete and return a postal voting statement which includes their signature and date of birth, as well as their ballot paper(s). The RO will decide whether or not the date of birth and signature provided by electors on their postal voting statements matches the signature and date of birth previously provided by the elector and held on their records. If they do not match, the postal vote will be rejected. A very small number of voters will have been granted a waiver because they are unable to sign or provide a consistent signature due to a disability or an inability to read or write. These voters do not need to sign their postal voting statement. The postal vote opening process can be summarised as follows: Post vote opening procedure Stage 1 Step 1: Open the postal voters' ballot box. Step 2: Count and record the number of covering envelopes (Envelopes 'B') Step 3: Open the covering envelopes (envelopes 'B') and remove the postal voting statement and ballot

paper envelope (envelope 'A') Step 4: Mark all returned postal vote statements on the postal/postal proxy list to show it is returned If not all parts of the postal vote have been returned: Step 5: Mark the envelope 'provisionally rejected', attach contents and add to the rejected votes packet. Add to the lists as appropriate: the list of ballot papers received without a valid (or any) postal voting statement the list of ballot paper numbers of postal voting statements received without a ballot paper. See Stage 4. Stage 2 Step 1: Verify the personal identifiers on the returned postal voting statements Step 2: Separate the ballot paper envelopes from the postal voting statements and keep both in order Step 3: Determine those postal voting statements that are missing a date of birth and/or signature or where either/both do not match those held on the identifier record. Adjudicate those and reject where either are not included or you are not satisfied that the statement is duly completed. Invalid postal voting statements are rejected. The statements, ballot paper and envelopes are marked 'rejected' and placed in the receptacle for rejected votes Postal voters who have been granted a waiver only need to complete their date of birth Step 4: Check the number on the postal voting statement matches the number on the ballot paper envelope (envelope "A"). After matching, package up the postal voting statements and seal the packet. If the numbers do not match: Step 5: Open the envelope. If the ballot paper matches the statement, it is valid and should go in the postal ballot box. Non-matching ones should be provisionally rejected (see below). Stage 3 Step 1: Open the ballot paper envelopes (envelopes 'A') If the ballot paper is inside the envelope: Step 2: Remove the ballot paper(s), ensuring they are kept face down at all times Step 3: Check the number on the ballot paper envelope (envelope 'A') against the number on the back of the ballot paper Step 4: Keep the ballot papers face down at all times. Don't look or allow others to look at the votes marked on the ballot papers. Step 5: Place ballot papers in the postal ballot box or appropriate receptacle and proceed to Stage 5. If the ballot paper number does not match: Step 2: Attach the ballot paper to the envelope Step 3: Mark it as 'provisionally rejected' and put it in the receptacle for rejected votes Step 4: Add to the both the list of ballot papers received without a valid postal statement and the list of ballot paper numbers of postal voting statements received without a ballot paper If there is no ballot paper inside the envelope: Step 2: Mark 'provisionally rejected' and put in the receptacle for rejected ballot paper envelopes. Step 3: Add to the list of ballot paper numbers of postal voting statements received without a ballot paper. Stage 4 Step 1: To match up separated documents, check the two reject lists against all ballot papers/postal voting statements that have been returned separately from their corresponding postal voting statement/ballot paper and, if possible, match them up The two lists must be taken to the final opening of postal votes to carry out any final matching Step 2: Record any successful match on the relevant lists Step 3: Place the ballot papers that are no longer to be treated as provisionally rejected in the postal ballot box or appropriate receptacle and place the accompanying postal voting statements in the appropriate receptacle. Stage 5 Step 1: Count and record the total number of ballot papers, keeping the ballot papers face down at all times Actual votes are not counted at this stage Step 2: Place the ballot papers in the postal ballot box, which much be sealed at the end of each opening session and stored securely Step 3: Complete postal vote ballot paper account Duty to maintain secrecy The RO will give you a copy of the statutory Requirement of Secrecy. Anyone attending a postal vote issuing or opening session must comply with this. Ballot papers will be kept face down throughout a postal vote opening session. Anyone attending an opening session must not: attempt to

see how individual ballot papers have been marked attempt to look at identifying marks or numbers on ballot papers disclose how any particular ballot paper has been marked pass on any such information gained from the session Anyone found guilty of breaching these requirements can face an unlimited fine, or may be imprisoned for up to six months. Observing at polling stations You are entitled to observe inside polling stations. The RO will be able to provide you with a list of all polling stations in the area where you want to observe. Returning Officers may have reviewed their polling stations since the last elections and there may be some late changes to polling stations if venues become unavailable. Look out for such changes being communicated via local authority websites and/or social media channels. When are polling stations open? Polling stations will be open between 7am and 10pm on Thursday 4 May 2023. You are permitted to arrive shortly before this to observe the sealing of the ballot box(es) prior to the poll opening. What will the inside of the polling station look like? The layout within each polling station may differ, but it may look similar to the images below: Example of a single polling station layout with one entrance/exit: Example of a single polling station layout with separate entrance and exit: Example of a double polling station layout: Who can vote at a polling station? Any person on the polling station's electoral register can vote at the polling station unless: they are a registered postal voter they are a registered proxy voter and their proxy has already voted for them or has applied to vote on their behalf by post they are not 18 years of age or older on polling day they are registered as an overseas elector Electors receive a poll card before the election telling them where they can vote. Most electors do not need to take their poll card to the polling station in order to vote. The only electors who need to bring a poll card with them to vote are those who have registered anonymously because of risks to their safety. Registered postal voters cannot be issued with a ballot paper at the polling station. They can return their completed postal ballot pack to their polling station or any polling station in the relevant electoral area or to the RO at the elections office. Postal ballot packs returned to polling stations must be handed to polling station staff and not placed in the ballot box. Polling station staff will keep any postal votes secure until they are collected. Who is allowed to be in the polling station? The following people are entitled by law to be present in a polling station: the RO and their staff the Presiding Officer and clerks voters persons under voting age who accompany voters companions of disabled voters candidates and their election agents polling agents police officers and community support officers on duty at the polling station Electoral Commission representatives observers accredited by the Electoral Commission What do polling agents do? Candidates and political parties can appoint polling agents to be present at any polling station. The main role of a polling agent is to detect personation (when an individual votes as someone else – whether that person is living or dead, or is a fictitious person). Other duties that the polling agents may undertake include: checking that the ballot box is empty at 7am being present when the Presiding Officer marks a ballot paper on behalf of a voter being present at the close of poll to observe the sealing up of the ballot box and other packages attaching their own seal to the ballot box or any packet in addition to the official seal What happens in a polling station? Polling station staff will: ask voters for their name and address, and make sure they are eligible to vote ask voters for photographic ID mark a straight line against the voter's entry on the register of electors call out the number and name of the elector write the elector number on a list next to the number(s) of the ballot paper(s) to be issued ensure the ballot paper(s) include the official mark (e.g. a barcode or watermark) fold the ballot

paper(s) and then hand them to the voter unfolded so that they can see all of the options on the ballot paper(s) Voters will need to produce one of the following documents in order to prove their identity: a passport issued by the UK, any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, a British Overseas Territory, an EEA state, or a Commonwealth country (including an Irish Passport Card) a driving licence issued by the UK, any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, or an EEA state (this includes a provisional driving licence) a biometric immigration document an identity card bearing the Proof of Age Standards Scheme hologram (a PASS card) a Ministry of Defence Form 90 (Defence Identity Card) a Blue Badge a national identity card issued by an EEA state an Older Person's Bus Pass funded by the Government of the United Kingdom a Disabled Person's Bus Pass funded by the Government of the United Kingdom an Oyster 60+ Card funded by the Government of the United Kingdom a Freedom Pass a Scottish National Entitlement Card issued in Scotland a 60 and Over Welsh Concessionary Travel Card issued in Wales a Disabled Person's Welsh Concessionary Travel Card issued in Wales a Senior SmartPass issued in Northern Ireland a Registered Blind SmartPass or Blind Person's SmartPass issued in Northern Ireland a War Disablement SmartPass issued in Northern Ireland a 60+ SmartPass issued in Northern Ireland a Half Fare SmartPass issued in Northern Ireland an Electoral Identity Card issued in Northern Ireland Voter Authority Certificate These documents are listed in legislation and no other forms of identity can be accepted. The identification document does not need to be current, but the photograph must be of a good enough likeness to allow polling station staff to confirm the identity of the holder. The voter will: mark the ballot paper(s) in private in the polling booth fold the ballot paper(s) and show the ballot paper number(s) and unique identifying mark on the back of the ballot paper(s) to the Presiding Officer place the ballot paper(s) in the ballot box(es) and leave the polling station A single ballot box may be used for all of the elections or one box may be used for each separate election. What assistance is available for voters with disabilities? Through our work with civil society organisations and charities we have identified a range of equipment that can help to overcome the known barriers faced by disabled people. The following equipment should, as a minimum, be provided in all polling stations to support disabled voters: chairs/seating – this provides a place to rest for voters who cannot stand for long periods and a seat for voters who would like to take some time to think before entering the polling booth magnifiers – these can provide support for voters who are visually impaired to vote independently by increasing the size of the text on a document tactile voting device – tactile voting devices provide support for voters who are visually impaired to mark their vote on the ballot paper in the correct place, provided it is placed on the ballot paper correctly. They have been found to provide assistance in completing the ballot paper once visually impaired voters know the position on the ballot paper of the candidate for whom they wish to vote. They do not allow blind voters to vote independently unless they also have accessible information about the order of the candidates on the ballot paper polling booth at wheelchair level – helps to ensure that voters who use a wheelchair are able access a lower writing surface to ensure they can cast their vote in secret in a booth that is accessible badges identifying polling station staff – these help voters more easily identify who is a member of staff in the polling station and can therefore be approached for assistance. pencil grip – these can help voters with dexterity impairments to more easily hold and use a pencil independently ramps (for buildings with steps) – these support access to a polling station for voters who use a wheelchair or have difficulty using steps temporary alerters or temporary doorbells

for any doors that are required to remain shut during the day (for example, fire doors) – these provide a way for voters to let polling station staff know that they need assistance to open the door so they can access the polling station. These do not need to be permanently fixed or installed in a building used as a polling station but can be temporarily placed at an accessible level on a table or chair next to any doors that must remain closed appropriate lighting – some polling station venues have good lighting but others may need additional lighting at the desk; to ensure that voters can clearly see the faces of staff, and in the polling booths; to support voters with visual impairments to be able to read and complete the ballot paper. parking spaces reserved for disabled voters (where parking is available at the venue) – this ensures that disabled voters can park as close as possible to the polling station a large print version of the ballot papers (for reference purposes only) Voters with sight loss may use apps on their mobile phones or carry pocket-sized assistive equipment, such as video magnifiers to help them read documents. These could be used in conjunction with the template. The Returning Officer may also have provided magnifying glasses to support voting without assistance. If a voter is unable to mark a ballot paper themselves because they have a disability, the Presiding Officer or a companion can mark it for them. The voter must tell the polling station staff that this is how they want to vote and the reason why. If a companion marks the ballot paper for a voter, they will be asked to fill in a form. A companion cannot assist more than two electors to vote at an election. Electors can contact the Returning Officer to explain any specific access needs that they have. As a result, there may be extra equipment in certain polling stations where the Returning Officer has allocated specific equipment to meet those access needs. What are Tellers? Tellers stand outside polling stations and record the elector numbers of people who have voted. They can then identify likely supporters who have not voted yet and encourage them to vote before the close of poll. Tellers have no legal status and voters can refuse to give information to them. What happens after polls close? Polls close at 10pm. Any voters waiting in a queue at their polling station at 10pm will be allowed to vote, even if they haven't been issued with their ballot paper(s) yet. Once all voters who have been issued with ballot paper(s) have voted, the Presiding Officer must seal the ballot box. Candidates, agents and polling agents can also add their own seal if they want to. The Presiding Officer must then complete a number of official forms: the ballot paper account (which states how many ballot papers were issued) the list of voters with disabilities assisted by companions the list of votes marked by the Presiding Officer the statement of the number of voters whose votes were marked by the Presiding Officer the list of tendered votes the Evaluation Form (VIDEF) the Ballot Paper Refusal List (BPRL) Duty to maintain secrecy in the polling station Anyone attending a polling station must maintain the secrecy of the ballot. In particular, the following information must not be disclosed: the name or electoral number of who has or has not voted the number or other unique identifying mark on a ballot paper Anyone attending a polling station must not try to determine how a voter has voted or who they are about to vote for. A polling agent can mark off on their copy of the register of electors those voters who have applied for ballot papers. If the polling agent leaves the polling station during the hours of polling, they must leave the marked copy of the register in the polling station to ensure that secrecy requirements are not breached. Any person found guilty of breaching the secrecy requirements can face an unlimited fine, or may be imprisoned for up to six months. Observing the verification and count You are entitled to attend the verification and count. You are only permitted to observe the process. You are

not allowed to enter the restricted area where staff count the votes. Returning Officers have the right to limit the number of observers who may be present at any one time during the verification and count. The RO is responsible for verifying and counting the votes cast in their area. They are responsible for declaring the results of any local council elections and any local area mayoral elections. The RO will be able to tell you when and where the counts will take place. Who can attend the count? The following people are entitled by law to attend the verification and count: Returning Officers and their staff candidates plus one guest election agents (or a sub-agent on their behalf) counting agents Electoral Commission representatives observers accredited by the Electoral Commission any other person permitted by the RO The RO may allow representatives of the media to attend the verification and count. They must not interfere with the process or compromise the secrecy of the vote. What do counting agents do? Counting agents have a number of important roles to play at the count: they observe the counting process and make sure that it is accurate they can draw to the attention of count staff any doubtful ballot papers if they disagree with a decision by the RO to reject a ballot paper, they can ask the RO to mark on the ballot paper "rejection objected to" if a count is suspended for any reason, counting agents can add their seals when the RO seals the ballot boxes and envelopes What is verification? After polling stations close at 10pm the ballot boxes will be delivered to the count venue. Postal ballot papers previously received and opened will also be brought to the venue in sealed ballot boxes. All ballot papers must then be verified. Verification has two main purposes: to make sure and show that all ballot papers issued at polling stations and all the returned postal ballot papers have been brought to the count to provide the figure that should match the result of the count The number of ballot papers in each box are counted and will be compared with the number on the ballot paper account. If the number of ballot papers in each box matches the ballot paper account the verification of that box is complete. If the numbers do not match, the ballot papers will be recounted and the documentation checked again. This process will continue until the RO is satisfied as to the actual number of ballot papers to be included in the count. How are the votes counted? After the verification stage is complete, the RO must mix the polling station and postal vote ballot papers before the votes are sorted and counted. The ballot papers should be kept face upwards and be visible at all times to any candidates, agents and observers present. Any doubtful ballot papers should be placed aside for adjudication. Staff will count the number of votes at each election cast for each candidate. Where more than one candidate is to be elected in a ward, ROs may use different methods to establish the votes cast for each candidate, for example, by using counting sheets. The candidate(s) with the most votes are elected. The RO will make a declaration stating who has been elected after each contest has been counted. What are doubtful ballot papers? A doubtful ballot paper is a ballot paper that has not been completed in accordance with the instructions. During the count, these ballot papers will be placed aside. The RO will adjudicate these ballot papers regularly throughout the count to determine whether the intention of the voter clearly appears on the ballot paper. An announcement will be made that an adjudication on doubtful ballot papers is about to be made. The RO will decide whether each doubtful ballot paper is valid in the presence of candidates, agents and observers. You can attend the adjudication but it will not be delayed if you are not present. The RO will inform those present whether or not each doubtful ballot paper is valid and the reason for their decision. The ROs decision is final and can only be challenged by an election petition. Any doubtful ballot papers that are declared as

valid must be counted and included in the total number of votes cast for the appropriate candidate. A ballot paper will not be counted if it: is unmarked does not contain the official mark contains votes for more candidates than the number of vacancies (local elections) contains more than one vote (mayoral elections) contains any mark or writing that can identify the voter does not indicate the voter's intention with certainty The RO must mark the word "rejected" on any ballot paper that is rejected and must draw up a statement showing the number of ballot papers rejected for these reasons. What happens if candidates have the same number of votes? If two or more candidates have the same number of votes, the Returning Officer must decide between them by drawing lots. Duty to maintain secrecy Anyone attending the count has a duty to maintain the secrecy of the count. In particular, anyone attending must not: ascertain or attempt to ascertain number or other unique identifying mark on the back of any ballot paper communicate any information obtained at the count as to the candidate for whom any vote is given on any particular ballot paper Submitting feedback We welcome feedback from your electoral observations which you can submit using our feedback form. If you want to submit feedback on these elections, the deadline for feedback to be considered is 9 June 2023. Feedback may be shared with relevant Returning Officers to help improve the running of elections and the observer scheme. You may find it helpful to print a copy of the feedback form in advance to take with you when observing. If you would like to send feedback in a different format please email observers@electoralcommission.org.uk.

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Our consultations On this page How we developed the codes Key themes Conclusion Draft codes of practice First published: 22 April 2020 Last updated: 22 April 2020 Summary

On 21 April 2020 we submitted two codes of practice to the Minister for the Constitution and Devolution to approve and lay before Parliament. They are about election spending: one on spending by candidates and one on spending by parties.

Between September and December 2018 we carried out a consultation on the codes. We wanted views from a wide range of stakeholders, and we recognised how important it was that people who will use the codes support them. This paper sets out the feedback we received and how we responded to it. We've used the feedback to make sure the codes are right and clear. In some cases we were not able to make the amendments suggested because the law would need to be changed to allow us to do this. Or because proposed changes were inconsistent with what is in the law.

Overview A code of practice is a legal guidance document. The Representation of the People Act 1983 and the Political Parties Elections and Referendums Act 2000 allow us to draft codes giving guidance on candidate and party spending. The Government now needs to ask Parliament to approve the codes. The legislation uses general categories such as 'advertising' and 'unsolicited material to electors' to identify costs that should be included in each category. The codes set out detailed guidance on what is and is not included in these different categories of spending. The codes relate to elections that the UK Parliament is responsible for, i.e. UK Parliamentary, Northern Ireland Assembly and local government elections. In some circumstances they will apply to other elections as well . They will improve transparency, fairness and consistency in reporting for candidates, agents and parties. They will make it clearer to voters and observers what was spent on different activities during campaigns. We're grateful to the many stakeholders who provided feedback on the codes. Overall, people were supportive of our aim for the codes to make it clearer what should be reported as party and candidate spending.

Key themes in the feedback focused on:

- Language and structure of the codes
- Transparency for spending on digital campaigning
- Splitting spending between party and candidate
- Treatment of overheads
- Treatment of costs of items used at several elections
- Treatment of material featuring a prominent party member
- Treatment of legal costs
- Interaction of the codes with other guidance we issue

Why we wrote the codes The codes are written to help parties, candidates and agents meet their legal obligations and improve transparency for voters. Election legislation allows us to prepare legal guidance on what is and is not included in categories of spending listed in the legislation. When in force parties and candidates will need to take the codes into account when they campaign and report spending after an election. If enacted the codes will give clarity to candidates, agents and parties about what items count towards spending and whether spending should be reported in a candidate return or a party return. They also set out how to report spending on digital campaigning. Electoral law is in need of reform to make it clear and easy to understand. In the absence of reform, the codes allow us to provide clarity and consistency in reporting election spending. We therefore urge Parliament to approve the codes.

What elections the codes apply to The codes will apply to elections to: the UK Parliament, Northern Ireland Assembly and local Councils in England. In some circumstances the codes will apply to other elections. We're working on separate codes for elections that the Scottish Parliament and National Assembly

for Wales are responsible for – i.e. Scottish Parliamentary, Scottish local government, National Assembly for Wales and Welsh local government elections. The consultation for the Welsh Codes has closed, and the consultation for the Scottish Codes began on 15 April 2020. We are working with the Scottish and Welsh Governments on ensuring these codes are ready for the next set of scheduled elections in 2021.

How we developed the codes We used our experience regulating elections and reviewing financial returns to draw up the codes. We wanted to work collaboratively with people who would either use the codes or had expertise in particular areas. We consulted key stakeholders early in the project. For example, we spoke to parties at meetings of the Parliamentary Parties Panel and the panels for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. We also got feedback from experts in digital campaigning and the Information Commissioner's Office. As well as inviting written and verbal feedback, during the formal consultation period we: held meetings with parties, and held drop-in sessions in Parliament for MPs. This ensured we received views from a wide range of people. We received 42 responses to the consultation . All the feedback was logged and sorted into key themes. We then started to redraft elements of the codes. While doing this, we met with parties to gather more detail and discuss the key themes. We shared updated drafts of the codes and held a round table with parties of the Westminster Parliamentary Parties Panel. This was very helpful as we were able to talk through the changes in the updated drafts and decide how we could improve the final codes.

Following further feedback from Cabinet Office and political parties we have increased the number of examples and confirmed that these examples will form part of the statutory codes. The additional examples cover: when spending counts towards the candidate or party spending limit campaign material that is distributed across a number of electoral areas situations when party staff are paid to promote particular candidates when costs associated with mobile phones will count towards a limit We have also added clarity to the examples of 'notional spending' where a candidate or agent makes use of items provided by someone else. Key themes identified from the consultation responses

Language and structure We thought carefully about language use and the structure of the codes. We worked to strike a balance between the codes being easy to understand and sufficiently formal to secure the required approval from the UK Parliament for a legal document. Respondents generally thought the codes were too technical, especially for volunteers who may not have a deep understanding of the law. We revised the overall structure of the codes and simplified the language, while maintaining the precision and accuracy a legal document needs. We shortened sentences and used bulleted lists to make the codes easier to read. We changed the introductory sections to help readers understand the legal context of the codes. We also made it clear how the codes will sit with our other guidance.

Transparency for spending on digital campaigning The campaign spending rules apply to all activities, including digital. More information on this can be found in our report ' Digital Campaigning: Increasing transparency for voters '. Election legislation does not have a separate category for reporting spending on digital campaigning. This means spending on digital campaigning has to be reported under existing categories. For example, spending to increase the visibility of an online advert would be reported under advertising. Most feedback recognised that the codes explained how the rules apply to digital activity. When we drafted the codes we included examples of different types of digital campaigning to explain when and under which category they should be reported. We received mixed comments about our approach to this. Some people said more specific examples should be used. A similar number of comments acknowledged that in order to future proof the codes we needed to use more generic examples. People

also said that codes should focus equally on digital and non-digital campaigning techniques. We've included references to data analytics and photo licensing. We did this because the feedback said these were relevant and should be included. We also included additional non-digital examples to reflect more traditional methods of campaigning that are still used at elections. Splitting party and candidate spending The codes make clearer what is to be reported as candidate or party spending. The law only allows us to address this in the candidate code. The majority of feedback was supportive of our aim to clarify what should be reported as candidate and party spending. Most responses also set out the practical challenges faced by parties in splitting spending. Other comments related to the principle we adopted. The principle we adopted is, where the candidate or constituency can be identified the spending has to be reported in the candidate return. We received four types of responses on the principle we used: the principle should be expanded to include other types of activity where targeting of material occurs in a constituency asking for more clarification on how the split works in practice and how spending is split across multiple candidates and elections the principle could result in a wide interpretation of what counts as candidate spending how the principle works with the rules on notional spending The codes are based on the definitions of party and candidate spending set out in the law. We are content our drafting in the codes reflects this. We are not able to extend these definitions to include, for example, how adverts are targeted. However, we thought adding more examples would help others understand our position. The additional examples show how the principles in the code apply to splitting spending in different cases. In future we will look at providing further guidance on how to split spending across a number of candidates and elections in other guidance we produce. The large number of possible scenarios mean it's not possible to address all of these in the codes. Notional spending occurs where a candidate or party is given goods or services, towards their campaign, free of charge or at lower cost than their commercial value by supporters. The full value of the notional spending counts towards the spending limit in the same way as actual spending on the campaign. During meetings with respondents we were able to provide clarity about how the principle of splitting spending works with the rules on notional spending. In 2018 there was a criminal case about candidate election spending at the 2015 UK Parliamentary election. During this case, in July 2018 the Supreme Court considered the law on notional spending. Some of the respondents referred to the Supreme Court judgement, concerned that it had changed the interpretation of how notional spending is incurred. We welcome this opportunity to reassure them that this is not the case: the Judgement did not change the law or introduce any new requirements about what candidates and agents must report. Nonetheless, we have produced new guidance on notional spending to further explain how the rules work in practice. And while we don't have the power to add further clarity to this decision in the codes, we are confident that the codes will support candidates and agents in understanding what costs they need to report. We asked people if the codes could have any other consequences for the candidate and party spending rules. A small number of responses referred to the existing spending limits at elections. One comment was that if more types of spending had to be reported in candidates' returns the current spending limit was too low. At this time we do not think the codes will have a big impact on spending limits. We will keep this issue under review. Treatment of overheads The codes give examples of overhead costs directly connected to campaigning such as electricity, phone and accommodation costs. The candidate code has a separate heading for these types of costs. This is because

the law has a specific category, called 'accommodation and administration'. The law on party spending does not have this category. Overheads form part of the spending in each category in the legislation, and the codes reflect this. We recognise however that these costs may be reported as a lump sum. There were two main types of feedback on overheads: which overhead costs should be included; and how to apportion these costs. The majority of responses talked about the practical difficulties of apportioning overhead costs and asked why certain types of overhead costs were included or excluded. The types of overhead costs we used were based on the types of costs that had been reported at previous elections and referendums. We have now included business rates in the list of items included in overheads in both codes.

We've made it clearer in the party code that it is costs over and above usual overhead costs for the campaign period that need to be reported. We have included an example to help explain this. Treatment of costs of items used at several elections The codes set out how costs of items bought and used at one election and re-used at another election are to be reported. Our view is that the full cost of items that may be reused at another election count towards the spending limit at the first election they are used at. This position has been included in our guidance for some time. Some respondents didn't appear to consider that, in some circumstances, re-use of items by different people is actually notional spending. For example if a candidate is using something that was used by another candidate this is likely to be a donation and notional spending. This is also the case where a party gives a candidate items that have been used at previous elections. We recognise this part of the code gives some advantage to candidates who stood at previous elections. So we've made this principle as narrow as possible. We have limited it to items actually owned by candidates and have excluded notional spending and items previously hired by candidates. Most respondents thought this principle was more problematic for political parties who purchase capital items rather than for candidates. We discussed this at the round-table with the Parties Panel. Some responses said that parties will often buy high value capital items during a campaign period, for example a van or computer system, which are intended to be used at future elections. They said that it did not seem appropriate to account for the full cost of such items only once. In response to this we amended the wording in both codes. They now explain that where an item is bought and used for purposes other than use at an election, the cost of the portion used at the election must be reported. We also added a range of examples to illustrate how this principle applies to different situations including physical items and computer software. Treatment of material featuring a prominent party member When we first drafted the codes we wanted to explain how spending on material that promotes well known members of the party should be reported. We were thinking about situations where, for example, material featuring the party leader is distributed in the area where they are standing for election. The same material might also be distributed outside that constituency, to promote the party more generally. In the codes we used the phrase 'prominent party member' to refer to this type of party member. Our view is that in most cases where material featuring a 'prominent party member' is distributed outside the area in which they are standing, the spending should be reported in the party return. But we also thought that some part of the cost of the material distributed in the constituency in which the prominent party member is standing should be in their candidate return. The majority of the feedback commented on the phrase 'prominent party member' and how it could be open to different interpretations. People asked for clarification on what we meant by the phrase. It was clear it was confusing. We therefore redrafted the wording to make it clearer

that this part of the codes deals with situations where material is distributed outside the constituency in which the person featured in it is standing. We also included some examples to demonstrate the principle. The examples address physical and digital distribution of such material. The costs to be included are limited to the cost of distributing the material in the constituency. Our examples recognise that with digital material these costs may not be quantifiable and therefore may not appear in the candidate return. Treatment of legal costs The consultation draft of the codes set out that the cost of legal advice could be included under a number of different categories of campaign spending in both the candidate and party codes. During meetings with parties we received very helpful feedback on this. It gave us a better understanding of types of legal costs that parties and candidates can incur. It also explained the type and frequency of litigation that candidates can face. Some respondents were concerned that reference to legal costs in the codes could encourage litigation. It could be used as a way of exhausting an opponent's spending limit. We do not want to encourage this type of litigation, and have redrafted this part of the codes to recognise that in most cases the cost of legal advice will not be an election expense, but there may be some circumstances where it might be. Interaction of the codes with other guidance we issue We used the introduction to the codes to explain their purpose and their legal background. Some people said that they found the technical wording and legal references hard to understand. People also wanted more information on how the codes were different to other types of guidance we publish. The codes give detailed guidance on the types of spending that have to be reported in spending returns. They do this by listing what should be reported under each kind of expense. Once approved, the codes will be part of the law. Candidates and parties must have regard to them. If a person is charged with breaking the law on campaign spending, and they can show that they followed the code, this will be a defence in any court case. In this way they are different to other guidance we produce. We have changed the introduction to the codes to make it clear how they differ to other guidance we publish. We have had to keep some of the technical language to reflect the legal nature of the codes and the fact that they will be laid before Parliament. The codes will be supported by other guidance we publish which set out the rules that apply at each election. Conclusion We are grateful for all the feedback we received and support for our aim of the codes to improve consistency and transparency in reporting of party and candidate spending. In response to the feedback we've updated the codes. Where we've not been able to make changes, we've explained why. We've addressed some of the feedback by including additional examples in the codes. These examples show how the principles in the code apply to different scenarios. We're also updating other guidance we produce to cover some areas of feedback that we can't deal with in the codes. This guidance supports the codes. The codes have been submitted to the Minister for the Constitution and Devolution to approve and lay before Parliament. Further information What elections do the codes apply to? The code of practice on candidate spending applies to the following elections: United Kingdom Parliamentary General elections (UKPGE) Northern Ireland Assembly elections Combined Authority Mayoral elections Greater London Authority elections Mayoral elections in England Local elections in England By-elections in any of the above The code of practice on expenses for political parties applies at the following elections: United Kingdom Parliamentary General elections (UKPGE) Northern Ireland Assembly elections Spending by political parties is also regulated in relation to other elections taking place at the same time as the above categories of elections. Where there is a regulated period in force for a UKPGE relevant elections

are: Combined Authority Mayoral elections Greater London Authority elections Mayoral elections in England Police and Crime Commissioner elections Local elections in England Local elections in Scotland Local elections in Wales Local elections in Northern Ireland Any by-election Where there is a regulated period in force for a Northern Ireland Assembly election, local elections in Northern Ireland are relevant elections. Where there is a combined regulated period in operation under Part III of Schedule 9 of the Political Parties Elections and Referendums Act 2000 elections to the following are also relevant: Scottish Parliament National Assembly for Wales Stakeholders providing feedback We received 42 responses to the consultation. Respondents included: Representatives of political parties (22) MPs (9) Others (11) Others: representatives from local and devolved Government, s, academics, policy institutes and the Information Commissioner's Office The codes Draft Code of Practice for Candidates UK April 2020 (PDF) Draft Code of Practice for Political Parties UK, April 2020 (PDF)

Home Elections Act On this page Changes Our role First published: 5 July 2021 Last updated: 2 February 2023 Summary From May 2023, there are changes which aim to provide greater flexibility and choice in how disabled voters are supported to vote at polling stations. These changes apply to local elections in England, Police and Crime Commissioner elections in England and Wales, and general elections in the UK including recall petitions. The changes were applied for the first time at the local elections taking place in 230 areas of England in May 2023. Changes Disabled voters will be able to choose anyone who is over 18 to accompany them in the polling station to help them vote, including carers who may not themselves be eligible to vote at the election. There will also be changes to the assistance available at polling stations. From May 2023, Returning Officers will need to take all reasonable steps to provide support for disabled voters at polling stations. This will improve the range and quality of support available and speed up the process of providing additional support where needed. Our role We have consulted organisations that represent disabled people, electoral administrators, and the Government to update our guidance for electoral administrators. Our guidance will recommend what Returning Officers should make available in polling stations for disabled voters, so that they receive the service they are entitled to. Working alongside partners, we will tell disabled voters about the changes and how to contact the electoral services team at their local council if they need support. Related content [Elections Act about the UK Government's Elections Act](#) and what it means for voting and campaigning [About the Elections Act](#) [about the Elections Bill](#), including the measures it contains and which elections it applies to. [Changes to proxy voting](#) [about the proposed changes to voting by proxy](#), where someone you trust votes on your behalf. [Preventing undue influence](#) [Read about the proposals to simplify and clarify the offence of undue influence](#) (when someone uses, or threatens to use, force or violence to make someone vote a certain way).

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EU referendum First published: 29 July 2019 Last updated: 29 July 2019 [Overview](#)
Registered campaigners at the EU referendum were required to complete campaign spending returns if they spent more than £10,000 on their campaign. If they spent £10,000 or less they were required to submit nil campaign expenditure returns One hundred and twenty-three organisations and individuals registered with as campaigners at the referendum. Altogether, the 123 campaigners reported spending £32,642,158 on campaigning at the referendum. Remain: £19,309,588 Leave: £13,332,569 [View full details of EU referendum spending](#) . [Chart: Spending by campaigners against the spending limit](#) [Chart: Spending over the campaign period by campaigners](#) [Related content](#) [Results and turnout at the EU referendum](#) [View the results and turnout at the EU referendum](#) [Report: The costs of delivering the June 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union](#) [Read our report about the costs of delivering the 2016 EU referendum](#) [Report: The regulation of campaigners at the referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union held on 23 June 2016](#) [Read our report about the regulation of campaigners at the 2016 EU referendum](#) [Testing the EU referendum question](#) [Find out about our testing of the EU referendum question](#)

11. Managing risks and opportunities in Wales | Electoral Commission Search

11. Managing risks and opportunities in Wales You are in the Corporate Plan for Wales 2022/23 to 2026/27 section Home Our plans and priorities Corporate Plan for Wales 2022/23 to 2026/27 First published: 25 April 2022 Last updated: 25 April 2022

Managing risks and opportunities We have designed our risk management processes to: maintain a clear framework across the organisation within which risks are identified, assessed, managed and regularly reviewed assign specific responsibility for managing risks in their areas of responsibility to individual Executive Team members (including managing risks to significant projects) ensure that the likelihood and impact of risks are assessed on a consistent basis ensure that existing risks are regularly reviewed and that new risks are identified and managed provide the Chief Executive, the Audit and Risk Committee and the Board with assurance that the risks are being managed appropriately We identify and evaluate risks by: taking key decisions following consideration of opportunities, risks and associated mitigations, which are separately identified in papers for the Board and those taking delegated decisions considering whether new risks should be added to the organisational risk register, and whether the existing risks' profiles need to be changed, both as changes are identified and as part of our quarterly review of risk completing a review of risk at the start of each year, to ensure that the organisational risk register captures risk to the delivery of objectives in our Corporate Plan presenting a risk report to each meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee and also annually to the Board identifying risk through our planning process, audit, review of operations and training activities assigning owners to risks who formally review the likelihood, potential impact and the mitigations in place for all risks each quarter subject to review by the Audit and Risk Committee We are committed to continuously improving our risk management processes and are currently reviewing our procedures to ensure they remain in line with good practice and match our ambitions for this Corporate Plan period.

Navigation 10. Measuring our performance in Wales Section 10 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan for Wales

Inquiry report: the voting registration process for EU citizens resident in the UK for the 2019 European Parliamentary elections held in the UK | Electoral Commission Search Inquiry report: the voting registration process for EU citizens resident in the UK for the 2019 European Parliamentary elections held in the UK You are in the European Parliamentary elections section Home European Parliamentary elections On this page Our evidence The process for registering to vote for citizens of other EU Member States Promoting awareness of the registration process for citizens of other EU Member States Impact on EU citizens Key dates in the lead-up to the elections Background to the policy and legislation First published: 8 October 2019 Last updated: 8 October 2019 Overview Some citizens of other EU member states living in the UK, who had wanted to vote in the 2019 European Parliamentary elections in the UK, experienced difficulties in ensuring they were registered to vote. Ultimately, this meant that some people who were entitled to vote and wanted to vote in the European Parliamentary elections in the UK were unable to do so. We looked at the registration process for EU citizens resident in the UK in relation to European Parliamentary elections, and what happened in practice before polling day in May 2019 to enable EU citizens to register to vote and vote in the UK. We also gathered evidence on the impact on EU citizens and their ability to register and vote in the European Parliamentary elections in the UK. It sets out in detail: the process for registering to vote for citizens of other EU Member States the background to the policy and the legislation what the Electoral Commission, the UK Government and Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) did to promote awareness of the registration process for EU citizens data about the registration of EU citizens What we found In summary, the feedback and comments we received from EU citizens, their families and elected representatives highlighted three main areas of concern: they had not been aware of the need to complete an additional declaration as well as an application to register to vote. they had not been able to submit a declaration in time before the deadline set in law. they thought they had submitted a declaration in time, but were still not included on the electoral register and were not able to vote. It is not possible to conclusively verify how many were affected. This is because there are no comprehensive data sources available to us or any other body that would tell us how many voters wanted to register and were unable to do so, or tell us how many attended a polling station on 23 May but were not able to be issued with a ballot paper. Data provided by Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) after the elections shows that in the weeks leading up to the deadline more than 400,000 EU citizens submitted a declaration that was received and processed, which meant that they were therefore able to vote in the UK at the 2019 European Parliamentary elections. In total, around 450,000 were registered to vote in these European Parliament elections as a result of returning a declaration (UC1 form). This represents just over a fifth of citizens of other EU Member States who had been included in the May 2019 local government register. Approximately four in five EU citizens (1.7 million) who had previously registered to vote did not submit an additional declaration in time to be registered to vote at the European Parliamentary elections in the UK. Some of these people may have wanted to vote in the UK but were not able to submit the declaration in time before the deadline, although we have no data that allows us to assess how many were in this position. Equally, it is not possible to assess how many of these people opted to vote in the EU Member State where they held citizenship, or actively decided not to vote in the elections at all. Our evidence We have analysed evidence from a wide range of sources to identify the difficulties that some EU citizens in the UK had in registering to vote and submitting their declaration before the legal deadline

of 7 May 2019. Our evidence included: calls made and emails sent to our enquiry lines formal complaints made directly to us concerns raised by MPs – via parliamentary questions and correspondence (before and after the elections) about the registration process for EU citizens and EU citizens being unable to vote feedback from members of the Electoral Co-ordination and Advisory Board (ECAB) – a group coordinated by the Electoral Commission and the Cabinet Office (which brings together the 12 Regional Returning Officers from across the UK), on their experiences relating to the registration and participation of EU citizens and what activity they carried out to tell EU citizens what they had to do in order to be able to vote in the European Parliamentary elections feedback from electoral administrators about the challenges they faced in relation to EU citizens registering to vote and voting data from Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) about how many citizens of other EU Member States were registered to vote at the 2019 European Parliamentary elections, and who had been included in the May 2019 local government register. The process for registering to vote for citizens of other EU Member States EU citizens' right to vote Citizens of all EU Member States living in the UK are entitled to register and vote at European Parliamentary elections. This includes EU citizens who are not British, Irish or qualifying Commonwealth citizens. British citizens resident in Gibraltar are entitled to register to vote at European Parliamentary elections in the South West electoral region. Legal requirements for registering to vote EU citizens (other than British citizens, and citizens of the Republic of Ireland, Cyprus and Malta) had to complete and submit an additional declaration if they wanted to vote in the UK at the May 2019 European Parliamentary elections, even if they were already registered to vote for local government elections in the UK. If they preferred, EU citizens living in the UK could choose to vote in the country where they held citizenship instead, and they did not have to submit a declaration in the UK to do so. The deadline for submitting an application and declaration ahead of the May 2019 European Parliamentary elections was midnight on Tuesday 7 May 2019 (12 working days before polling day). This was the same as the deadline for applications by any other eligible citizens to apply to register to vote at the 23 May elections. Practical requirements for registering to vote Applying to register to vote Citizens of other EU Member States could apply online to register to vote in the same way as UK or Commonwealth citizens. If their application was determined successful by the ERO they would be included in the register and able to vote at local government elections. Alternatively, they could download and complete a paper application form, which they would need to submit and ensure was received by their local ERO before the deadline. Paper application forms were available to download from the UK Government's register to vote website. Completing the declaration In addition to applying to register to vote, citizens of other EU Member States also needed to download and complete a paper application form which included the necessary declaration (commonly referred to as a 'UC1' form) in order to be included in the register for European Parliamentary elections. This form was available on our Your Vote Matters website from 2 April 2019. These electors could also have requested a copy of the form from their local ERO, and in many cases would have been sent the form directly by their ERO. They needed to send the signed declaration form to their local ERO. EROs could only determine applications and declarations which they had received by the deadline of midnight on Tuesday 7 May 2019. Electors could not complete and submit this declaration online as the law requires it to include a signature; however, electors could have submitted a scanned copy of the completed form as an attachment to an e-mail. Promoting awareness of the registration process for citizens of other EU

Member States What we did Contacts with Cabinet Office On 9 January 2019 the Commission's chair, Sir John Holmes, had a meeting with Rt Hon David Lidington CBE MP, in his capacity as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and a senior Cabinet Office minister. At this meeting our contingency planning work in relation to scheduled and unscheduled electoral events, including the potential for European Parliamentary elections in the UK, was discussed. Our contingency plans were also the subject of a meeting between our staff and Cabinet Office officials on 25 January 2019. On 6 March 2019 our Chief Executive, Bob Posner, had a meeting with the Minister for the Constitution, Chloe Smith MP. At this meeting, we outlined its intention to publish guidance as part of its contingency planning for potential European Parliamentary elections. Further to these meetings, our Chief Executive wrote on 29 March 2019 to David Lidington about the ongoing uncertainty about whether the European Parliamentary elections would be held in the UK. He highlighted the fixed dates in the electoral timetable and the extent to which this limited the available time for prudent operational and regulatory preparations. In particular, he highlighted the need for the UK Government to provide assurances for Returning Officers about the reimbursement of any reasonable spending by them on contingency preparations. After the date on which the UK had been due to leave the EU, 29 March, the UK Government wrote to Returning Officers on Monday 1 April, confirming that they would be reimbursed for any expenditure on activity necessarily undertaken to prepare for the possibility of a European Parliamentary elections. Guidance and advice to EROs Before any electoral event, we provide guidance and advice to ROs and EROs to support and encourage their provision of a high quality service for voters. In addition, the Electoral Coordination and Advisory Board (a UK-wide body which is co-chaired by us and Cabinet Office, which brings together key stakeholders from across the electoral community, including the 12 Regional Returning Officers) held a series of teleconferences in the lead up to the European Parliamentary elections to review contingency planning for the then unconfirmed poll. The first of these teleconferences took place on 11 March 2019. The registration and participation of EU citizens was raised formally as an issue at the ECAB teleconference on 29 March 2019. We provided additional support to electors and electoral administrators by amending the existing UC1 form with supplementary information such as new deadlines and qualifying EU member states since the last polls, and circulated guidance on registering EU citizens to all EROs and ROs on 4 April 2019, advising EROs on sending declaration forms to EU citizens. Direct public awareness activity We have a statutory duty to promote public awareness of electoral systems (and connected matters). Each year, we run a voter registration campaign ahead of scheduled elections to make sure that eligible voters are aware of the need to be registered, and also that they know there is a deadline by which they need to do this. While we maintain contingency plans for unscheduled polls, the late confirmation that the 2019 European Parliamentary elections would be held in the UK significantly reduced our planning and set up time. We would normally run a campaign for a scheduled poll of this significance over a period of four to six weeks – and it would have been many months in the planning – but due to the late announcement and enabling by government of these elections proceeding, we only had two and a half weeks from launch to the registration deadline. Activity to raise awareness with citizens of other EU Member States During those two and a half weeks, we ran a mass campaign, delivered through TV advertising, to reach as many eligible voters as possible. This was supported by targeted digital advertising to reach our under-registered groups. These are primarily those who have recently moved house, and those aged 18-34. Additionally, in

this case, that included those who had not had local elections earlier in May. As well as promoting awareness among UK and eligible Commonwealth citizens ahead of the May 2019 European Parliamentary elections, we used our own channels and platforms to promote the need for citizens of other EU Member States to complete the UC1 declaration if they wanted to vote in the UK. This included promoting messages on our social media channels , providing information on our yourvotematters.co.uk website , and producing a briefing pack for local authorities and other partner organisations to help them carry out their own awareness work. One of our Twitter posts on 24 April, which reminded EU citizens to submit their declaration forms, was retweeted over 1,500 times and liked over 800 times. The UC1 form itself was added to the ‘What does the European Parliament do?’ page of our Your Vote Matters website on 2 April. This was followed by additional information for EU citizens in mid-April highlighting the need to complete an additional form. This content was in line with that provided to EU citizens in 2014. We also proactively promoted those resources through an edition of our Roll Call newsletter on 30 April, through our ‘Delivering Democracy’ Facebook group with local authorities (where it was seen by well over 100 members), and directly with a variety of organisations relevant to citizens of other EU Member States in the UK. This included contacting 24 Member State Embassies. What the UK Government did The UK Government was responsible for the design and messaging on the register to vote website. This included information and messages for citizens of other EU Member States who wanted to vote at the May 2019 European Parliamentary elections in the UK. On 10 April the Cabinet Office Minister made the legislation which set the date of polling day for the 2019 European Parliamentary elections in the UK. Once that legislation had been made, the Cabinet Office updated the information provided on the landing page of the register to vote website to include messaging for citizens of other EU Member States who wanted to vote. The link to ‘about voting in the European Parliament elections if you’re an EU citizen living in the UK ’ took users to the GOV.UK European Parliament page . This contained a more detailed explanation of how to register to vote, and included a link to the Your Vote Matters website page where users could download what was described as the ‘ European Parliament voter registration form ’. We understand that the Cabinet Office considered whether it would be possible to improve navigation and develop additional functionality for the register to vote website, once it had become clear that the UK would take part in the 2019 European Parliamentary elections. This included considering how to allow citizens of other EU Member States who applied to register to vote through the website to also receive the UC1 form directly. However, officials concluded that there was not enough time to develop, appropriately test, and implement this functionality in the period available. Cabinet Office also considered adding new messaging for citizens of other EU Member States within the user journey for people applying to register to vote online. Officials concluded that it would not be possible to add this without displaying the message to all users when it was relevant to only EU citizens – which they estimated to be about 10% of total applicants. Cabinet Office has reported that there were 235,382 views of the GOV.UK European Parliament page, 25% of which came directly from the link on the Register to Vote homepage. What Electoral Registration Officers did Activity by EROs We asked the Regional Returning Officers for feedback on their experiences relating to the registration and participation of EU citizens. We also asked them about the activity EROs in their electoral region carried out to tell EU citizens what they had to do in order to be able to vote in the European Parliamentary elections. The Association of s also sent out a post-election survey to its members to ask them what they did. Most

responses included reference to their local authority working hard to send out forms, and complete follow up actions as soon as the polls had been confirmed, but also that the process was difficult and restricted due to the timing and the legislation around EU electors. Some examples of what EROs did, included: emails and/or letters sent to all eligible EU nationals telling them that they were eligible to vote in the European Parliamentary elections and that they had to complete and return the UC1 form if they wanted to vote in the UK follow up reminder emails and letters providing all the necessary information, including clear instructions on when EU citizens had to complete and return the UC1 form by, on council websites and related social media targeting messaging to areas with known high concentrations of EU citizens Sending out UC1 forms After the elections we contacted EROs across the UK to ask them to tell us how many UC1 forms they had sent to citizens of other EU Member States who were already registered as local government electors. This indicates that approximately 2.4 million forms were sent out. However, it is not clear that these are all forms sent out to unique electors and it is likely that the figure includes some reminders issued by ERO. We also asked when the forms were sent to electors and the majority of EROs were able to provide this breakdown. However, the data we have received (see chart below) commonly relates to when EROs sent forms to be printed and then dispatched – not when they were directly posted to electors. The data we have received suggests that more than three quarters of all forms had been sent for print and dispatch by 18 April 2019. That is within the two week period after the Commission had emailed EROs to remind them of the need to contact citizens of other EU Member States. Chart 1: UC1 forms: Dates of print and dispatch Feedback from EROs and electoral administrators indicates that, where they held email addresses, some EROs decided to send copies of the UC1 form by email to citizens of other EU Member States who were already included in the local government register. If these emails were recorded as undelivered, they then sent a hard copy form to the elector at their registered address. Feedback from EROs on the challenges they faced After the elections we asked electoral administrations to give us feedback on their experience of running the European Parliamentary elections, and to tell us about any challenges they faced in relation to EU citizens registering to vote and voting. Many of those who responded to our survey talked about the impact of the period of uncertainty about whether the elections would go ahead in the UK, and the late confirmation that it would be held. Where local elections were also held in May, administrators told us they were under considerable pressure and in some instances unable to send UC1 forms to EU citizens as early as they would have wanted or follow up non-responders as they would have done in previous polls. Other issues included: there was a lack of understanding by EU citizens of what they had to do in order to be able to vote UC1 forms were returned after the deadline or with errors some administrators experienced blame on polling day when EU citizens realised that they were unable to vote electoral management software was not 100% up to speed to cope with the volume and processing of UC1s. Impact on EU citizens How many EU citizens were included in the register After the elections we contacted EROs across the UK to ask them to give us information about how many citizens of other EU Member States were registered to vote at the 2019 European Parliamentary elections. We also asked for information about the number of citizens of other EU Member States who had been included in the May 2019 local government register. European Parliamentary electoral data and information from EROs about citizens of other EU Member States This shows that approximately 450,000 (21%) of citizens of other EU Member States who had been included in the May 2019 local government register were also registered to vote in the European Parliamentary

elections in the UK on 23 May 2019. This proportion varied considerably across individual local authority areas, although three quarters of all EROs who returned data to us reported that between 10% and 30% of citizens of other EU Member States who had been included in the May local government register were also registered to vote in the European Parliamentary elections in the UK on 23 May 2019. We cannot know how many of those who were not registered to vote at the European Parliamentary elections in the UK may have wanted to vote in the UK but were not able to submit the declaration in time before the deadline. Equally, it is not possible to assess how many of these people opted to vote in the EU Member State where they held citizenship, or actively decided not to vote in the election at all. Overall, an estimated 37.2% of all registered electors turned out to vote at the May 2019 European Parliamentary elections in the UK. Turnout at the European Parliamentary elections in the UK in 2014 was 35.4%. Comparison with the 2014 European Parliamentary elections Our estimates of the completeness of the local government electoral registers have found that citizens from other EU Member States are less likely to have complete electoral register entries (i.e. be included in the register at their current address) than UK citizens. In Great Britain, the rate of completeness among citizens of other EU Member States was estimated to be 54% in December 2018 (similar to the 53% we found in February/March 2014). This compares to 86% for UK and Irish citizens in December 2018. After the May 2019 European Parliamentary elections we asked EROs to tell us how many citizens of other EU Member States had been added to the register of European Parliamentary electors through the interim notices of alteration to the registers (in the weeks before the registration deadline). We received data covering all but five areas, which showed that approximately 400,000 citizens of other EU Member States were added to the registers ahead of the 2019 elections. Figures from 2014, when 29 EROs were unable to provide data to us, shows that approximately 325,000 citizens of other EU Member States were added to the registers ahead of the May 2014 European Parliamentary elections. However, drawing any comparison between the 2014 and 2019 data is difficult because of the different levels of non-response from EROs, the increase in the absolute number of eligible EU citizens in the UK between 2014 and 2019, and the earlier issue of UC1 forms in 2014 (which might have meant that more electors were added to the register of European Parliamentary electors in the period before the interim notices of alteration). The reasons why some EU citizens were unable to vote We have looked at evidence from a wide range of sources where concerns were raised about EU citizens being unable to vote in the May 2019 in the UK European Parliamentary elections. These sources included: 149 calls made and emails sent directly to the Electoral Commission's enquiry line 618 formal complaints raised directly with the Electoral Commission - we looked at a sample of these complaints which confirmed that they matched the findings from our other data sources concerns raised by MPs – via parliamentary questions and correspondence - before and after the elections raising the issue of EU citizens not being able to register to vote and vote We found that the reasons why some EU citizens were unable to vote fell into three main areas. It is also likely that some citizens of other EU Member States may have chosen to vote in the country where they held citizenship, either because this is something they have previously done or because they did not think that the UK would take part in the 2019 European Parliamentary elections. However, there is no available data on the number of people who actually chose this option. EU citizens who were not aware of the declaration requirement EU citizens who were not aware of the declaration requirement The most frequently cited concern was that some citizens of other EU

Member States were not aware that they needed to complete an additional declaration in order to be included in the register of European Parliamentary electors. This accounted for over half of the queries that we received from EU citizens and most of those we received from a family member on their behalf. It included people who: had successfully completed an application to register to vote (as a local government elector), but did not realise that a further declaration was needed to be able to vote in the European Parliamentary elections in the UK said that the acknowledgement that confirmed they were registered to vote as a local government elector did not tell them that a further declaration was needed, and therefore assumed that this meant they were also registered to vote in European Parliamentary elections in the UK had received a declaration form from their ERO, but didn't understand that they needed to complete it to be able to vote in the European Parliamentary elections in the UK EU citizens who had not submitted a declaration in time EU citizens who had not submitted a declaration in time A smaller number of queries were from citizens of other EU Member States who had understood that they would need to complete a separate declaration in order to be included in the register of European Parliamentary electors, but were unable to submit it before the deadline on 7 May 2019. This included people who: said that they had not received a declaration form from their ERO but found out about the requirement from another source; had downloaded, completed and submitted the form by post, but found it had not been received by the ERO before the deadline said that they had not received a declaration form from their ERO but found out about it from contacting their ERO regarding other issues but too late to be able to submit the declaration had received a declaration form from their ERO, but had not had enough time to complete and submit it by post to the ERO before the deadline EU citizens who submitted a declaration in time but were still unable to vote EU citizens who submitted a declaration in time but were still unable to vote Around a sixth of queries, almost all received directly from citizens of other EU Member States, highlighted that they had been able to complete and submit a declaration before the deadline on 7 May 2019, but found they were still unable to vote. This included people who: had completed and submitted the declaration form by email or by using an online service, but said that the ERO would not accept a submission in that way believed that they had completed and submitted the declaration form by post before the deadline, but said that the ERO claimed they had not received the form by the deadline believed that they had completed and submitted the declaration form by post before the deadline, but said that they were not included in the register of European Parliamentary electors on polling day because of a clerical error by the ERO. Key dates in the lead-up to the elections Key dates in the lead-up to the elections 2019 European Parliamentary elections: chronology of events Date Event July 2014 We publish a report on the administration of the May 2014 European Parliamentary elections in the UK. The report highlights the need to simplify the registration process for citizens of other EU Member States in time for the 2019 European Parliamentary elections. November 2014 The House of Commons Political and Constitutional Reform Committee publishes Fourth Report of Session 2014-15, Voter engagement in the UK. It recommends that we should run a specific campaign aimed at Commonwealth citizens and citizens of other EU Member States resident in the UK on eligibility and how to register to vote. It also recommends that we should bring forward proposals for simplifying the process for EU citizens living in the UK to register to vote at European Parliamentary elections promptly, so that changes can be made before the next elections in 2019. December 2014 Our staff attend initial meeting with Cabinet Office officials on registration process for EU citizens along

with members of other representative groups. January 2015 UK Government responds to European Commission request for information about how it plans to remedy the electoral registration difficulties encountered by some EU citizens living in the UK at the May 2014 European Parliamentary elections. We understand that the UK Government informed the European Commission that it intended to remedy these issues through legislation or practice, with the aim of having a solution in place before the 2019 European Parliamentary elections. February 2015 UK Government publishes response to Political and Constitutional Affairs Committee's report on Voter engagement in the UK, confirming that 'Cabinet Office plans further discussions with us and other electoral stakeholders on the registration process for EU citizens to consider ways to simplify the process for EU citizens living in the UK to register to vote at EP and local elections'. 7 May 2015 UK Parliamentary general election: polling day. 23 June 2016 European Union referendum: polling day. 16 March 2017 European Union (Notification of Withdrawal) Act receives Royal Assent. 29 March 2017 UK Government issues notice of the UK's withdrawal from the EU under Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union. The default EU exit date under Article 50 is defined as 29 March 2019, before the next scheduled European Parliamentary elections in May 2019. 8 June 2017 UK Parliamentary general election: polling day. 13 July 2017 The UK Government introduces the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill. This includes from 'exit day' the repealing of legislation governing the UK's participation in European Parliamentary elections (i.e. the European Parliamentary Elections Act 2002 and the European Parliament (Representation) Act 2003). The Bill also includes delegated powers enabling the repeal of other relevant provisions through secondary legislation. 27 March 2018 We receive confirmation that our 2018-19 budget bid had been approved by Speaker's Committee, including contingency funding for possible European Parliamentary elections in May 2019. 14 May 2018 Minister for the Constitution Chloe Smith MP confirms in replying to a written Parliamentary Question that the UK will not be taking part in the 2019 European Parliamentary elections. The Minister states that the UK Government therefore does not intend to make an Order setting the date of the poll for the European Parliamentary elections in 2019; nor will it undertake the usual preparations for Information Exchange between the UK and the Member States in respect of EU citizens (including UK citizens) living in another Member State. The Minister also confirms that the UK Government has written to every local authority Returning Officer to inform them of the cancellation of the 2019 European Parliamentary election in the UK. 31 May 2018 Minister for the Constitution Chloe Smith MP writes to Sir John Holmes, Chair of the Electoral Commission, expressing the UK Government's view that 'it would not be prudent for money to be spent preparing for elections that the Government is clear will not take place'. 26 June 2018 The European Union (Withdrawal) Bill receives Royal Assent. Schedule 9 provides for the repeal of the two main Acts governing the conduct of European Parliamentary elections: the European Parliamentary Elections Act 2002 and the European Parliament (Representation) Act 2003. However, these repealing provisions would only commence on 'exit day', then defined as 29 March 2019. 3 December 2018 The European Parliamentary Elections Etc. (Repeal, Revocation, Amendment and Saving Provisions) (United Kingdom and Gibraltar) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018 are made. The Regulations provide for the repeal or revocation of all provisions not included in the 2002 Act and the 2003 Act in relation to the franchise and the registration of electors in respect of European Parliamentary elections in the UK and Gibraltar and in relation to the conduct and administration of those elections, including provisions in respect of election expenditure in the UK and Gibraltar. They would

come into force on 'exit day'. 15 January 2019 House of Commons votes against UK Government's Withdrawal Agreement in the first 'meaningful vote'. 23 January 2019 Regulated period for political parties and non-party campaigners begins. 11 March 2019 First weekly teleconference of the Electoral Coordination and Advisory Board. 12 March 2019 House of Commons votes against UK Government's Withdrawal Agreement in the second 'meaningful vote'. 28 March 2019 We receive confirmation that its 2019-20 budget bid had been approved by Speaker's Committee, including contingency funding for possible European Parliamentary elections in May 2019. 21 March 2019 The European Council agrees to an extension of Article 50, meaning Brexit will no longer happen on 29 March 2019. The extension will be until 22 May 2019, provided the Withdrawal Agreement is approved the following week. If not the European Council agrees to an extension until 12 April 2019 and expects the UK to indicate a way forward before this date for consideration by the European Council. 29 March 2019 House of Commons votes against UK Government's Withdrawal Agreement in the third 'meaningful vote'.

Our Chief Executive, Bob Posner, writes to Cabinet Minister David Lidington highlighting the ongoing uncertainty about whether the European Parliamentary elections will be held in the UK and on the need for assurances to Returning Officers that they will be reimbursed for any reasonable spending on contingency preparations.

1 April 2019 Cabinet Minister David Lidington writes to Returning Officers: 'Cabinet Office is therefore confirming that Returning Officers will be reimbursed in the usual way for any expenditure on activity that is necessarily undertaken, at this stage and in the coming weeks, to prepare for the possibility of European Parliamentary elections on Thursday 23 May 2019'. 4 April 2019 We advise Electoral Registration Officers on the sending of UC1 declaration forms to EU citizens. 8 April 2019 European Parliamentary Elections (Appointed Day of Poll) Order 2019 made and laid (came into force on 10 April 2019). 10 April 2019 The UK and EU27 agree a further extension of Article 50 until 31 October 2019, with the possibility of leaving earlier if the Withdrawal Agreement is ratified by both parties before this date. The conclusions state that 'If the UK is still a Member of the EU on 23-26 May 2019 and if it has not ratified the Withdrawal Agreement by 22 May 2019, it must hold the elections to the European Parliament in accordance with Union law. If the United Kingdom fails to live up to this obligation, the withdrawal will take place on 1 June 2019'. 12 April 2019 Deadline for receiving electoral registration applications for 2 May local council and mayoral elections (midnight). 2 May 2019 Local council and mayoral elections (England and Northern Ireland): polling day. 6 May 2019 Bank holiday across UK. 7 May 2019 Cabinet Minister David Lidington confirms the UK will take part in European Parliamentary elections on 23 May. Deadline for receiving electoral registration applications for European Parliamentary elections (midnight).

Deadline for receipt of UC1 declaration forms (midnight). 8 May 2019 Cabinet Minister David Lidington confirms it is no longer possible for Parliament to legislate to cancel European Parliamentary elections. 23 May 2019 European Parliamentary elections (UK and Gibraltar): polling day. Background to the policy and legislation Background to the policy and legislation In 1992, the Maastricht Treaty extended the right to vote and stand as a candidate at European Parliamentary and local government elections in each EU Member State to citizens of other Member States who were resident there. Citizens of Cyprus and Malta were already entitled to vote in European Parliamentary elections in the UK by virtue of their status as Commonwealth citizens. A European Council directive set out the detailed arrangements for the exercise of the right to vote at European Parliamentary elections: citizens of other EU Member States should have to complete the same process as national citizens in

each country to register to vote, but they would also need to submit an additional declaration stating that they would only exercise their right to vote in the Member State where they were living. The UK Parliament subsequently legislated for this declaration requirement, which would only be valid for 12 months after submission.

Changes to legislation before 2014

In 2001, the UK Parliament approved changes to the declaration process for citizens of other Member States to be included in the register for European Parliamentary elections in the UK, to reflect the introduction of rolling electoral registration. Under the new system, eligible citizens could apply to register to vote at any time of the year and would be added to the register by updates published at the beginning of each month. This meant that there was now a deadline for registration applications ahead of any election at 12 working days before polling day. The same deadline would apply to declarations by citizens of other EU Member States ahead of European Parliamentary elections. In 2013, the UK Parliament approved changes to the requirements and process for registering to vote in Great Britain, to move to a system of individual electoral registration. This system had already been introduced in Northern Ireland, since 2003. From June 2014 in England and Wales, September 2014 in Scotland, and June 2018 in Northern Ireland, citizens could also apply to register to vote using an online service. This included citizens of EU Member States applying to register to vote in local government elections. Parliament did not change the requirements for applications and declarations by citizens of other EU Member States to be included in the register of European Parliamentary electors following the introduction of individual electoral registration or online registration. The online service was not configured to allow citizens of other Member States to submit the additional application and declaration needed to be included in the register of European Parliamentary electors.

The 2014 European Parliamentary elections

In our statutory election report published in July 2014, we highlighted that citizens of other EU Member States living in the UK had experienced problems at the May 2014 European Parliamentary elections. We found that a significant number of citizens of other EU Member States resident and registered to vote in the UK who wanted to vote in the UK at the May 2014 European Parliamentary elections were unable to. This was because they had not successfully completed the necessary declaration. We said that we would work with the UK Government, EROs and organisations representing citizens of other EU Member States in the UK to identify what could be done to simplify the system and remove unnecessary administrative barriers to participation, so that this problem did not affect electors at the 2019 European Parliamentary elections. In particular, we said that we would consider whether legislation could be changed so that in future, citizens of other EU Member States did not need to complete more than one electoral registration form to be able to vote at European Parliamentary elections in the UK. We said that we would make any recommendations to the UK Government in sufficient time for any changes to legislation to be introduced ahead of the 2019 European Parliamentary elections.

During autumn 2014 we were able to begin productive discussions with representative groups such as the New Europeans campaign group. These discussions aimed to analyse the problems with electoral registration for citizens of other EU Member States living in the UK, and to begin the process of identifying proposals for changes to the process for future European Parliamentary elections. During these discussions we identified that UK electoral law would need to be changed to make the improvements that would be needed. This meant the UK Government would need to develop and introduce new legislation. In December 2014 our staff attended an initial meeting with Cabinet Office officials to discuss options for resolving this issue, along with

members of groups representing citizens of other EU Member States living in the UK. The UK Government indicated in February 2015 that it planned further discussions with the Commission and other stakeholders on the registration process for EU citizens, but no such discussions were held. Immediately after the June 2015 UK Parliamentary general election the Government introduced legislation to hold a referendum on the UK's membership of the EU. Following the result of the June 2016 referendum, the UK Government issued notice of the UK's withdrawal from the EU under Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union, with a default exit date defined as 29 March 2019. The UK Government made clear that the UK would not be required to take part in the 2019 European Parliamentary elections. Related content Report: May 2019 European Parliamentary elections and local elections Read our report about the 2019 European Parliamentary elections and local elections Results and turnout at the 2014 European Parliamentary elections View the results and turnout at the 2014 European Parliamentary elections Past elections and referendums Read our reports and view data about past elections and referendums Types of elections about the types of elections in the UK.

Commission Board minutes of items of electronic business: 15 June 2020 | Electoral Commission Search Commission Board minutes of items of electronic business: 15 June 2020 You are in the Electoral Commission Board section Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Annual Review of Complaints Minutes Commission Board action tracker Forward plan of Board business First published: 29 July 2020 Last updated: 21 June 2021 Meeting overview Noted by email: Monday 15 June 2020 Present Present John Holmes, Chair Alasdair Morgan Anna Carragher Elan Closs Stephens Joan Walley Sarah Chambers Stephen Gilbert Rob Vincent Sue Bruce Annual Review of Complaints (eEC 48/20) The Board noted that complaints were a useful source of information that helped the organisation improve and asked for more details on specific complaints. Resolved: That the paper be noted. Minutes (eEC 49/20) Queries were raised about how the electronic business could be discussed in Board meetings and how the Commission would be engaged in proactive research partnerships. Resolved: That the paper be noted. Commission Board action tracker (eEC 50/20) It was noted that external stakeholders, including several local authority Chief Executives, were scheduled to be invited to speak about the pressures and challenges facing local government in general and in relation to elections specifically as part of the October Board meeting. Resolved: That the paper be noted. Forward plan of Board business (eEC 51/20) Queries were raised about the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on Commission staff and the forward plan. The Chief Executive's Update would keep Commissioners updated and a lessons learnt review has started. This matter would also be addressed in the developing new five-year corporate plan. Queries were raised about the timeline for developing the 2021/22 schedule of Board meetings. This work was planned for the summer break and Commissioners would be able to review it when the schedule comes to Board on the 23 September 2020. Resolved: That the paper be noted.

Scottish Parliament Political Parties Panel minutes: 23 October 2018 | Electoral Commission Search Scottish Parliament Political Parties

Panel minutes: 23 October 2018 You are in the Party panels section Home How we make decisions Party panels On this page Minutes of 15 June 2018 Scottish Government update Scotland Office update Scottish Boundary Commissions update EMB update on electoral registration and electoral administration matters Electoral Commission update Dates for 2019 meetings AOCB Actions First published: 12 June 2019 Last updated: 12 June 2019 Meeting overview Date: 23 October 2018 Time: 11am Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Scottish Liberal Democrats: Paul Moat (Chair) Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party: James Tweedie Scottish Green Party: John Hardy Scottish National Party: Scott Martin Scottish Government: Maria McCann James Newman Liz Ure Scottish Boundary Commissions: Colin Wilson Electoral Management Board for Scotland: Chris Highcock Scottish Assessors Association Kate Crawford Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland, UK Government: Alastair Noble The Electoral Commission: Alasdair Morgan, Electoral Commissioner Andy O'Neill, Head of Electoral Commission, Scotland Martin McKeown, Senior Adviser Elections & s Roisin McDaid, Senior Officer – Political Parties Liaison Lindsey Hamilton, Business Support Officer (Minutes) Apologies: Dame Susan Bruce, Electoral Commissioner, Scotland Pete Wildman, Scottish Assessors Association (Chair of Electoral Registration Committee) Julie Pirone, Royal Mail Isabel Drummond-Murray, Scottish Boundary Commissions Matt Edmonds, Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party Lorna Finlayson, Scottish Labour Party Welcome and introductions Paul Moat (PM) welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made. Andy O'Neill (AON) gave apologies from those unable to attend. Minutes of 15 June 2018 The minutes from the previous meeting were approved and action points from those picked up as follows: Chris Highcock (CH) apologised for not raising with Returning Officers the parties' desire to be informed of polling place reviews at the HQ level but would rectify this as soon as possible. Maria McCann (MMc) had promised Inclusion Scotland a flexible approach in regard to timing of engagement with prospective candidates and encouraged candidates to get in touch with Inclusion Scotland at an early stage. (AON) said that the Electoral Commission had promised to help raise the profile of the Access to elected office fund and the access charter and had discussed it at the last meeting of the Scottish Advisory Group. The Commission would continue to highlight the initiatives in the future.

Scottish Government update (MMcC) apologised for the late circulation of the report on ballot paper ordering for local government elections. The consultation analysis of their earlier consultation on electoral reform and the Scottish Government response had now been published. She said there were likely to be two Bills arising from the consultation; Electoral Reform and Franchise and would include some technical matters, such as transferring oversight of some of the Electoral Commission responsibilities to the Scottish Parliament. A further update would be provided at the next meeting. (MMcC) said the Franchise Bill would likely include provisions to extend the franchise for Scottish Parliament and Local Government elections to everyone resident in Scotland and would be brought forward following a separate consultation on prisoner voting. This is in line with the recommendation made in the Scottish Parliament's Equalities and Human Rights Committee's report on prisoner voting to consult widely on any proposed change. She encouraged everyone to respond to the consultation once published. Liz Ure (LU) introduced the paper circulated prior to the meeting on candidate ordering for local government election ballot papers. Following responses to the consultation on electoral reform, undertaken between December 2017 and March 2018, Scottish Government proposed exploring a move

to a system of randomisation for local government election ballot papers. The current proposal would be to have a single fixed version of the ballot paper for each ward, with the order of candidates being determined by the drawing of lots to avoid alphabetical bias. She said they were keen to hear all views, particularly from the parties most directly affected and it was proposed to test the suggested changes prior to introduction. There was a discussion on the merits of this (and other) options as well as the drawbacks and how each might impact on parties, voters and administrators. (MMcC) thanked the members for their input. (AON) said the Electoral Commission expected to be instructed to undertake a consultation exercise to look at the impact of any change on voters. Scotland Office update Annual Canvass Reform - Alastair Noble (AN) spoke about the Consultation jointly published by the UK, Scottish and Welsh Governments which proposed measures to reform the annual canvass and closed 30 November 2018. The UK Government was taking forward some statutory instruments which will affect legislation on elections. One of these will exempt disability-related expenses for candidates from electoral spending limits. The statutory instrument (SI), as drafted, will cover candidates standing for general Parliamentary elections across the UK; including by-elections. It was envisaged that the SI will be in force for local government elections in May 2019, similar provision was already in place for Scottish Parliament and Scottish local Government elections. Another SI to be laid would make regulations to amend legislation relating to European Parliament elections to amend the legislation in the light of the UK's exit from the European Union. These have now been cleared by the Sifting Committees in the UK Parliament which concluded that it was appropriate for the instrument to be subject to the negative procedure, i.e. without the need to be debated. Boundary Review – (AN) said they received (in September) the final report of the Boundary Commission for Scotland as part of the review of UK Parliament constituencies. The other Commissions had also submitted their recommendations to the UK Government and the reports were laid before Parliament and made publicly available on 10 September. Following this, under the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986, the Government was required to bring forward draft Orders in Council to give effect to the recommendations contained in the reports. The Orders were currently being drafted. The Orders must be approved by both Houses of Parliament for the recommendations to be adopted. If the Orders were accepted by both Houses, the recommendations would take effect at the next UK Parliamentary General Election. Scottish Boundary Commissions update Colin Wilson (CW) thanked (AN) for covering the update on the 2018 Review of UK Parliament constituencies and said he would address the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland. Scottish Ministers had agreed to adopt the Commission's recommendations to amend the boundary between Glasgow City council area and North Lanarkshire council area at Cardowan. An Order would now be drafted for the Scottish Parliament to implement the boundary changes. Following the commencement of The Islands Act the Commission had begun work on the Islands review to allow the use of 1, 2, 3 or 4 member wards. He reported that the Commission had met with the CNES, Orkney and Shetland Islands councils for initial discussions but the review would officially start later this year. The Commission expected to begin the Island review of Argyll and Bute, Highland and North Ayrshire council areas in 2019. The Commission would also consider the need for interim reviews in advance of 2011 local government elections. He said the Commissions websites were currently being updated to make information easier to find. In response to (SM)'s question about areas where reviews were not accepted, (CW) said the first step would be to look at which wards were out of step as there was a rolling timetable in place to consider those. EMB update on

electoral registration and electoral administration matters Chris Highcock (CH) confirmed that the new Convener of the Electoral Management Board (EMB) was now in post, appointed 1 July 2018 and progressing work to support EROs and ROs around consistency of approach and best practice in support of the voter. There were some general concerns to address due to the recent high level of turnover in Returning Officers and their deputies which has eroded the experience and capacity of electoral administrations. The priority is to address this, ensuring that there are the skills and resources available to deliver an electoral event. Although the next scheduled election is not due until 2021, ROs needed to plan for that specific while maintaining preparedness for any unscheduled event election which may be called prior to this date, including by-elections. (CH) reminded everyone that the period of the 5 yearly review of polling arrangements commenced on 1 October and local authorities would be consulting formally with electors and other stakeholders. The reviews would need to be completed within the next 18 months but most authorities are undertaking them within the coming six months. In response to (PM)'s question about the calling of a 'snap' election, (CH) said elections teams were always ready to deliver an electoral event but conceded that a UK Parliament 'snap' election which had to be run on the new boundaries would be challenging as a degree of effort would be required to address inconsistencies in boundaries and polling arrangements. Electoral Commission update Consultation on Code of Conduct for Electoral Observers – Martin McKeown (MMcK) said research indicated the scheme had largely worked well over the last ten years but a number of changes had been identified which would improve it. The consultation paper asked specific questions in relation to our proposals and closed on 31 October; feedback on the operation of the scheme would be welcomed. Police Scotland Training Event – (MMcK) said there had been a high turnover in officers filling the role of SPOC for electoral events across the divisions of Police Scotland and it had been decided to hold a training event on 29 October hosted by the Commission with Police Scotland and the Electoral Management Board. This would be an opportunity to bring people together, set the background to elections and to focus on integrity and malpractice issues. (CH) said the list of SPOCs was available on the EMB website and said he would circulate a link. Protecting the debate: Intimidation, Influence and Information of candidates – (MMcK) said the Electoral Commission published its' response to the consultation on 15/10 in which we support creating electoral sanctions for intimidating candidates and campaigners; simplifying the law on undue influence and making imprints on digital campaign material a legal requirement. Review of party descriptions – Roisin McDaid (RMcD) said the Electoral Commission had begun a review of party descriptions, starting with the Northern Ireland register, to ensure that the identity of the party was clear from its registered descriptions. This followed from the Commission's earlier clarification of the definition of party description. Upon completion of the NI register review, a review would commence on the GB register. She said a letter would go out shortly to each of the parties informing them and giving some more information on the review. Parties were encouraged to speak to the Commission if they had any questions or concerns about the process. Any parties affected by the review would have an opportunity to make representation to the Commission. Consultation on Codes of Practice on Election Spending – (RMcD) said the Commission had issued two draft codes; one for candidate spending and the other for political party spending at a UKPGE, setting out what is and isn't included in the categories of spending for elections that are listed in the legislation and give guidance on the cases and circumstances when spending will be regarded as for the purposes of a candidate's

election. The aims in preparing the codes were to provide guidance for candidates about what items of spending counted towards the spending limits and were to be reported and to provide clarity to political parties and candidates about when spending should be in a candidate return and when it should be in a political party return. The draft codes would apply primarily to UK Parliamentary elections (unless there was a combined regulated period). She encouraged parties to respond to the consultation which closed on 4 December 2018. It was noted that the Commission was in discussion with Scottish Government on how similar codes might be developed for Scottish Parliamentary and Scottish Local Government elections. (MMcC) noted that Scottish Government was considering how codes for these elections could be developed. Modernising guidance project – (AON) said the Electoral Commission was working closely with the contractor (Numiko) who is building the new website and had produced a proof of concept using the nominations guidance. Work was now starting on the RO guidance and guidance on spending and donations. The aim was to put draft guidance in the new format out for comment next year, after the May 2019 polls so it could be tested with users. Dates for 2019 meetings As dates could not be agreed at the meeting, (AON) said he would circulate further options to members. AOCB As there was no other competent business, the meeting was adjourned. Actions Action items Owner(s) Deadline Indicate to Returning Officers the desire of parties to have polling place reviews shared. Chris Highcock As soon as possible Further update at next meeting on transfer of oversight of the Electoral Commission to the Scottish Parliament Maria McCann At next meeting Circulate link to SPOC list on EMB website Chris Highcock 24 October 2018 Circulate suggested dates for 2019 meetings Andy O'Neill 30 November 2018

Objective: Accessible registration and voting | Electoral Commission Search
Objective: Accessible registration and voting You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23 On this page What we are working to achieve Work done to achieve this Performance indicators Ongoing and future work First published: 14 September 2023 Last updated: 27 September 2023 What we are working to achieve Free and fair elections depend on all people who are eligible and want to vote being able to do so. With this goal, we are striving to: increase levels of voter registration, especially amongst groups that currently have difficulty engaging in the process remove barriers, especially those that affect people who currently have difficulty trying to cast their vote. We are working to achieve these outcomes through collaboration with policy makers and other partners to identify barriers to participation and propose solutions. We are directly supporting people who have difficulty engaging in the process, with tailored accessible information and learning resources, and targeted public awareness activity. United Response quote We greatly valued being able to feed in to the guidance for to ensure that these changes were made as accessible as possible for disabled people. United Response Work done to achieve this Our latest evidence shows that between 8-9 million people in Great Britain are either missing or incorrectly registered. As well as advocating for registration reform, ahead of the elections, we ran a voter registration campaign to encourage the public to ensure they were correctly registered ahead of the deadline. This was supported by our Your Vote is Yours Alone campaign, which raises awareness of voter fraud and how voters can protect their vote. Planning and implementing measures in the Elections Act has been a priority for the Commission. The legislation includes measures that impact voters directly, some of which came into force at the 2023 local elections taking place in parts of England. Ensuring voters are aware of the changes is fundamental to supporting their confidence and participation in our electoral system. We prepared for the introduction of the voter ID requirement. In January, the Commission launched a wide-reaching public awareness campaign aimed at raising awareness of the requirement and reminding the public to bring it with them when they voted. Our work helped voters understand which forms of ID can be used and supported those without an accepted form of ID to understand how and when to apply for free ID. We worked with local councils and civil society organisations to support those less likely to have an accepted form of ID, so that they were aware of the free ID and applied in time. The Commission ran a thorough consultation on the new accessibility measures before drafting its guidance, working closely with charities and organisations representing disabled voters. We also shared details with disabled voters of the new accessibility rules, which increase the range of assistance available to them in the polling station. Within the scope of our role, we continued to work with local authorities, police, and parliamentarians to protect the system against electoral fraud. This included running, with the National Police Chiefs Council, the annual conference of Single Points of Contact within police forces that lead on fraud, and engaging with Lord Hayward on his secrecy of the ballot Private Members' Bill. These campaigns and voter communication around the Digital Registration Number, helped to support the successful delivery of the local elections in Northern Ireland. Our learning work aims to promote greater consistency in political literacy education and increase political knowledge and understanding amongst young people. Over 220 schools signed up to take part in Welcome to Your Vote Week in January. Lee Rowley There are few tasks more important in public life than maintaining the trust of the British public in our electoral institutions and our electoral processes. A huge amount of work is

under way, and that will continue until May. I am grateful to officials, to the Electoral Commission and to councils up and down the land for the work that they are doing. Lee Rowley, UK minister responsible for elections, February 2023 Performance indicators Indicator Target 2022-23 Additions to electoral registers during our voter registration campaigns meet or exceed our targets 379,810 for 2022/2023 280,498* The target for voter registration was not met this year. There are a number of factors that could have negatively impacted this KPM, some of which were external and some relate to the campaign including target setting itself. Notably, there was a reduction in campaign spend ahead of these elections and in the early awareness-raising phase. Since the polls, we have reviewed all data to ensure ongoing efficacy of our advertising, and our target-setting processes, to take these insights into account in planning future campaigns. Ongoing and future work We will be evaluating the May 2023 public awareness campaigns for voter ID and registration, to identify learnings and opportunities for improvement. We will be refreshing the creative approach to our voter registration campaign in time for the May 2024 elections. With the support of civil society partners, we will evaluate the tailored information we co-created for each key group most likely to be impacted by the new voter ID requirements. This will include refining resources to make them suitable for future years and identifying any gaps in our provision. In the autumn, we will publish election reports for England and Northern Ireland, reflecting on how the May 2023 elections were run and recommending changes where necessary. This will include an assessment of the implementation of the new voter ID and polling station accessibility provisions. We will work to prepare voters, administrators and the wider electoral community for further changes coming from the Elections Act, including updating guidance for those responsible for implementing the changes. This will include an extension to the franchise through changes to the overseas voter rules. We will pilot the inclusion of accessibility information as part of the online election information we provide, including our online polling station finder. This will further reduce pressure on local councils. If successful, we will roll this out throughout the UK. We will continue to extend our 'youth voice' work, building on our current activity in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales to ensure our work on registration and voting reflects the needs and views of young people. We will continue to maintain contingency plans for unscheduled electoral events, including a UK Parliamentary general election and a Northern Ireland Assembly election. We will finalise development of feasibility studies on a range of flexible voting options, exploring how new ways of voting could be implemented. We expect to appear before the Levelling Up Committee to expand on our written evidence for its inquiry examining voter registration, and will outline our proposals for reforming the system. EC quote The current registration system does not work well for voters or administers. To ensure all eligible voters can have their say at elections, the registration system needs to be reformed. Our written evidence to the Levelling Up Select Committee Navigation Previous Next Performance analysis Objective: transparent political campaigning and compliant political finance

10. Measuring our performance | Electoral Commission Search

10. Measuring our performance You are in the Corporate plan 2022/23 to 2026/27 section Home Our plans and priorities Corporate plan 2022/23 to 2026/27 On this page Measuring our performance The strategic objectives are underpinned by three key factors First published: 25 April 2022 Last updated: 25 April 2022 Introduction

Throughout our plan we identify improvements we will deliver. These aim to benefit the public, parties and campaigners, electoral administrators and parliaments. We will measure how well we realise these improvements over the course of our Corporate Plan using a range of indicators across the UK. We will use a mix of quantitative and qualitative measures, using them to drive continuous improvements in our procedures and skills. This will include annual and five-year targets against key measures.

Measuring our performance Strategic Objectives Improvements Performance indicators 1.

Accessible registration and voting Increased ease of registering and voting Public satisfaction with the system of registering to vote Public satisfaction with the process of voting Accuracy of the electoral register Completeness of the electoral register Votes rejected and not included in the count for elections Public perception that the process of voting is easy Additions to electoral registers during our public awareness campaigns

2. Transparent political campaigning and compliant political finance Maintained availability of information Publish donation and loan reports within deadlines Publish statements of accounts within deadlines

2. Transparent political campaigning and compliant political finance Increased confidence in decision making Applicants are notified of the outcome of their registration application within the working day targets Decisions on final notices issued for

representations within deadlines Progression and conclusion of investigations within targets for complexity

2. Transparent political campaigning and compliant political finance Increased compliance with electoral law Responses to requests for regulatory advice on financial reporting within targets Public perception that appropriate action will be taken by the authorities if a political party or a campaigner is

caught breaking the rules on campaign funding

3. Resilient local electoral services Maintained quality of electoral services Formal Electoral Registration Officers and Returning Officers performance assessment of when standards are not met Guidance products for electoral administrators published on time with no substantive errors

Confidence that elections are well run Election reports published within deadlines

3. Resilient local electoral services Maintained confidence in the electoral process

Public confidence in knowing how to register to vote Public confidence in how to cast their vote

4. Fair and effective electoral law Improved accountability Election, referendum and other reports responded to by the relevant government within deadlines

Responses to policy proposals and legislative consultations by the deadlines

Responses to elected members correspondence responded to within deadlines

5. A modern and sustainable electoral system Improved security of the electoral system Public perception that voting in general is safe from fraud and abuse

5. A modern and sustainable electoral system Increased environmental sustainability Meeting requirements if existing and emerging or new environmental legislation

The strategic objectives are underpinned by three key factors Key factors Improvements Performance indicators 1. We demonstrate independence and integrity Improved reputation as an independent regulator

Responses to requests for advice from Electoral Registration Officers and Returning Officers within deadlines

1. We demonstrate independence and integrity Improved reputation as an independent regulator

Responses to requests for elections guidance from candidates and agents within deadlines

1. We demonstrate independence and integrity Improved reputation as an independent regulator

Responses to requests for advice from Electoral Registration Officers and Returning Officers within deadlines

to requests and enquiries from the public within deadlines 2. We are a skilled organisation where diversity is valued Maintained staff well-being Staff engagement score from the annual employee survey 3. We are a learning organisation where improvement is continuous and resources are used efficiently Increased value for money Agreed auditors' recommendations that are implemented by the target date Navigation 9. Managing our costs Section 9 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan 11. Managing risk and opportunities Section 11 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan

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

Performance standards for Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers: consultation response | Electoral Commission Search

Performance standards for Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers: consultation response You are in the Our consultations section Home Our consultations On this page Consultation background Summary of consultation responses Using the standards in 2023 Performance Standards for ROs Performance Standards for EROs Stakeholders providing feedback First published: 17 November 2022 Last updated: 6 January 2023 Summary title (hidden) We commenced a 10 week consultation on a draft new performance standards framework for Returning Officers (ROs) in June 2022. This outlined the proposed new standards which aim to provide a robust framework for the delivery of well-run elections, support the effective and consistent implementation of legislative changes, and enable transparent reporting on how elections have been delivered at a local level and across Great Britain. The consultation also sought views on updates to the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) performance standards, which were last reviewed in 2021, to reflect new responsibilities arising from the Elections Act 2022. The feedback we have received has been positive and, overall, respondents agreed that the standards – with minor amendments – cover the range of responsibilities of the RO and, alongside our guidance, will be effective in supporting ROs with planning for and delivering elections. The feedback provided during the consultation has been used to inform the final standards – which have now been laid in the UK, Scottish and Welsh Parliaments – and the approach to how they are used. A summary of the key themes of feedback we received during the consultation and our response to the points that were made is set out below. We will use the standards to inform our engagement with ROs on planning for and delivering elections, with a particular focus in 2023/24 on the effectiveness and consistency of the implementation of the changes introduced by the Elections Act.

Consultation background Background We have the power in law to: set performance standards for ROs and EROs issue directions to ROs and EROs to provide reports on their performance against the standards prepare and publish assessments of their performance against the standards. We first introduced performance standards for ROs in March 2009, and revised the framework in December 2011 and then again in November 2013. The Elections Act has provided a timely opportunity to review the RO framework, to ensure it will help support the consistent and effective implementation of the changes. The changes arising from the Elections Act will also impact on the role of EROs, and we identified a number of areas where the ERO framework, which was last reviewed in 2021, needed to be updated to reflect these new responsibilities.

Developing the new standards We started developing the new RO performance standards last autumn, using the ERO performance framework structure as our basis. The ERO framework was last updated in June 2021 and focuses on outcomes rather than the processes that have been followed. We informally discussed the approach with a number of ROs from across Great Britain to get their input at an early stage, and their feedback helped shape the draft standards that we consulted on. This included discussions with small groups of ROs across England, as well as engagement with the Wales Electoral Coordination Board and the Electoral Management Board for Scotland. The draft standards also benefitted from input from the Association of s, at an official level as well as through discussions around the high-level approach with members at their regional branch meetings, and were discussed with government officials and the elections leads at the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (Solace). Consultation The consultation was sent to a range of stakeholders, including: Ministers and officials in the UK, Scottish and Welsh Governments political parties ROs and EROs electoral

administrators a range of agencies, professional bodies and representative organisations. In addition, we also obtained feedback through discussions with stakeholders from across the electoral community during the consultation period. This included attending various meetings – including AEA branch meetings and meeting with individual ROs and their teams – to talk about the draft standards and to seek feedback. We also held a series of virtual drop in sessions for interested groups and individuals to ask questions and provide feedback. We received 60 responses to our consultation from a range of organisations and individuals, including: UK, Scottish and Welsh Government ROs and local authorities across GB the Association of the Electoral Management Board for Scotland the Wales Electoral Coordination Board the Scottish Assessors Association (SAA) accessibility groups, including Learning Disability Wales, RNIB, RNIB Cymru and RNIB Scotland View the full list of respondents. We are grateful for the feedback we received, whether by way of written responses to the consultation or through discussions.

Summary of consultation responses

The consultation asked for views on a number of questions on the proposed performance standards for ROs, including:

- The scope of the standards:** whether the draft standards are focussed on the right outcomes, while covering the full range of responsibilities of the RO, and whether there are any gaps, or anything included in the standards that shouldn't be there
- How the standards are used:** whether our proposed approach to how we use the standards to engage with ROs and their teams will ensure we are providing effective support and challenge, while maintaining the right level of transparency of RO performance
- How the standards support the implementation of legislation:** whether the standards, along with our guidance, will support the consistent implementation of the legislative changes introduced by the Elections Act 2022

The scope of the standards

The consultation set out the structure of the standards, which focus on the outcomes that should be delivered, rather than the processes that are followed, with the objective of helping ROs and their teams to understand and demonstrate the impact of their election activities. Overall, there was agreement from respondents that the standards focus on the right outcomes and activities. However, concerns were raised by some respondents about the risk that ROs be challenged on elements outside their control. A particular example of this was the inclusion of 'elections delivered without legal challenge' as a success measure. It was already implicit throughout the standards that it is the actions that the RO is accountable for that are covered by the framework and not (for example) the behaviour of candidates and campaigners, which would be relevant context but not something the RO can be held directly accountable for. However, to reflect the concerns raised, we have made an addition to the wording of this element to reflect that it explicitly refers to a legal challenge to the administration of the poll. In addition, we also received some suggestions of additional activities undertaken by ROs – for example, the inclusion of an additional activity 'Ensuring polling stations are set up and staff are trained to support voters to vote independently and in secret' – which has now been added into the standards. We have also amended and updated the standards to reflect how the new voter ID measures from the Elections Act will work in practice, now that the secondary legislation which provides for this has been laid in parliament. Some respondents also highlighted that the Elections Act will introduce significant differences in the devolved nations, and that these differences could be more explicit within the standards. As noted, the standards focus on the outcomes that should be delivered, rather than the processes that are undertaken, and while the specific activities undertaken may differ, the overall outcomes are still the same across Great Britain. Therefore, we believe the standards provide sufficient

flexibility to accommodate any differences across England, Scotland and Wales, but they will be kept under review and further updates made whenever needed; and indeed we expect to consider this further as electoral reform proposals from Welsh Government and Scottish Government are progressed. Likewise, there are particular elements of the standards that will not apply to devolved elections – for example, the provision of photo ID when voting in person at the polling station – and therefore these elements of the standards will not apply in those circumstances. The version of the new standards sent to the Scottish Minister and the Welsh Minister for laying in the Scottish Parliament and the Senedd omit the content relevant only to reserved elections, but are otherwise consistent and focussed on the same outcomes.

How the standards are used The consultation set out how the standards, alongside our guidance and advice, form a central part of the Commission's work to support and challenge ROs in the delivery of well-run elections, and to report transparently on RO performance and how elections are delivered. Most respondents agreed with the proposed approach to how we will use the standards. However, concerns were raised by several respondents about the volume of data and information contained within the standards and their ability to collate and provide all the information and data listed. It is not our intention that ROs would collate and provide us with all the information listed within the standards as a matter of course. Instead, the information and data set out in the standards will be used to shape the structured discussions with ROs and their teams and we will focus on particular aspects of the standards in our discussions – for example, in the first year we expect to prioritise the new elements of the standards relating to the Elections Act. This is in addition to our regular risk-based approach to engaging, supporting and challenging ROs that includes focussing on areas where issues have previously arisen. However, we will continue to collect management information from all ROs, with the focus being around key information and evidence from the standards which would provide an overview of the key preparations that have been made (for example, around polling station venues and staffing, count venues and timing, and postal vote despatch arrangements). As well as giving us an important source of information to analyse and use to inform engagement with local ROs, it also provides a picture of progress at a national level and gives us data we can use proactively and reactively to tell the story of how the elections are being managed. On the whole, respondents agreed that our proposed approach to reporting - highlighting areas where there have been issues as well as using our reporting to highlight examples of good practice – would support transparency, promote confidence that elections are well-run and enable the sharing of good practice. However, a number of respondents highlighted that we could be doing more in using the framework to identify and share good practice more widely. This is already an area that we have identified we want to expand on, and we are committed to exploring this further. For 2023/24, we will seek to use our engagement and reporting to collect and highlight examples of good practice that emerge. This will be particularly important as we gather examples of new processes to support the implementation of legislative changes, which we can then share with other local authorities to help inform their local arrangements. We will also share good practice examples directly with those who we have identified as needing support and that may benefit from the experience of other teams who have faced similar challenges. Beyond this, we intend to explore further how we can use existing networks to share experiences and examples more widely. How the standards support the implementation of legislation The consultation set out how the standards, along with our guidance and advice, would have an important role in supporting the effective and consistent

implementation of legislative changes, including changes resulting from the Elections Act. Whilst the majority of respondents were content that the scope of the standards addressed and supported the implementation of the changes introduced by the Elections Act, responses from accessibility organisations asked for a greater emphasis on accessibility throughout the standards. We have therefore made some minor amendments to strengthen the standards, making accessibility more explicit across the standards.

While the standards include the headline activities that ROs will need to undertake to be able to meet the overall outcomes, the detail of how to deliver these activities, including in relation to ensuring elections are accessible, will be covered in the accompanying guidance and resources. Throughout September and October, we consulted on draft guidance for ROs on providing assistance with voting for persons with disabilities, which will play a key role in helping ROs to ensure they are taking steps to enable voters to vote independently and in secret. The feedback we received, including from accessibility organisations, has informed the further development of the guidance which we are now formally consulting on. Most respondents also agreed that the standards do provide sufficient flexibility to accommodate future legislative change, although responses consistently highlighted the uncertainty about how provisions in the Elections Act will work in practice and the importance of ensuring that the standards remain appropriate and accurately reflect the responsibilities of ROs and EROs once the Act is embedded. Whilst the outcome-focussed framework we have developed should provide flexibility to cover the range of changes and how they are implemented in practice, we will continue to keep them under review and will be able to make further updates if necessary. Using the standards in 2023 The new performance standards will form an important part of our support package for ROs in preparing for and delivering elections across Great Britain. Now that the standards have been finalised and laid in the UK, Scottish and Welsh Parliaments we will start to use them to inform our engagement with ROs and EROs, with a particular focus in 2023 on the effectiveness and consistency of implementation of the changes introduced by the Elections Act. We will also use the information from this engagement, along with an analysis of the information and data we will collect, to support our reporting on how the May 2023 elections have been delivered and on the operation of the system more generally. Targeted engagement Whilst we aim to engage with all ROs with elections, as in previous years, we will take a risk-based approach to help prioritise the order, frequency and intensity of our engagement. This builds on our already-established process, where we undertake risk assessments taking into account a range of factors, including the experience of the RO and their team, any staffing changes, demographics of the area and electoral fraud risks, to inform who, how and when we engage. We will also continue to prioritise engaging with any ROs who have previously had issues with the delivery of their polls, particularly where we may have found that they did not meet elements of the standards. More generally, the framework of the standards will be used to support structured conversations with ROs, EROs and their teams. In the first year of operation, our engagement will see a focus on the following elements of the standards:

- of voting: this will include a focus on the arrangements being made to support voters to vote independently and in secret, in line with our new guidance. We will engage in advance of the elections to support and challenge ROs where necessary to help ensure appropriate arrangements are in place, and will use the information and data we collect to inform our statutory reporting after the polls on what ROs have done to ensure accessibility.
- Administering the Voter Authority Certificate process: this will look at the targeted engagement activity being carried out locally to raise awareness of the need for ID and the

availability of the Voter Authority Certificate, as well as the processing of applications and managing the production and distribution, to help ensure that voters without one of the accepted forms of ID are able to obtain a Voter Authority Certificate. Again this will include support and challenge in the period leading up to the polls, as well as providing a basis for the collection of information and data to inform our evaluation of the implementation of the provisions. To help prepare for structured discussions, we will provide advance notice to individual ROs and EROs of the types of information and data that we will want to discuss with them, to help them understand the areas we will want to explore. Data collection from all ROs We will continue to collect baseline information from all ROs with elections, which aligns with the information and evidence outlined in the standards. As explained above, we do not plan on collecting all the information listed in the standards at one time, with our focus instead being on the key pieces of information during an election period which would provide an overview of the key preparations that have been made. As well as giving us an important source of information to analyse and use to inform engagement with local ROs (i.e. using the information to update risk profiles, and informing the prioritisation of our targeted engagement), it also provides a picture of progress at a national level and gives us data we can use proactively and reactively to tell the story of how the elections are being managed.

Reporting As set out in the consultation, we also need to ensure that where issues have arisen, we are transparent about these, being open and clear about what has happened, the impact, and the learning. To this end, the standards play an important role in enabling us to report on the administration of elections. Where issues arise, after we have supported the RO to resolve the situation, the relevant pieces of data and information listed in the standards will be collated and analysed to enable us to reach an assessment about whether or not the relevant aspects of the standards have been met in practice. We will continue to use our established process for doing this which includes consultation with a panel of Electoral Coordination and Advisory Board members (i.e. senior ROs from across the UK) to gather their feedback on the evidence, impact and provisional assessment of performance, before a final decision is taken. As well as highlighting areas where there have been issues, we will remain mindful of the responses to the consultation that highlighted the value of using our reporting to highlight examples of good practice. The information we gain through our engagement with ROs and their teams will not only provide us with an understanding of local performance but will also help us to build up a picture of how the system is working more generally. By capturing and collating the key points from our individual structured discussions with ROs we can identify emerging themes and issues, which can in turn inform our reporting and recommendations after elections.

Year-round engagement The new framework has been designed to be used not only in the period leading up to polls but throughout the whole year. The first of the standards in particular aims to provide a basis for year-round engagement, including in relation to the wider structure and approach to elections delivery, helping to identify and address any issues further out from elections and to help ensure readiness for polls, whenever they may take place. As part of our ongoing wider engagement programme, which ensures we have regular contact with all ROs, we will use performance standard one to support structured conversations with ROs outside a scheduled election period. These conversations will focus on ensuring that ROs have the structures and resources in place to enable and support their teams to deliver elections in practice and on the ongoing planning and preparations that are needed to ensure they are ready to deliver polls whenever they may take place. Performance Standards for ROs Outcome:

electoral services are robust and support the delivery of well-run elections What inputs are needed? RO understanding and delivery of role and responsibilities Management and oversight of the delivery of elections, including the range of statutory functions of the RO, and an understanding of the strategic landscape, including any legislative changes that will impact on delivery Stakeholder engagement Establish and maintain strong relationships with key stakeholders Planning Maintain plans for the delivery of elections, scheduled and unscheduled, ensuring they are kept under review. Resources Identification and allocation of budget and permanent staffing; and management of contractors and suppliers What activities are being undertaken? Understanding of statutory responsibilities Polls are delivered in accordance with legislation, guidance and directions (where issued) RO knowledge and understanding of role and responsibilities is developed and maintained, including through training Formal appointment of deputies, ensuring clear delegations in place and roles are allocated and understood What information is needed to understand the impact of our activities? Awareness of guidance and legislation Records of training/meetings attended Evidence of quality assurance of the whole electoral process Notification of appointment of deputies Development and maintenance of robust delivery plans Establish project team to support preparations for and delivery of elections Clear plans in place, with objectives and success measures Contingency planning to ensure readiness for unscheduled events Business continuity planning Risk register in place, with risks monitored and mitigations identified and implemented Recruitment of all necessary staff and identification of training needs Robust arrangements in place for managing issues Access appropriate funding What information is needed to understand the impact of our activities? Clear agendas for and records of project team meetings, to support focus on outcomes Project planning documentation which is kept under regular review Evaluation of previous events and identification of lessons learned Analysis of wider context within which polls are being conducted Succession plans which are regularly monitored Training needs analysis and records of training Reconciliation of project costs against available budget Working with contractors and suppliers, both internal and external Identification of services required of services Contract development and management of delivery What information is needed to understand the impact of our activities? Records of formal procurement decisions Contracts in place with all suppliers, with mechanisms to manage and monitor performance Contract monitoring tools and escalation mechanisms, including supplier issues logs, risk registers and assurances of supplier business continuity plans Service level agreements Maintaining effective relationships with key stakeholders Engagement with key stakeholders on plans Ongoing engagement with stakeholders throughout the delivery of the polls What information is needed to understand the impact of our activities? Minutes of meetings with stakeholders Consultation with and feedback from local stakeholders on plans and election arrangements Assessment of local accessibility requirements and demonstrated understanding of needs Records of issues or concerns raised by stakeholders and resolutions implemented Evaluation of feedback from key stakeholders Coordination and management of the poll (by ROs with a power of direction) Work across local authority boundaries with other ROs to develop guidance and issue directions where necessary to support consistent delivery of polls Engage with local Returning Officers on the arrangements they have in place to deliver the elections in their area What information is needed to understand the impact of our activities? Plans for communication with local ROs Plans for coordinating and delivering public awareness activity and engaging with electors across the electoral area Arrangements for the

collation of results Records of any guidance issued and whether and how the power to issue directions has been used Analysis of post-election feedback What difference is being made? A consistent high-quality experience for electors, candidates and agents Public confidence in and satisfaction with election processes Teams delivering electoral services are supported to effectively deliver electoral processes The RO has the right skills, knowledge and influence to support the effective delivery of the polls How can we determine the success of our work? Events are delivered in accordance with legislation Elections delivered without legal challenge to the administration of the poll Analysis of team resilience, capability and capacity Analysis of feedback on the delivery of polls and any complaints received Performance against measures and objectives set out in your project plans Outcome: everybody who is eligible and wants to vote is able to do so and has confidence in the voting process What inputs are needed? RO understanding and delivery of role and responsibilities Management and oversight of the delivery of elections, including the range of statutory functions of the RO Planning Maintain plans for the delivery of elections, ensuring they are kept under review and actively used to support delivery Stakeholder engagement Establish and maintain strong relationships with key stakeholders Resources Identification and allocation of budget and temporary staffing; and management of contractors and suppliers Training Identification and delivery of training to meet the needs of both permanent and temporary staff What activities are being undertaken? Providing information to ensure voters understand how they can take part Develop and deliver a public awareness strategy, ensuring that electors are provided with the information they need to understand how they can take part Ensure all required election materials are accurate, accessible and made available as soon as practicable What information is needed to understand the impact of our activities? Analysis of different communication methods, to support targeting of messaging Evidence of working with partners to deliver public awareness Ballot paper rejection rates and postal vote rejection rates, contributing to an understanding of whether voters have been able to follow the instructions Feedback from polling station staff and data relating to those who were unable to vote due to not having appropriate identification (at relevant polls) (Wales only) Plans in place to ensure all information for electors is provided equally in English and Welsh, including all election materials Production of election materials Production and publication of election notices Production and delivery of poll cards Proof-checking of election materials Production of ballot papers What information is needed to understand the impact of our activities? Accuracy of statutory notices Information on method and timing of delivery of poll cards and postal ballot packs Accuracy and timeliness of election materials: Record of arrangements for any outsourcing of production and delivery of poll cards, postal votes and ballot papers Record of proof checking processes Examples of election materials Record of data protection processes Managing absent voting Production and delivery of postal ballot packs Opening and processing returned postal votes What information is needed to understand the impact of our activities? Accuracy and timeliness of postal ballot packs: Record of arrangements for any outsourcing of production and delivery of postal ballot papers Audit trail of issuing of postal votes Record of checking processes Records of postal votes delivered by hand to council offices Accurate records of postal vote openings including audit trails of postal votes opened, verified and rejected Managing voting in person Identifying and booking suitable polling stations Assessing accessibility of polling stations Identifying and providing equipment to support voters with accessibility needs Ensuring polling stations are set up and staff are trained to

support voters to vote independently and in secret Ensuring appropriate staffing levels at polling stations Providing training for polling station staff What information is needed to understand the impact of our activities? Evaluation checklists for polling stations to demonstrate suitability for use Polling station layout plans Approach taken to allocating electors and staff to polling stations Checklists of required polling station equipment Analysis of voter needs informing decisions about equipment to be provided to support voting Feedback from voters and local interest groups on equipment provided to support voting Guidance/training provided to polling station staff Records of those refused a ballot paper, by reason Records of postal votes delivered by hand to polling stations What difference is being made? Voters understand the different ways in which they can cast their vote Voters are able to cast their vote using their preferred method Voters are able to cast their vote in secret at polling stations Barriers to voting are minimised How can we determine the success of our work? Evaluation of public awareness activities Analysis of feedback and complaints from eligible voters, staff, candidates and agents Analysis of available data relating to voters who have not been able to cast their vote (for example, due to not having appropriate Identification (at relevant polls)) No voters are prevented from casting their vote due to inaccessibility of polling station arrangements Outcome: everybody who is eligible and wants to stand for election is able to do so and has confidence in the process What inputs are needed? RO understanding and delivery of role and responsibilities Management and oversight of the delivery of elections, including the range of statutory functions of the RO Planning Maintain plans for the delivery of elections, ensuring they are kept under review and actively used to support delivery Stakeholder engagement Establish and maintain strong relationships with key stakeholders Training Staff understand their responsibilities in relation to the processes to be followed for candidates seeking to stand for election What activities are being undertaken? Providing information to support anyone wishing to stand as a candidate in understanding what they need to do Ensuring accessibility and awareness of electoral processes Provision of information and guidance to parties, candidates and agents Briefings offered to candidates and agents Gathering feedback from attendees to inform continuous improvement What information is needed to understand the impact of our activities? Records of attendance at briefings Evaluation of feedback from candidates and agents on the information/briefings provided to those wanting to stand for election Analysis of process queries from candidates and agents to support provision of relevant information Number of nomination papers rejected by the RO, by reason Administration of the nominations process Provision of informal checks Determination of nomination papers Close of nomination processes Ensuring accurate ballot papers What information is needed to understand the impact of our activities? Records of arrangements in place for candidates to have their nominations informally checked Timeliness and accuracy of publication of the statement of persons nominated Accuracy of the ballot paper Assessment of GDPR requirements and records of management of personal data received as part of the nominations process Management of access to electoral processes to ensure transparency and enable scrutiny Receipt of notifications of appointment of polling, postal voting and counting agents Provision of information relating to polling stations, postal vote opening sessions and the count (layout plan, process documents, etc.) What information is needed to understand the impact of our activities? Records of those entitled to access electoral processes Information provided to attendees What difference is being made? Candidates are aware of the process they need to follow to stand for election Nominations are accurately

processed and everyone who is validly nominated is included on the ballot paper Candidates and appointed agents are aware of their entitlement to attend electoral processes and are able to carry out their scrutiny role effectively How can we determine the success of our work? No errors on the statement of persons nominated or ballot papers Analysis of feedback and complaints from candidates, agents or parties Outcome: everyone can have confidence that the election process is well managed and in the accuracy of the results What inputs are needed? RO understanding and delivery of role and responsibilities Management and oversight of the delivery of elections, including the range of statutory functions of the RO Planning Maintain plans for the delivery of elections, ensuring they are kept under review and actively used to support delivery Stakeholder engagement Establish and maintain strong relationships and manage communications with key stakeholders Resources Identification and allocation of budget and staffing Training Identification and delivery of training to meet the needs of both permanent and temporary staff What activities are being undertaken? Postal vote opening Accurate processing of returned postal votes Verification of postal vote identifiers What information is needed to understand the impact of our activities? Audit trail of receipt and opening of postal ballot packs Arrangements for the secure storage and transportation of returned postal votes Number of postal vote rejections, by reason Postal vote opening venue layout information Records of those entitled to attend Managing the verification and count Development of venue layout and processes to ensure an accessible and transparent count Managing attendance at the verification and count Managing the verification and count processes Managing media liaison What information is needed to understand the impact of our activities? Evaluation of previous count venues and processes Assessment of access needs, with actions taken to address any issues Count venue layout information Audit trail of receipt and opening of ballot boxes Audit trails of count processes Number of rejected ballots for each contest, by reason Strategy for dealing with both proactive and reactive communication with the media Managing the declaration of results Declarations are accurate and accessible Publication of results is timely and accurate What information is needed to understand the impact of our activities? Processes in place to quality assure results Accurate declarations of results (in Wales, in both English and Welsh) Audit trails of verification and count paperwork Statement of results (in Wales, in both English and Welsh) and where they are published Maintaining electoral integrity Ensuring the security of election materials Engagement with local SPOCs Develop a fraud/integrity plan and work with the appropriate authorities to support the investigation of any allegations of electoral fraud/integrity issues What information is needed to understand the impact of our activities? Risk register showing security risks and associated mitigations Fraud/integrity plan, including risk assessments and mitigations Allegations of electoral fraud/integrity issues referred to the police What difference is being made? Voters have confidence their vote will be counted in the way they intended Candidates and agents have confidence in the accuracy of the result All those who have observed the election have confidence in the conduct of the election Voters can easily access the results of the election Voters have confidence their vote is secure How can we determine the success of our work? Elections delivered without legal challenge to the administration of the poll Analysis of feedback and complaints from candidates, agents and other observers Election results are accurate and readily available Analysis of police data relating to allegations of electoral fraud/integrity issues Download the Performance Standards for ROs Performance standards for ROs - December 2022 Performance Standards for EROs Outcome: electoral

registers are as accurate and complete as possible, ensuring that everyone who is eligible and wants to vote is able to do so What inputs are needed? ERO understanding and delivery of role and responsibilities Management and oversight of delivery of the electoral registration service, including the statutory functions of the ERO, and stakeholder engagement Planning Maintaining a plan for registration throughout the year, ensuring it is kept under review and evaluation is undertaken, with lessons learnt fed back in, and a risk and issues register, identifying any risks to the effective delivery of your registration plan and corresponding mitigating actions Resource Identification and allocation of budget and staffing for electoral registration activities Training Identification and delivery of training to meet the needs of both permanent and temporary staff What activities are being undertaken? Identification of those not registered, including hard to reach groups: Using available data and information sources, identify those not registered, including hard to reach groups Develop and maintain a public engagement strategy, ensuring planned activities are tailored to meet the needs of different groups of electors What information is needed to understand the impact of these activities? Analysis of the scope and usefulness of data and information Ward level analysis of the registration area Identification of priority areas to target registration activity Evaluation of communications channels and approaches, including cost/benefit analysis of previous activity, supporting development of engagement strategy and activities Undertaking year-round registration activity: Maintain the property database Contact potential eligible electors, including carrying out work to target hard to reach groups Ensure those no longer entitled to be registered are identified and removed Develop and implement processes to identify and address potential integrity issues Manage special category electors What information is needed to understand the impact of these activities? Number of properties with UPRN/as a percentage of properties Analysis of any issues reported with the allocation of properties to polling districts to reflect relevant electoral boundaries The accuracy and usability of data sources used Analysis of response rates by channel, to understand impact of different approaches Number of ITRs sent (by channel) Number of ITRs followed up Number of ITRs not responded to after the reminder and personal visit stages Number of electors whose identity has not been verified and have yet to provide documentary evidence by type e.g. ordinary electors, overseas electors, etc. Number of registration applications received, by type e.g. ordinary electors, overseas electors, etc. Number of additions to the register, by type e.g. ordinary electors, overseas electors, etc. Number of reviews of registration and number of deletions as a result Number of deletions not as a result of a review, by type Number of registration applications referred to the police Number of renewals sent by elector type Number of special category elector applications (both new and renewals) processed, from different elector groups (overseas, service etc.) Number of special category electors renewed by elector type Administering the canvass: Using available data and information, identify the most appropriate method to canvass properties in your area Make arrangements to deliver the planned canvass activities Undertake the planned canvass activities What information is needed to understand the impact of these activities? The accuracy and usability of local data sources used Results of data matching (national and local) Number of households intended for each route Analysis of available communications channels (e-communications, telephone, mail, etc.), to inform contact with individual properties Number of households canvassed, by route and channel Number of communications sent, by route and channel Number of responses by route and channel Assessment of success of canvass communication channels used Number of canvassers

recruited and trained Evaluation of canvasser performance Administering the Voter Authority Certificate process Develop and maintain an engagement strategy for those less likely to hold an accepted form of ID on how to obtain a Voter Authority Certificate Process Voter Authority Certificate applications Manage production and distribution of temporary Voter Authority Certificates Process Anonymous Elector's document applications What information is needed to understand the impact of these activities? Identification of those less likely to hold a required form of ID, supporting targeting of activity Evaluation of communications channels and approaches, supporting development and delivery of engagement strategy and activities Number of Voter Authority Certificate applications received by channel Number of Voter Authority Certificate applications processed Number of Voter Authority Certificate applications rejected Number of Voter Authority Certificates issued Number of temporary Voter Authority Certificates issued Number of Anonymous Elector's document applications received and processed Number of Anonymous Elector's document applications rejected Number of Anonymous Elector's documents issued What difference is being made? The demographics of the registration area and the needs of groups of electors within it are understood, enabling services to be targeted and designed to meet the needs of residents Barriers to registration are minimised, enabling all eligible individuals, including those from different elector groups, to register Potential new electors are identified and are given every opportunity to register to vote Changes in the registration status of individuals are captured and applied to the register in a timely manner Elections are effectively supported by the register Voters without one of the accepted forms of ID are able to obtain a Voter Authority Certificate to enable them to cast their vote in person How can we determine the success of our work? Performance against the KPIs/objectives set out in your registration plans Evaluation of public engagement activities undertaken, including of changes made to the register as a result of the activity Changes in levels of registration within and across the registration area, both generally and within identified under-registered groups An assessment of levels of additions and deletions, during the canvass and throughout the year. A year-on-year analysis of additions and deletions Assessment of the numbers of eligible electors who tried to vote on polling day but were unable to do so as a result of not being registered to vote or who were unable to vote due to not having appropriate identification (at relevant polls) Outcome: absent voting is accessible, ensuring that everyone who is eligible and wants an absent vote is included on the relevant absent vote list What inputs are needed? ERO understanding and delivery of role and responsibilities Management and oversight of delivery of the absent voting function, including the statutory responsibilities of the ERO, and stakeholder engagement. Planning Maintaining a plan throughout the year, including arrangements for managing the absent voting process, and a risk and issues register, identifying any risks to the effective delivery of your plan and corresponding mitigating actions. Resources Identification and allocation of budget and staffing for absent voting activities. Training Identification and delivery of training to meet the needs of both permanent and temporary staff. What activities are being undertaken? Supporting electors to engage with the absent voting process: Develop and implement a communications plan to ensure that electors are aware of the absent vote options available to them Ensure that all electors can access the absent vote process What information is needed to understand the impact of these activities? Evaluation of information made available to electors on the absent voting process to help them understand the options available to them Number of absent vote applications from different elector groups

(overseas, service), by type (postal or proxy) Number and type of complaints received about ability to access the absent vote process from different elector groups (ordinary, overseas, service etc.) Administering absent vote processes: Process new applications Process requested changes to absent voting preferences Maintain absent vote records and lists Undertake postal vote refresh/ reapplication process (as relevant) Develop and implement processes to identify and address potential integrity issues What information is needed to understand the impact of these activities? Number of absent vote applications received by channel Number of absent vote applications received by type (postal or proxy) Number of absent vote applications rejected Number of absent vote confirmations sent Number of changes to voting arrangements processed Number of absent vote refresh notices sent, followed up and responses processed, by type (e.g. ordinary elector, overseas elector, etc.) Number of postal vote applications for postal votes to be redirected to one address Number of postal applications from one address Number of proxy applications from one address Number of emergency proxy applications by type Number of applications referred to the police for investigation What difference is being made? Electors are able to make an informed decision on what voting method is best for them Barriers to absent voting are minimised, enabling all eligible individuals, including those from different elector groups, to apply Changes to voting arrangements are captured and applied in a timely manner The integrity of absent voting records and lists is maintained How can we determine the success of our work? Performance against the KPIs/objectives set out in your plans Analysis of complaints and feedback received about ability to access the absent voting process Assessment of the numbers and types of errors in the absent voter lists Outcome: stakeholders and electors have confidence in the secure management of the electoral registers What inputs are needed? ERO understanding and delivery of role and responsibilities Management and oversight of delivery of the electoral registers, including the statutory functions of the ERO, and stakeholder engagement. Planning Maintaining a plan throughout the year, including details of the publication and supply of the register and arrangements for managing the security of systems, and a risk and issues register, identifying any risks to the effective delivery of your plan and corresponding mitigating actions Resources Identification and allocation of budget and staffing for electoral registration activities. Training Identification and delivery of training to meet the needs of both permanent and temporary staff. What activities are being undertaken? Publication and supply of the electoral register: Maintain record of those who are entitled to receive the electoral register Securely supply the electoral register to recipients Timely and accurate supply of electoral registers to the Returning Officer to support the conduct of elections What information is needed to understand the impact of these activities? Evaluation of arrangements for publication of the revised register and monthly updates to the register Evaluation of arrangements for supplying the register to those entitled to receive it Number of requests received, number of requests approved and when supplied Audit trails showing how and when data has been transferred Evaluation of methods for transferring data Processes to ensure cyber security Timing of provision of the registers Information provided to recipients on appropriate use of the register What difference is being made? Everyone who is entitled to be supplied with the register receives data on time and in an appropriate format Electors have confidence in how their data is compiled, accessed and used Personal data is processed lawfully and transparently How can we determine the success of our work? Performance against the KPIs/objectives set out in your plans Analysis of complaints received from register recipients in relation to the provision

of registers Analysis of complaints from electors about how their data is processed
Download the Performance Standards for EROs Performance standards for EROs - December 2022 Stakeholders providing feedback Stakeholders providing feedback We received 60 responses to the consultation: Governments (3) Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities officials George Adam, Minister for Parliamentary Business (Scotland) Welsh Government officials Representative bodies (6) Association of s (AEA) AEA Southern Branch Electoral Management Board for Scotland (EMB) Scottish Assessors Association (SAA) South Wales Central regional group (Cardiff Council, Vale of Glamorgan Council and Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council) Wales Electoral Coordination Board Academics (1) Toby James, Professor of Politics and Public Policy Other organisations (5) Learning Disability Wales RNIB RNIB Cymru RNIB Scotland Welsh Language Commissioner ROs, EROs and their teams (45) Bristol City Council Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils Broxtowe Borough Council Buckinghamshire Council Coventry City Council Dacorum Borough Council Darlington Borough Council Dorset Council Dumfries and Galloway Council Eastbourne Borough Council Falkirk Council Fareham Borough Council Folkestone and Hythe District Council Gloucester City Council Gravesham Borough Council Harrogate Borough Council Hartlepool Borough Council Havant Borough Council Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council Kirklees Council Lewes District Council Lewisham Council London Borough of Bexley Luton Borough Council Neath Port Talbot Council North East Lincolnshire Council North Lanarkshire Council North Northamptonshire Council North Tyneside Council Norwich City Council Plymouth City Council Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council Richmond and Wandsworth Councils Selby District Council Shropshire Council South Kesteven District Council South Tyneside Council Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Swale Borough Council Swindon Borough Council Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council Torridge District Council Tower Hamlets Council West Dunbartonshire Council West Suffolk Council

Report on the May 2023 local elections in England | Electoral Commission Search Report on the May 2023 local elections in England You are in the England local council elections section Home England local council elections Currently reading: of 6 - Show page contents On this page Voting at the elections at the elections Campaigning at the elections Delivering the elections Summary of recommendations Supporting evidence Executive summary This report looks at how the May 2023 elections in England were run, how voters and campaigners found taking part, and what lessons can be learned for the future. We have reported separately on the local elections in Northern Ireland . On 4 May local council elections took place in many areas of England. There were also local mayoral elections in Bedford, Leicester, Mansfield, and Middlesbrough. These were the first elections in Great Britain where changes introduced by the Elections Act were in place. Voters needed to show photographic identification (ID) to vote in a polling station, and this report draws on a wider range of evidence to build on our June 2023 interim analysis . It confirms the interim findings that most people who wanted to vote were able to do so, but that some groups struggled to meet the ID requirement. Our evidence indicates that this stems from two overlapping issues: variations in levels of ownership of accepted ID, and in awareness of the new requirement. We have recommended changes to the UK Government to improve accessibility and support people who do not have accepted ID. These elections also saw increased flexibility as to what support and equipment can be provided at polling stations to enable, or make it easier for, disabled people to vote independently. Although Returning Officers provided a range of support at polling stations, voter awareness of what is available continues to be low and more can be done to ensure disabled voters receive the support they need. More generally, candidates engaged with voters in a range of ways ahead of the elections and voters found it easy to access information, although this did not necessarily lead to them feeling well-informed. Concerns remain about the number of candidates experiencing intimidation or harassment however, with many telling us they experienced some form of harassment in this election at least once. Coordinated action from partners across the electoral community is needed to ensure candidates and campaigners can participate freely in the democratic process without fear of intimidation.

Significant changes to the process of voting added new layers of complexity and risk to already stretched electoral administration processes, and the capacity and resilience of election teams remains a key risk for future elections. Despite these challenging circumstances, electoral administrators were able to deliver well-run elections. Further significant changes are expected to be implemented ahead of elections in 2024 and the next UK Parliamentary general election. To ensure electoral administrators can continue to deliver well-run elections that meet voters' expectations, the UK Government must ensure there is sufficient time and capacity and fully functioning operational resources to support them. Voting at the elections The experience of voters at the May 2023 elections These were the first elections in Great Britain where voters needed to show photographic identification (ID) to vote in polling stations. There was also, for the first time, increased flexibility as to what support and equipment could be provided in polling stations to enable, or make it easier for, disabled people to vote independently and in secret. Our evidence indicates that public confidence in how elections are run in England remains high. Most people are satisfied with registration and voting processes and think that voting is safe from fraud and abuse. Public views on this year's elections are broadly consistent with comparable elections in recent years. Returning Officers provided a range of accessibility equipment and support at polling stations, although

voter awareness of what is available continues to be low. We will continue to work with electoral administrators, charities, and civil society organisations to raise awareness, and to further develop our voter information resources for disabled voters. Summary On 4 May 2023, there were elections for local councillors in 230 local authorities in England. There were also local mayoral elections in Bedford, Leicester, Mansfield, and Middlesbrough. Around 27 million people were eligible to vote in these elections. These were the first elections in Great Britain where changes introduced by the Elections Act 2022 were in place. In particular, there was increased flexibility as to what support could be provided in polling stations to enable, or make it easier for, disabled people to vote independently and in secret. For the first time in Great Britain, voters also needed to show photographic identification (ID) to vote in polling stations, and further evidence about the experience of the new requirement is highlighted in the next chapter of this report. Public confidence in how elections are run remains high Public confidence in how elections are run remains high After each election we ask members of the public who were eligible to vote for their views on voting and elections. This helps us understand if views have changed since the last comparable set of elections. Most people are confident elections are well-run and are satisfied with registration and voting processes Our research with the public found that just over two-thirds (68%) of people said they were confident that the elections were well-run – this is consistent with the 64% who said they were confident after the last comparable elections in 2019. In 2023, the most commonly chosen reasons for being confident were: it was quick and easy to vote (56%) the polling station was accessible and easy to get to (47%) a lack of negative experiences when taking part in the election (46%) everyone having the opportunity to vote (41%) helpful polling station staff (37%) Around one-in-seven (14%) people said they were not confident that the elections were well-run, in comparison to 10% after the 2019 elections. Those who did not vote were more likely than voters to say they were not confident. In 2023, the most chosen reasons were: people being unable to vote due to not having photo ID (46%) a lack of information about the elections or candidates (40%) the voting system being unfair, outdated or wanting a different voting system (32%) believing some people had difficulties registering to vote (26%) media, TV, and press coverage being biased (22%) People continue to have high levels of satisfaction with the process of registering to vote and voting. Our research shows that: 77% of people in England were satisfied with the process of registering to vote – this is consistent with the levels of satisfaction reported after the most recent comparable elections held in 2019 (81%) 90% of voters were satisfied with the process of voting – this is consistent with 2019, when 91% of voters were satisfied In addition, nearly all voters felt that it was easy to fill in their ballot paper, and there is no evidence to suggest that voters had problems with the change to the voting system (from Supplementary Vote to First Past the Post) in the four areas with local mayoral elections. We found that: in areas with local elections, 97% of voters said that it was easy, with 73% saying it was very easy – only 2% of voters said that they found it difficult in areas with mayoral elections, 95% of voters said that it was easy, with 78% saying it was very easy – only 3% of voters said that they found it difficult Almost everyone who voted by post said that they knew how to complete and return their postal vote and found the postal voting instructions useful. Our research shows that: 96% of postal voters said that they found the written instructions (about how to vote and return their vote) included with their postal vote useful, with two-thirds (65%) saying they were very useful 94% of postal voters

also said it was easy to complete and return their postal vote, compared to 5% who said it was difficult. Most people think voting is safe from fraud and abuse. Views about the safety of voting and whether electoral fraud is a problem were also consistent with the most recent comparable elections. Our research found that: 81% of people in England said they thought voting in general was safe from fraud and abuse, with the same proportion (81%) saying this after the 2022 elections. Some people were less likely to feel that voting was safe from fraud and abuse – this included younger people, people from an ethnic minority background, and those limited a lot by a disability when asked if they thought electoral fraud was a problem. 16% of people in England said that they thought it was – this is consistent with the 19% who saw it as a problem after the 2022 elections. Our research also found that: four-in-five voters (80%) in England said they thought voting was secret, while 8% said they thought it was not – this is in line with findings from the surveys we conducted after the 2021 and 2022 elections. A similar proportion (82%) of voters said they thought voting was secure, with 55% saying it was very secure. Fewer than one-in-20 respondents (4%) said they thought voting was not secure – this is consistent with our findings in 2021 and 2022. A small proportion of voters (4% of people who voted in polling stations and 8% of people who voted by post) said that they had help completing their ballot paper. Younger voters and those limited a lot by a disability or long-term health condition were most likely to say they had help filling in the ballot paper.

For some people, help would have been provided in response to a specific request for assistance, including for example by a Presiding Officer or an officially declared companion. Nevertheless, it remains essential that voters are able to vote in secret, and we will continue to provide information for voters about their rights and ensure guidance for polling station staff supports them to protect the secrecy of voting in polling stations. Few allegations of electoral fraud have been reported so far. Throughout the year, all police forces across the UK send us data about allegations of electoral fraud that they receive and investigate. Data collected so far shows that there were: two allegations of polling station personation, both of which resulted in the police taking no further action; four allegations of postal vote personation – two resulted in the police taking no further action, while two are under investigation; one allegation of proxy vote personation, which is under investigation; one public order incident related to voter ID, which was reported by polling station staff – there were no lines of inquiry and the case was closed; one allegation of assault against a member of polling station staff by a person who could not show accepted ID. The suspect has been charged with criminal damage and common assault. In spring 2024, we will publish our annual update on the number, type and outcome of the allegations reported to police forces during 2023. Turnout at these elections was slightly lower than at recent comparable elections. Turnout at these elections was 32.0%, which is slightly lower than at the last comparable set of elections in 2019, when it was 32.5%. The most common reasons given by people who told us they did not vote were: a lack of time or being too busy at work (mentioned by 15% of non-voters); a lack of interest in, or being fed up with, politics (13%); medical reasons unrelated to Covid (8%); being away on polling day (8%). Although it was not one of the most common reasons given, 3% of non-voters said they did not vote because they did not have ID, and 1% said it was because they did not agree with the requirement to show ID to vote at a polling station. Data collected from electoral administrators on postal votes and ballot papers shows that: 2.6% of returned postal votes (approximately 88,971 votes in total) were rejected and not able to be included in the count. The most common reason for postal votes being rejected was that the

signature (27%) or date of birth (22%) on the postal voting statement did not match that previously provided to the Electoral Registration Officer 0.6% of all local election ballot papers (approximately 48,547) were rejected and not included in the count the most common reason for ballot papers to be rejected was because they were unmarked, with this accounting for over three-quarters (76.3%) of all rejected ballot papers Most voters could vote using their preferred method Of all registered voters, most people (81%) could vote in person at their designated polling station, but 19% applied to be sent a postal vote and 0.1% (23,414) appointed a proxy, of which 964 were an emergency proxy, including 249 people who appointed an emergency proxy due to their ID being lost or stolen. Our research with the public found that most people who voted were able to use their preferred method: 95% of voters said they were able to use their preferred method of voting, compared to 4% who said they were not groups more likely to have voted using their preferred method included older voters, white voters, those in employment, and those without a disability Most people said that they found it easy to find information on how to vote either in person at a polling station or by post or proxy. Our research showed that: three-quarters (75%) of people said they found it easy to get information about the different methods of voting they could choose from 83% of people who voted in a polling station and 86% of people who voted by post said they found it easy to get information about different methods of voting Data from local authorities indicates that the number of people voting by post and by proxy was consistent with the elections in May 2022 and in line with post-pandemic trends. There was little evidence that the new voter ID requirement had a significant impact on the number of people choosing to vote by post. Just over one-in-six (17%) of postal voters told us that these elections were the first time they had voted by post, and the most common reasons for choosing to do so were: wanting to avoid queuing at the polling station (24%) being away on polling day (24%) difficulties accessing or travelling to their polling station (24%) Not having photographic ID, chosen by one-in-eight (12%) people who voted by post for the first time this year, was the seventh most chosen option as a reason for voting by post. Returning Officers took steps to assist disabled voters at the elections but more needs to be done to raise awareness Returning Officers took steps to assist disabled voters at the elections but more needs to be done to raise awareness Following changes in the Elections Act, electoral administrators now have increased flexibility on what support and equipment they can provide at the polling station to enable, or make it easier for, disabled people to vote independently and in secret. Restrictions have also been removed on who can be a 'companion'. Anyone who is 18 or over can now accompany a disabled voter to the polling station and, if requested by the voter, provide support. The companion no longer needs to be eligible to vote at the elections taking place, but they must still complete a declaration before assisting the voter. Returning Officers provided a range of support at polling stations Ahead of the elections, we published guidance for Returning Officers to support them to remove the barriers and challenges disabled voters face when voting at the polling station. Returning Officers were required to take this guidance into account when planning for and running the elections. After the elections, we asked electoral administrators and polling station staff for their feedback about the accessibility support provided to voters and about any specific support requested by voters. We did not receive responses from all local authorities, and not everyone answered all the questions, but among the electoral administrators who responded to our questions on accessibility: over three-quarters (81%) found our guidance on assistance with voting for disabled voters useful, with over half (54%) saying it was very useful most of

the equipment that was made available at polling stations was provided proactively by administrators, with a limited number of requests from voters for specific equipment almost all respondents said that they had met the minimum requirements for equipment and support, as set out in our guidance However, follow-up responses suggest there may have been some misunderstanding of either the survey question or what constitutes a 'minimum requirement'. When asked to select which items they had provided from a list of types of support and equipment, and at how many polling stations, responses indicate that some administrators did not provide the minimum equipment. This may have led to an inconsistent provision of equipment and support for voters in some areas, which we are following up with the relevant Returning Officers. This was the first year Returning Officers had to have regard to our guidance, and we will continue to work with them to ensure they understand what equipment and support they should make available so that elections are accessible. Most survey respondents indicated that they had tried to engage with local disability groups to inform their planning and the implementation of the accessibility requirements. However, some electoral administrators noted that they had difficulties identifying or engaging with local groups, with a lack of capacity and time being a factor for some. "No difficulties as such, but more time was required to procure equipment, update polling station staff training and liaise with the equalities access officer." "We don't have the capacity and resources to engage with local groups as much as we would like to." "While the council invited and reached out to organisations, there was limited response. However, we believe this will come over time through continued invitations to work with us." The limits on capacity for local engagement also reflects feedback we have previously received from disability charities about the limited resources they have available, as well as concerns raised elsewhere about the capacity and resilience of electoral administrators. Some administrators also noted that funding played a role in their decision making. "It is not practical to provide audio devices and hearing loops within the New Burdens funding allocated." "Hearing induction loops sat unused in our office waiting to be deployed – these were on request as we could not afford 160 of these." Most of the administrators responding to our survey said that they did not have any issues providing training for polling station staff on accessibility. Among the polling station staff who shared their experiences, most were confident that they were able to assist disabled voters, including voters with a visual impairment (94% were confident) or a learning disability (90%). However, 9% of polling station staff reported that at least one disabled voter had problems with voting, with just under half (43%) of the staff reporting problems saying that it was due to problem with physical access to the polling station. In some cases, Returning Officers highlighted a lack of suitable alternative venues. "Rural polling stations tend not to be as accessible. No alternative venues unless required to travel outside of the polling district, which is less practical for many. Staff were trained on how to assist those who are unable to physically enter the polling station." "Two polling stations were not available, so had to find alternatives. One polling station was not accessible to wheelchairs (and no suitable alternative). Staff trained on how to enable people to vote where they cannot access the polling station." We will continue to work with electoral administrators and civil society partner organisations to identify and share examples of good practice. Further work is needed to ensure disabled voters receive the support they need Our research with those who voted at the elections found that: almost all (97%) adults who voted in person and told us they have a disability or long-term health condition said that it was easy to get inside the polling station and vote – one-in-10 in-person voters with a disability or

long-term health condition said that they needed additional assistance or equipment voters limited a lot by a disability or long-term health condition were more likely to have gone to vote with another person who helped them vote (16%) compared with voters limited a little or not at all by a disability/long-term health condition (1%) those limited a lot by a disability or long-term health condition were most likely to say they had help filling in their ballot paper in the polling booth – 14% of these in-person voters said they had help, compared to 3% of in-person voters who said they were not limited by a disability or long-term health condition We also asked all those who have a disability or long-term health condition for their views on the experience of voting at the May elections. Overall, we found that: 52% of voters agreed that they received the equipment, information and support that they need in order to vote, with 7% disagreeing 40% felt that staff at polling stations are properly trained to assist them with voting, while 7% disagreed 49% disagreed that the way elections are run at present prevents them from voting in person, with one in seven (15%) agreeing After the elections, we asked civil society organisations and their service users for feedback on their experiences at this year's polls, and on the impact of voter ID and the new accessibility measures in particular. This feedback provides a valuable insight into disabled people's lived experience, although we only received a limited number of responses which means they are not representative of the views of all disabled people. Overall, most people who fed back found it relatively easy to register and vote. However, some people raised concerns around: the lack of information in accessible formats, including about how to register and vote the impact of voter ID on those who have compromised or suppressed immune systems, and who continue to wear masks to protect their health difficulties applying for and completing their postal vote physical access to the polling station lack of clear signage at the polling station In the feedback received, we also found that many people had low levels of awareness of the support and equipment available to assist those voting in person, such as help from a companion or polling station staff, or the provision of a large print ballot paper. "I wasn't aware that I could have had a large print ballot paper. I would have felt awkward asking for one then a big fuss to find one etc." Recommendation 1: Increase awareness of the support available for disabled voters Recommendation 1: Increase awareness of the support available for disabled voters Recommendation 1: Increase awareness of the support available for disabled voters There is some evidence that levels of awareness of the support and equipment available, especially in polling stations, is still lower than it could be. This includes awareness of both the new accessibility measures and the existing provisions that are available (such as the possibility of asking a companion or polling station staff for help with voting). We will continue to work with the electoral community, national and local civil society organisations, and the media to raise awareness of the support that is available for disabled voters. We will also work with them to further develop our voter information resources for disabled voters. This work should include pro-actively ensuring voters are aware of the support and assistance that is available to help them vote, and how they can make a request for additional equipment or support – whether in advance of the election or on polling day. at the elections The experience of the voter ID requirement at the May 2023 elections These were the first elections in Great Britain where voters needed to show photographic identification (ID) to vote in polling stations. Our interim analysis highlighted evidence that some people found it harder than others to show accepted voter ID, including disabled people and the unemployed. We have now undertaken further data collection and analysis of evidence to establish a clearer

picture of the impact of the new requirement. This analysis confirms the interim findings and indicates that this stems from two overlapping issues – the variations in ownership of accepted photo ID and in awareness of the need to show ID when voting in person. It is crucial that improvements are made at the earliest opportunity, particularly given there are important elections that are due to be held during the next 18 months, to improve accessibility and support those people who do not have an accepted form of ID. at the elections These were the first elections in Great Britain where changes introduced by the Elections Act 2022 were in place. Voters needed to show photographic identification (ID) to vote in polling stations.

Photographic ID has been a requirement for polling station voters in Northern Ireland since 2003. Further work is required to ensure that elections remain accessible to all. Further work is required to ensure that elections remain accessible to all. We published our interim analysis of the new ID requirement in June 2023, using the information and evidence that was available at that time about how the new voter ID requirement was implemented and how voters found taking part. This report now draws on a wider range of information, including feedback from candidates, Returning Officers, polling station staff, election observers, charities and civil society organisations, and the police. Our interim analysis highlighted key findings about the impact of the new voter ID requirement at the May 2023 elections. Our research found that: around 4% of all people who said they did not vote at the elections on 4 May listed the ID requirement as the reason – 3% said they did not have the necessary ID, and 1% said they disagreed with the new requirement at least 0.25% of people who tried to vote at a polling station in May 2023 were not able to because of the voter ID requirement – this was equivalent to approximately 14,000 people who were not issued with a ballot paper awareness of the need to bring ID to vote at a polling station was high – 92% of people were aware of the need to bring ID to vote at a polling station, although awareness was significantly lower among people who said they did not have an accepted form of ID (74%) awareness and take-up of the Voter Authority Certificate was low – awareness of the availability of the free Voter Authority Certificate stood at 57% in May 2023, and only 25,000 certificates were actually used as a form of ID on polling day. We also said that further work was needed to improve the collection of data on the impact of voter ID at future elections. We recommended that the UK Government should ensure Returning Officers are able to collect and report monitoring data on the impact of voter ID at future elections, and that work is also needed to improve the quality and reliability of data collected at polling stations in future. There is evidence that the voter ID requirement had a greater impact on some groups of people. There is evidence that the voter ID requirement had a greater impact on some groups of people. Our interim analysis highlighted evidence that some people found it harder than others to show accepted voter ID. We have now undertaken further data collection and analysis of evidence in a number of areas to establish a clearer picture of this impact. This additional analysis confirms the interim findings and indicates that this stems from two overlapping issues – the variations in ownership of accepted photo ID and in awareness of the need to show ID when voting in person. Some people did not have the ID needed. We know, from our previous research, that some groups were less likely to have one of the forms of accepted photo ID (in particular those renting from a social landlord, the unemployed, lower social grades, and disabled people). Our evidence indicates that at least some of these groups were more likely to have a problem voting in person on 4 May. In our public opinion survey following the elections, 3% of all non-voters said they did not vote because they did not have the required ID,

but this was higher for unemployed non-voters (8%) and for disabled non-voters who reported being 'limited a lot' by their disability or health condition (9%). The Voter Authority Certificate is intended to allow those without ID to vote. However, we know that awareness of the Voter Authority Certificate was relatively low (57% of people with no photo ID were aware they could get a Voter Authority Certificate). While around 89,500 people applied for a Voter Authority Certificate before the elections, this is substantially fewer than the approximately 250,000 to 300,000 people that were estimated to need one to vote. We do not have detailed data on Voter Authority Certificate applications, which we understand will be published by the UK Government in due course. Our public opinion findings suggest that Voter Authority Certificate applications were more likely to be received from certain groups including disabled people, people from an ethnic minority community, and younger people. However, there is no evidence of a greater take up among the unemployed. In addition, only around 25,000 certificates were used as a form of ID on 4 May. It is not clear why a significant number of people applied for a certificate but did not use it on polling day. From the public opinion data available, it appears that some did then choose to vote by post or by proxy rather than at a polling station. Some people did not know they needed to show ID. While awareness of the ID requirement was relatively high, our research also shows that some groups were less likely to be aware than others (in particular younger age groups, people from an ethnic minority background, and people with no photo ID). Again, our evidence suggests that these lower levels of awareness meant that these groups of people were also more likely to have difficulties meeting the ID requirement. We asked all non-voters to choose from a list of reasons why they did not vote. On average, 1% of those who did not vote said that this was because they went to vote without the required ID. However, this was higher among 18-to-24-year-old non-voters and those non-voters from a mixed or black ethnic background (both 5%). The proportion of voters turned away varied across local authorities. In order to further explore the different impact across the population, we have also used the data on voters initially turned away from polling stations in 18 local authorities (where the data was available at ward level) and compared it against census data for those wards in relation to the proportions of: non-white British population; long term unemployed/never worked in the population; and households with at least two dimensions of deprivation. We find a moderate correlation between the numbers initially turned away from polling stations and all three additional factors. This finding suggests that the distribution of voters initially turned away was not random. We need to be cautious in drawing conclusions from this analysis. Firstly, this shows only a relationship, not any direct causation. Secondly, while the overall correlation for each of these factors is moderate, individual local authorities in the analysis can have much stronger or much weaker results. Finally, we have also highlighted some issues with the accuracy of the original polling station data, which could be distorting the findings. However, taken together, the evidence available tells us that some people, in relation to socio-demographic factors, were more likely to have problems in meeting the ID requirement. Our analysis in relation to deprivation suggests that, on average, more deprived areas had a higher proportion turned away compared to less deprived areas. The particular types of voters who faced greater problems were: disabled people, unemployed people from ethnic minority communities (although it is not clear to what extent this varies between distinct ethnic minority backgrounds), younger age groups. The feedback we received through our charity partner organisations and directly from disabled voters supports these findings and provides additional

evidence about the impact of the ID requirement on groups that are harder to reach through a public opinion survey (because of their size relative to the total population). The LGBT Foundation and TransActual told us that many of their users said they chose not to vote or to vote by post instead, because of the ID requirement. This was often because of the perception of the extra complexity involved in polling station voting as a result of the ID requirement. For example, some people were concerned about whether gender markers (on their ID) would be checked at polling stations. There were also concerns about legal name changes and around gender presentation in their photographs. “I felt actively discouraged to vote through new voter ID as a Trans person. My appearance has changed dramatically from when my current ID was issued.” LGBT Foundation user RNIB reported mixed feedback. Some of its users were unaffected and had ID or could apply for a Voter Authority Certificate. However, it heard from others who chose postal voting “specifically because of the introduction of voter ID” as well as where people had “become disenfranchised by the voter ID requirements, as it added yet another barrier to an already inaccessible process which some blind and partially sighted people were unable to overcome”. In its anecdotal feedback, RNIB highlighted some issues users faced including being unable to afford to pay to travel to the council offices for support to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate. Another user nearly discarded their Certificate as the tactile marking was not clear and they thought it was junk mail, however they were stopped by a sighted friend. Feedback via our own survey of voters with accessibility needs supports this: “I voted by post as the voter ID requirements, in addition to there being no accessible method of me voting secretly, caused me to change the way I voted.” “Requiring ID changes it from something you can do on your way to or from somewhere into something you have to make a specific trip for. It adds an extra step that makes it harder. Not requiring ID to vote would have made me vote.” Grace Eyre, an organisation working with people with learning disabilities, autism and mental health conditions, was concerned that the mainly online nature of the Voter Authority Certificate application process was an issue, as many people with a learning disability are not online. They also felt that it required information the person applying may not easily be able to access. They reported most of their users who voted used a postal vote to avoid needing to show ID and that “having voter ID adds significant anxiety to an already anxiety inducing process.” Improvements are needed ahead of higher turnout elections Improvements are needed ahead of higher turnout elections Elections are scheduled to take place across all of England and Wales in May 2024, including in London and Birmingham where there were no elections in May 2023. A UK Parliamentary general election must also take place before the end of January 2025. For many people, these elections will be the first time they will have voted since the requirement to show voter ID was introduced. Our research indicates that the voter ID requirement is likely to have a larger impact at higher turnout elections such as a UK general election, where people who do not always vote at local elections may want to take part. We found that: people who said they do not tend to vote at local elections had significantly lower levels of awareness of the requirement (84% were aware) compared with those who vote more frequently at local elections (94%) people who never vote in local elections are less likely to have accepted ID (7%) than those who always vote in local elections (2%) Changes must be made at the earliest opportunity to improve accessibility and support people who do not have accepted ID, particularly given there are important elections that are due to be held during the next 18 months. This should include both changes in the law and work to increase awareness of the voter ID requirement and the

availability of the free Voter Authority Certificate, as recommended in our interim analysis . Recommendation 2: Review the list of accepted ID Recommendation 2: Review the list of accepted ID Recommendation 2: Review the list of accepted ID The UK Government should review the current list of accepted forms of ID to identify any additional documents that could be included to improve accessibility for voters. This should focus on forms of ID that would support people who are least likely to have documents on the current list, including disabled people and those who are unemployed. Any changes to the list of accepted forms of ID should be confirmed in legislation in time for details to be included in public awareness materials and activities, and in guidance for polling station staff ahead of polling day.

Recommendation 3: Improve access to the Voter Authority Certificate for voters

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Recommendation 3: Improve access to the Voter Authority Certificate for voters The UK Government should explore whether the deadline for Voter Authority Certificate applications could be moved closer to polling day, to extend its availability for voters who do not have any other form of accepted ID. The current deadline of six working days before polling day is significantly earlier than the Government's original policy intention – as set out in a policy paper published during the passage of the Elections Bill – which was for the deadline to be the day before polling day.

Electoral Registration Officers and their staff must still be able to process applications and issue Voter Authority Certificates to voters in time for them to be able to vote, alongside other essential duties taking place in the days before polling day. Any potential changes to application deadlines must therefore take into account the operational impact and workability of a later deadline, also recognising the level of dependency on printers and postal services to deliver Certificates to voters. Recommendation 4: Provide options for voters who do not have or cannot access any form of accepted ID Recommendation 4: Provide options for voters who do not have or cannot access any form of accepted ID Recommendation 4: Provide options for voters who do not have or cannot access any form of accepted ID The UK Government should enable registered voters who do have accepted ID to make an attestation at their polling station on behalf of someone who does not have any form of accepted ID (also referred to as 'vouching'). The voter ID requirement currently assumes that people either have an accepted form of ID or are sufficiently motivated to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate by the deadline. This means that voting is effectively not accessible for anyone without ID who misses the application deadline or only decides they want to vote on polling day (or close to polling day). In the limited and exceptional circumstances where a voter does not have access to any other form of accepted ID, allowing attestation would still provide a safeguard by requiring a formal link to a named elector who has had their own identity verified. Attestations are already a legitimate option for verifying identity in other parts of the electoral process, for example in applications to register to vote and applications for Voter Authority Certificates.

Recommendation 5: Polling station staff should continue to collect data on the impact of voter ID at future elections Recommendation 5: Polling station staff should continue to collect data on the impact of voter ID at future elections Recommendation 5: Polling station staff should continue to collect data on the impact of voter ID at future elections Analysing data from the first

scheduled elections where this requirement has been in place has helped to develop an understanding of the impact of the requirement and can now be used to help improve the experience of voters and polling station staff at future polls. There is no legal duty or explicit power for Returning Officers to report data for future elections

until the next UK Parliamentary general election, which must be held by January 2025. It would be a significant missed opportunity to learn and identify further improvements if Returning Officers did not collect and report data at the scheduled May 2024 elections, which will cover all areas of England and Wales. The UK Government should ensure that Returning Officers are able to collect and report monitoring data on the impact of voter ID at future elections, including specifically at the scheduled May 2024 elections and at any UK Parliament by-elections held during 2023 and 2024. This recommendation was first made in our June 2023 interim voter ID analysis.

Recommendation 6: The electoral community should work to improve the collection of data at polling stations for future elections

Recommendation 6: The electoral community should work to improve the collection of data at polling stations for future elections

Accurate data recording and reporting is essential to ensure there is a clear and reliable picture of the impact of the policy. This is needed to support informed debate and help identify areas for improvement. However, initial feedback from Returning Officers, polling station staff and observers suggests that some polling station staff found it difficult to record this additional data. We will work with the UK Government, Returning Officers, and electoral administrators to review the data collection forms and guidance for polling station staff, so they are clear and user-friendly. We will also work with local authorities and their training providers to make sure the ballot paper issuing procedure and data recording processes are fully explained to polling station staff. This should include guidance for polling station staff on the appropriate role of greeters and tellers. This recommendation was first made in our June 2023 interim voter ID analysis.

Campaigning at the elections

The experience of campaigning at the May 2023 elections

Most candidates engaged with voters in a range of ways ahead of the elections and felt able to get their messages across to voters effectively. Many also included information on the new voter ID requirement. Voters found it easy to get information, but some did not feel well-informed about candidates. We also identified and received concerns about the use of campaigning techniques and information (both online and in print) that could be perceived to be misleading. This risks undermining voters' trust and confidence in our elections.

Concerns remain about the number of candidates experiencing intimidation or harassment, with many respondents to our survey saying they experienced some form of harassment in this election at least once. Candidates and campaigners should be able to participate freely in the democratic process without fear of intimidation.

Tackling these problems will require coordinated action from a range of partners across the electoral community.

Campaigning at the elections

More than 25,000 candidates stood for election to local authorities on 4 May 2023. Just under three-quarters of those candidates (72.1%) stood for either the Conservative, Labour or Liberal Democrat parties, and 13% stood for the Green Party. Candidates standing for other parties represented 7.6% of the total. A further 7.3% of candidates were independents who did not stand for any political party.

1 A total of 20 candidates stood for election as directly elected mayors across the four local authorities where those positions were contested.

2 In our report on the May 2022 elections , we recommended that the UK Government should review subscriber requirements for nominating candidates for different elected offices, and noted that the Government was planning to introduce changes for local elections. The law was changed, from the May 2023 elections onwards, to reduce the number of signatures required to nominate candidates for local elections from 10 to two.

s are engaging with voters but some

people want more information s are engaging with voters but some people want more information Most candidates engaged with voters in a range of ways ahead of the elections and felt able to get their messages across to voters effectively. Many voters also found it easy to get information, but this did not necessarily mean that they felt they had enough information. s engaged with voters using a variety of methods and many included information on the new ID requirements At the 2023 elections, people continued to receive information about candidates and parties from a range of different sources, and in a variety of formats. The most common ways people reported seeing information on parties and candidates were: a leaflet or flyer from a candidate or political party (63%) information on social media (17%) talking to a candidate or campaigner directly (11%) Older people were more likely than younger people to have seen a leaflet or flyer or to have talked to a candidate or campaigner directly, while younger people were more likely to say that they had seen information on social media. Findings from our survey of candidates were consistent with what voters reported, with the traditional campaigning methods being most used by candidates. We found that: more than nine-in-10 candidates used leaflets, newsletters and flyers (93%) over three-quarters used door-to-door canvassing (79%) around two-thirds said they used social media (66%) Most candidates also reported that they included messages to inform people about the new voter ID requirement. The methods they used for informing voters about ID are consistent with the most used campaigning methods, with around three-quarters saying they spoke to voters about ID (75%) or included the information in leaflets, newsletters, and posters (74%), with some candidates also using social media posts (61%). Most people found getting information easy, but some did not feel well-informed about candidates Our research after the election found that: two-thirds of people (67%) said that they found it easy to find information on what the election was about/for a similar proportion (61%) said that they found it easy to find information on the candidates and parties running for election in the local elections in areas with mayoral elections, three-quarters (76%) of people said that they found it easy to find information on the candidates and parties standing in the mayoral election three-quarters (76%) of people said it was easy to get information on the types of ID that they could use at a polling station, with 39% saying this was very easy just over three-quarters of candidates who responded to our survey (77%) said they felt able to get their views across to voters effectively. While not directly comparable, due to the different elections taking place and the sample not being representative of all candidates who stood at the elections, this is consistent with the three-quarters of respondents (74%) who said this in 2022 Although most people surveyed said they found it easy to find information, this did not necessarily mean that they felt they had enough information. Our research found that: four-in-10 (43%) people agreed that that they had enough information on candidates to make an informed choice, but almost a third (31%) disagreed people aged 18 to 34 years old and non-voters were more likely than average to say that they disagreed that they had enough information almost half (46%) felt they knew what the local elections were about, but over one quarter (27%) did not agree Although evidence continues to suggest that people would like more information on candidates, there are still some challenges to meeting this need. In Bedford, candidates for the mayoral election decided not to use the opportunity that was available to include campaign material in an information booklet that would normally be sent to all voters by the Returning Officer. We understand that the candidates were not prepared to make the required contribution to the cost of printing the booklet and some had concerns about the environmental impact. Misleading

campaign techniques risk undermining voters' trust During the election campaign we identified and received concerns about the use of campaigning techniques and information (both online and in print) that could be perceived as misleading. These came from, and related to, campaigners from across the political spectrum. For example, some leaflets and posters used colours normally associated with other parties, while other materials included inaccurate information (in some cases inadvertently) about voter ID, such as the types of identification that would be accepted. It is for campaigners to decide on the content and format of their election materials, and it is essential to protect the space for them to get their messages across to voters ahead of polling day. However, campaigners must recognise the impact that their campaign choices have on voters' perceptions and confidence in elections, including their particular responsibility to provide accurate information about election and voting processes. Candidates continue to experience intimidation and harassment Candidates continue to experience intimidation and harassment After each election we ask candidates about their experiences of taking part in the election. Responses cannot be directly compared due to the different elections taking place each year and the self-selecting nature of the sample, but responses show that many candidates continue to report having experienced intimidation and harassment. Concerns remain about the number of candidates experiencing intimidation or harassment Our research following the 2022 local elections highlighted that a notable proportion of candidates responding to our survey said that they experienced some form of abuse or intimidation. Evidence collected by the Local Government Association (LGA) has also found an increase in the number of councillors saying they felt at risk at least some of the time while fulfilling their role, due to rising levels of abuse and intimidation. Ahead of the May 2023 elections, we highlighted the abuse faced by election candidates and called for a campaign free of intimidation, abuse or fear. We also worked with police and prosecution services to help candidates understand when behaviour goes beyond political debate and may be unlawful. The LGA and the Jo Cox Foundation issued a joint call for people to show respect and civility towards candidates standing in, and officials running, the local elections in May. When asked about how much of a problem they had with harassment, intimidation, or threats in this election, 36% of candidates who responded to our survey said they had some kind of problem (rating this as a two or above on a scale of one to five). However, when shown a list of types of harassment and asked if they had experienced any of them during the campaign, 55% of respondents said that they had experienced one of the scenarios at least once. The types of harassment that candidates reported having experienced most frequently included: abuse posted on social media (35%) someone intimidating or intentionally making them feel unsafe (24%) having campaign material torn down (18%) being insulted in person (18%) When asked if they had avoided doing something as part of their campaign to keep themselves safe, 37% of respondents said that they avoided campaigning on their own. "As a woman, I feel anxious about putting my address on the ballot paper and campaign materials." "I took precautions by not doing face to face meetings alone." "The level of personal abuse on social media was the worst I've ever known. Particularly Twitter, where spam accounts seem to be created to do so. Furthermore, there was no real reporting criteria online that matched. It will deter people from standing in the future." Only 12% of those who told us that they experienced harassment said that they reported it to the police. When it came to dealing with reports of intimidation and abuse from candidates, our survey of Single Point of Contact (SPOC) officers found that 54% of respondents (13 SPOCs) said that they were very confident that they knew where to

direct candidates to get advice or report an issue, with 46% (11 SPOCs) saying they were reasonably confident. The Elections Act introduces a new electoral sanction for those found guilty of intimidating candidates, campaigners, and elected representatives, which will come into force from 1 November 2023. This should strengthen the deterrent against intimidating behaviour by enabling someone to be banned from standing for elected office, as well as imposing criminal sanctions, such as a prison sentence or fine. The UK Government has recently committed to explicitly exempt reasonable security expenses from contributing to spending limits for parties and candidates at certain elections, to ensure that these limits are not a barrier to providing necessary levels of security during election campaigns. Recommendation 7: The electoral community should take action to protect voter trust and confidence in the democratic system Recommendation 7: The electoral community should take action to protect voter trust and confidence in the democratic system Recommendation 7: The electoral community should take action to protect voter trust and confidence in the democratic system Candidates and campaigners should be able to participate freely in the democratic process, ensuring that voters can hear from a range of voices and have confidence in our elections. However, abuse and intimidation continue to persist. Tackling these problems will require coordinated action from a range of partners across the electoral community, including political parties and campaigners themselves as well as police forces and prosecuting authorities. They should recognise the impact their choices have on how the public views our democratic system. They should actively discourage the use of inflammatory language and emphasise the importance of respect and constructive engagement with opposing viewpoints. Political parties should consider reviewing their membership criteria to include a clause explicitly emphasising respect for other campaigners and fostering a healthy political debate. The police and prosecutors must continue to treat allegations and cases of election-related intimidation seriously and demonstrate that those committing offences against candidates and campaigners will face significant sanctions. We will continue to work with parties, campaigners, the police and prosecutors, and the wider electoral community to understand what is driving this intimidatory behaviour and collectively develop effective responses to ensure that campaigners can get their messages across to voters openly and directly without fear of intimidation. Delivering the elections The experience of electoral administration at the May 2023 elections Electoral administrators were able to deliver well-run elections in challenging circumstances. However, significant changes to the process of voting added a new layer of complexity and risk to an already stretched process. The capacity and resilience of election teams remain a significant concern, especially looking ahead to the polls that are scheduled for 2024 and the further changes from the Elections Act that will need to be implemented. To ensure they can continue to deliver well-run elections that meet voters' expectations, electoral administrators need to be confident that they will have sufficient time and capacity and fully functioning operational resources needed to implement further electoral administration changes ahead of elections in 2024. Before making any final decisions about implementing the remaining Elections Act changes, the UK Government must carefully consider whether the necessary time and resources are, or will be, available. Delivering the elections Elections took place in 230 local authorities in England with local elections to district councils, most metropolitan boroughs (excluding Birmingham and London) and unitary authorities. Many local authority areas also had town and parish council elections, and there were local mayoral elections in Bedford, Leicester, Mansfield, and Middlesbrough. Local authority officers and their

teams were responsible for electoral registration, managing the nominations process, absent voting, polling stations, and the counting of votes for the elections. As a result of new requirements introduced by the Elections Act, electoral administrators were also responsible for processing Voter Authority Certificate and Anonymous Elector's Document applications, and issuing temporary Certificates or Documents, as well as providing equipment and support in polling stations to enable, or make it easier for, disabled voters to vote independently and in secret. The capacity and resilience of electoral administration teams has been further stretched. The capacity and resilience of electoral administration teams has been further stretched. Our reports on the May 2022 elections highlighted significant concerns about capacity and resilience of the UK's electoral administration systems and structures. In particular we noted that the changes being introduced by the Elections Act had the potential to increase the challenge of recruiting and retaining skilled and trained polling station staff for future elections. Elections teams were able to deliver the May 2023 polls, despite the additional pressures and challenges of significant and complex legislative changes. However, there is evidence that capacity and resilience within the electoral administration community was further stretched this year, and that administrators were only able to make these elections work by exceptional efforts and commitment. These remain key concerns for future elections, particularly looking ahead to the polls that are scheduled for May 2024 and the next UK Parliamentary general election which must be held by January 2025. We have already begun to work with senior representatives from the electoral administration community to consider these concerns, and there is a strong commitment to work together at a strategic level to tackle key challenges facing the sector in the medium to longer-term, including: electoral law reform; the role of technology; resilience and capacity of suppliers; resourcing of elections teams; and funding for elections. Many Returning Officers again faced challenges finding staff and relied on support from areas without elections. We received feedback from 17% of local authorities after the elections. Comments and views received from administrators show that longstanding problems with staff recruitment remain a key concern. When asked to indicate how much of a problem they had recruiting staff, we found that: nearly a quarter (24%) of respondents said that they experienced significant issues recruiting polling station staff almost one-in-six (16%) said that they had significant issues retaining polling station staff between recruitment and polling day. Recruiting count staff was less of a problem, with over two-thirds of respondents (68%) saying that they had no issues. Comments from administrators highlighted a lack of experienced staff and a high number of recruits dropping out ahead of polling day, including some Presiding Officers (POs). "We really struggled with recruitment of polling station staff this year. We had lots of last-minute dropouts and several POs pulled out after the training." "We have very low resilience amongst polling station staff and the core team. There are not enough experienced staff available to staff stations or the core team." The feedback also shows that the changes introduced by the Elections Act added a new layer of complexity and risk to an already stretched electoral system. In some cases, the higher levels of staff dropouts were attributed to the additional responsibilities added by the Elections Act changes. Administrators did, however, generally welcome the impact of the reduction in the number of subscribers required for local elections which came into effect for the first time at these elections. Further changes are being introduced by the Elections Act, such as new restrictions on handing in postal votes at polling stations, which will mean Presiding Officers have more new responsibilities from May 2024 onwards. These have the potential to

further increase the challenge of recruiting and retaining skilled and trained polling station staff for future elections. Because elections did not take place in all parts of England this year, some electoral administration teams were able to call on neighbouring local authorities for support. This is not a sustainable long-term solution, however, and staffing is likely to remain a significant challenge. In May 2024, for example, elections will take place across all parts of England and Wales, so there will be no additional support available from neighbouring areas with no polls. In addition to staffing challenges, there is continuing evidence that electoral administrators are finding it difficult to identify and book venues for polling stations. This creates additional work for administrators particularly if changes need to be made close to election day. “Polling stations were more challenging than usual, we were unsure whether two venues would be in use up until the days before the poll, despite being booked in November. Two polling stations lost their polling booths between them being delivered and polling day. A couple of venues changed the room the polling station was located in without prior consultation.” “A couple of polling stations were problematic to book, one cancelled just before the poll card data was sent.” Additional pressures from new electoral processes exacerbated existing challenges and increased risks to well-run elections. The changes introduced by the Elections Act added a new layer of complexity and risk to an already stretched electoral system. For the May 2023 elections, there were a number of additional responsibilities for electoral administrators, including: processing Voter Authority Certificate and Anonymous Elector’s Document applications; issuing temporary Certificates and Documents; voter ID data collection at polling stations; and developing and delivering training to polling station staff on new processes. Although feedback indicated that the new processes in themselves were relatively manageable at these particular polls – local elections with relatively low turnout and fewer than anticipated Voter Authority Certificate applications – administrators have nevertheless expressed significant concerns about the potential impact and risks at higher turnout elections, particularly the next UK Parliamentary general election. “Once we were aware of what we needed to do, the process was straightforward and with low numbers there were no challenges. I am more fearful for when the general election is announced, as voter turnout is likely to be double what it was for the locals.” “The election went very smoothly for us, though this was on a low turnout with quite high postal voting rates. The bigger unknown is how we would have dealt with considerably higher numbers for a poll with a much higher turnout, such as a general election.” Comments from administrators also suggest that the additional pressures of delivering new processes exacerbated existing challenges and have increased the risk of administrative errors or failure. “Service provision becomes increasingly difficult each year and with each new burden. We are seeing growing challenges in the recruitment and retention of staff, both in casual election roles (polling stations, count etc.) and in the core team of electoral administrators. New burdens obviously add to this, particularly with the Elections Act which has been consistently rushed, with guidance provided at the last minute when regulations are rushed through.” A number of electoral administration errors did occur at these elections that had the potential to affect levels of confidence of candidates, agents and voters in the effectiveness and integrity electoral process. We are aware of issues in eight local authorities, which have led us to conclude that the Returning Officers did not meet elements of our performance standards. In three areas there were errors related to nominations and postal voting, directly impacting on candidates and voters: The determination of nomination papers: In Arun, a candidate who had submitted a valid

nomination form was not included in the notice of uncontested election. In Bedford, nomination papers for a candidate were accepted without a home address form. Errors relating to the production of ballot papers: In East Devon, ballot papers included with the first issue of postal voting packs for one ward did not contain a party political emblem for one candidate, which led to the packs being reissued. The other errors related to the administration of the count and declaration of results: Votes not included in the count: In Newcastle, 193 postal votes spread over 26 wards were not processed and therefore not included in the final results. Similarly, in North Lincolnshire, around 800 postal votes were found to have not been included in the count for one ward following the declaration of the result. Inaccurate declarations of results: In West Devon, an error in transposing the votes cast for four candidates in one ward led to the incorrect result being declared initially. In Oadby and Wigston, a miscalculation when tabulating the votes, led to incorrect results being published for one ward, although this did not affect the overall election outcome. In East Devon, the declaration of results was incorrect in recording the total number of votes cast for one candidate in one ward – this had no impact on the final result. In Pendle, there was an election petition after the wrong candidate was announced as elected. This was due to the totals for the two candidates being mixed up and incorrectly transferred onto the declaration of result. In all of these cases, election teams acted quickly to rectify the error, as far as was possible in each case, once they became aware of the issue. Once made aware of the issues, we were able to provide each of them with support and guidance to help them address their error. Since the elections, we have worked closely with the Returning Officers and their teams as they have investigated what caused the issues to occur and identified actions to prevent similar issues arising in the future. We will continue to work with the Returning Officers as they implement the required improvements to processes to help ensure that voters, candidates and political parties can have confidence in the delivery of election processes. Increasing reliance on suppliers highlights risks for Returning Officers Elections are delivered through complex systems involving many different partners, including commercial suppliers. During the election, we received reports of some localised issues with the delivery of postal votes and with ballot paper proofing and printing, which raised administrators' concerns around the capacity and resilience of their suppliers. "Used Royal Mail 1st class post for delivery of all postal vote packs. Higher than usual requests for replacement postal vote packs from electors claiming not to have received initial pack. Currently liaising with both service providers (postal and printing)." "Our main issue was with the postal packs not being delivered by Royal Mail which led to over 200 needing to be re-issued. I believe other councils had similar problems. Issues with the post office in relation to returning postal votes. Frequently receiving postal votes for other authorities. More postal vote re-issues than in previous years because a postal vote was not received." Feedback also suggests that significant changes to operational infrastructure during the election period – specifically updates to the central digital ERO portal (EROP) that is operated by a team at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities – created unanticipated challenges for administrators when processing Voter Authority Certificate applications. "Functionality in the ERO portal was very limited at the start and not being able to send follow-up communications was difficult to track outside of the portal. A lack of proper information in the customer-facing website, i.e. no examples of an appropriate photo, meant a lot of applications had to be placed on hold to request a new photo to be provided. This created unnecessary extra work." "The only difficulty was the

changing functionality of the EROP, and although the functionality improved, the extent of functions at the outset were limited.” Recommendation 8: Ensure centrally provided digital systems are operational and updated in good time ahead of scheduled polls Recommendation 8: Ensure centrally provided digital systems are operational and updated in good time ahead of scheduled polls Recommendation 8: Ensure centrally provided digital systems are operational and updated in good time ahead of scheduled polls The UK Government should improve the operation and functionality of the central digital portal for processing Voter Authority Certificate applications, to better support Electoral Registration Officers dealing with applications particularly during the period close to polling day. Administrators should be able to rely on a fully functional ERO portal especially in the immediate run-up to an election, when there is likely to be a peak in Voter Authority Certificate applications. Updates should not be released during the live election timetable for future sets of polls, to minimise disruption for EROs. The UK Government should also ensure that any further digital infrastructure required to support new policy changes – in particular the new online absent vote application process – is available and fully operational in good time ahead of changes coming into force, to allow Electoral Registration Officers and Returning Officers to not only meet their legal duties but also provide the level of customer service that voters deserve. Implementation of policy changes must be carefully managed to minimise the risk to well-run elections Implementation of policy changes must be carefully managed to minimise the risk to well-run elections It is now a well-established and widely supported principle of effective electoral administration that Returning Officers need confirmation and clarity about changes to policy and legislation in good time to plan and deliver them. This principle, which was first highlighted after significant issues at the 2007 Scottish Parliament and local government elections, specifies that legislation should be clear at least six months before it is due to be implemented or complied with by voters, campaigners, or electoral administrators. The experiences of and feedback from electoral administrators following the May 2023 elections have highlighted the impact of delays to the development and delivery of secondary legislation and operational infrastructure ahead of these polls. Further changes will be introduced for the elections that are expected to be held in 2024, and administrators will have to deliver these alongside changes to UK Parliamentary constituency boundaries, polling district reviews, and the annual canvass. This will increase risks, which will be exacerbated without sufficient clarity and resources for administrators to prepare effectively well in advance of delivery. Further significant changes to elections need to be carefully managed ahead of important polls in 2024 Further changes from the Elections Act are expected to be implemented ahead of the scheduled May 2024 elections taking place across England and Wales and the UK Parliamentary general election that must be held by January 2025. These include: the introduction of online absent vote application processes changes to commonly used names that can be used on ballot papers by candidates changes to arrangements and time limits for postal and proxy voting appointments the removal of the 15-year registration limit for overseas voters Electoral administrators need early clarity and certainty about how and when these changes will be implemented, including any new or changed central digital infrastructure, so that they can prepare for and deliver well-run elections during 2024. The experience of planning for the May 2023 elections highlights the impact and risks of delays to confirming legislation and delivery infrastructures, which are both key dependencies for the wider electoral community. The detailed secondary legislation specifying how the voter ID requirements would work in practice were not

approved by Parliament until late December 2022, and the Voter Authority Certificate application service (hosted on gov.uk) did not go live until 16 January 2023. This not only made it more difficult to raise awareness of the new requirements with voters, but it also meant that detailed guidance for electoral administrators could only be made available with limited time for it to be considered before it needed to be implemented in practice. Although the final secondary legislation for the changes that remain to be implemented is currently expected to be available by November 2023, Returning Officers will still be highly dependent on further new digital services that will be provided by the UK Government. For example, introducing an online absent voting process will enable voters to apply for a postal vote and some types of proxy vote using a new online portal ahead of elections in 2024. While processing applications received online could be quicker than is currently the case for paper forms, the new portal system will need to be delivered with the necessary level of functionality to support quick and efficient processing from the outset. This will be particularly important if the online application process leads to larger volumes of applications, particularly close to key deadlines ahead of major polls (as has consistently been the case following the introduction of online voter registration since 2014). The portal must also be made available sufficiently far in advance of the election period so that administrators have time to familiarise themselves with the portal, and to allow time for any issues with the technology to be identified and resolved before the election period and avoid updates being issued close to voter deadlines. Electoral Registration Officers will also be dependent on digital services provided by the UK Government when processing applications from overseas voters who become eligible to vote following the removal of the 15-year limit. When determining applications, they will need to use data from the Department for Work and Pensions to check the identity and, in some cases, the historical residence of overseas voters. The context for implementing these changes for elections during 2024 is particularly complex, and Electoral Registration Officers and Returning Officers will be highly dependent on others to support and enable them to deliver their new statutory responsibilities: electoral law is already fragmented and complex, and the capacity and resilience of electoral administration teams are already stretched the electoral administration community is highly dependent on a range of commercial suppliers and external partners, including central government a UK Parliamentary general election could be called at any time and, once it is, must be delivered within a short timescale of less than six weeks the impact of the new online absent vote application option on application volumes in the weeks ahead of a major poll is unknown but may be significant widespread changes to UK Parliament constituencies must be implemented from late 2023, alongside a required review of local polling districts and polling places some new absent voting changes will only be implemented in Scotland and Wales for voters at UK parliamentary elections (and PCC elections in Wales), and not for voters at devolved elections This context increases both the risks to delivery of future polls and the need for effective management and robust decision-making by the UK Government. Recommendation 9: Ensure that dependencies and delivery risks are carefully managed for future changes to elections Recommendation 9: Ensure that dependencies and delivery risks are carefully managed for future changes to elections Recommendation 9: Ensure that dependencies and delivery risks are carefully managed for future changes to elections Further significant electoral administration changes are expected to be implemented ahead of elections in 2024, in addition to the new voter ID and accessibility policies that have been delivered for the first time this year. To ensure they can continue to deliver well-run elections that meet voters'

expectations, electoral administrators need to be confident that they will have sufficient time and capacity and fully functioning operational resources to support them. Before making any final decisions about implementing the remaining Elections Act changes, the UK Government must carefully consider whether the necessary time and resources are, or will be, available. Any decisions must be informed by a robust analysis of available data and evidence about realistic levels of preparedness, particularly given the complex range of changes that must be delivered and the interdependencies between them. The UK Government should publish its assessment of the evidence and the risks to successful delivery of the next set of Elections Act changes, and set out its proposals for mitigating those risks. This assessment should be available to Parliament and the wider electoral administration community so that it can be considered alongside draft legislation bringing these changes into effect.

Summary of recommendations

Recommendation 1: Increase awareness of the support available for disabled voters There is some evidence that levels of awareness of the support and equipment available, especially in polling stations, is still lower than it could be. This includes awareness of both the new accessibility measures and the existing provisions that are available (such as the possibility of asking a companion or polling station staff for help with voting). We will continue to work with the electoral community, national and local civil society organisations, and the media to raise awareness of the support that is available for disabled voters. We will also work with them to further develop our voter information resources for disabled voters. This work should include pro-actively ensuring voters are aware of the support and assistance that is available to help them vote, and how they can make a request for additional equipment or support – whether in advance of the election or on polling day.

Recommendation 2: Review the list of accepted ID The UK Government should review the current list of accepted forms of ID to identify any additional documents that could be included to improve accessibility for voters. This should focus on forms of ID that would support people who are least likely to have documents on the current list, including disabled people and those who are unemployed. Any changes to the list of accepted forms of ID should be confirmed in legislation in time for details to be included in public awareness materials and activities, and in guidance for polling station staff ahead of polling day.

Recommendation 3: Improve access to the Voter Authority Certificate for voters The UK Government should explore whether the deadline for Voter Authority Certificate applications could be moved closer to polling day, to extend its availability for voters who do not have any other form of accepted ID. The current deadline of six working days before polling day is significantly earlier than the Government's original policy intention – as set out in a policy paper published during the passage of the Elections Bill – which was for the deadline to be the day before polling day.

Electoral Registration Officers and their staff must still be able to process applications and issue Voter Authority Certificates to voters in time for them to be able to vote, alongside other essential duties taking place in the days before polling day. Any potential changes to application deadlines must therefore take into account the operational impact and workability of a later deadline, also recognising the level of dependency on printers and postal services to deliver Certificates to voters.

Recommendation 4: Provide options for voters who do not have or cannot access any form of accepted ID The UK Government should enable registered voters who do have accepted ID to make an attestation at their polling station on behalf of someone who does not have any form of accepted ID (also referred to as 'vouching'). The voter ID requirement currently assumes that people either have an accepted form of ID or are sufficiently motivated

to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate by the deadline. This means that voting is effectively not accessible for anyone without ID who misses the application deadline or only decides they want to vote on polling day (or close to polling day). In the limited and exceptional circumstances where a voter does not have access to any other form of accepted ID, allowing attestation would still provide a safeguard by requiring a formal link to a named elector who has had their own identity verified. Attestations are already a legitimate option for verifying identity in other parts of the electoral process, for example in applications to register to vote and applications for Voter Authority Certificates. Recommendation 5: Polling station staff should continue to collect data on the impact of voter ID at future elections Analysing data from the first scheduled elections where this requirement has been in place has helped to develop an understanding of the impact of the requirement and can now be used to help improve the experience of voters and polling station staff at future polls. There is no legal duty or explicit power for Returning Officers to report data for future elections until the next UK Parliamentary general election, which must be held by January 2025. It would be a significant missed opportunity to learn and identify further improvements if Returning Officers did not collect and report data at the scheduled May 2024 elections, which will cover all areas of England and Wales. The UK Government should ensure that Returning Officers are able to collect and report monitoring data on the impact of voter ID at future elections, including specifically at the scheduled May 2024 elections and at any UK Parliament by-elections held during 2023 and 2024. This recommendation was first made in our June 2023 interim voter ID analysis. Recommendation 6: The electoral community should work to improve the collection of data at polling stations for future elections Accurate data recording and reporting is essential to ensure there is a clear and reliable picture of the impact of the policy. This is needed to support informed debate and help identify areas for improvement. However, initial feedback from Returning Officers, polling station staff and observers suggests that some polling station staff found it difficult to record this additional data. We will work with the UK Government, Returning Officers, and electoral administrators to review the data collection forms and guidance for polling station staff, so they are clear and user-friendly. We will also work with local authorities and their training providers to make sure the ballot paper issuing procedure and data recording processes are fully explained to polling station staff. This should include guidance for polling station staff on the appropriate role of greeters and tellers. This recommendation was first made in our June 2023 interim voter ID analysis. Recommendation 7: The electoral community should take action to protect voter trust and confidence in the democratic system Candidates and campaigners should be able to participate freely in the democratic process, ensuring that voters can hear from a range of voices and have confidence in our elections. However, abuse and intimidation continue to persist. Tackling these problems will require coordinated action from a range of partners across the electoral community, including political parties and campaigners themselves as well as police forces and prosecuting authorities. s should recognise the impact their choices have on how the public views our democratic system. They should actively discourage the use of inflammatory language and emphasise the importance of respect and constructive engagement with opposing viewpoints. Political parties should consider reviewing their membership criteria to include a clause explicitly emphasising respect for other campaigners and fostering a healthy political debate. The police and prosecutors must continue to treat allegations and cases of election-related intimidation seriously and demonstrate that those

committing offences against candidates and campaigners will face significant sanctions. We will continue to work with parties, campaigners, the police and prosecutors, and the wider electoral community to understand what is driving this intimidatory behaviour and collectively develop effective responses to ensure that campaigners can get their messages across to voters openly and directly without fear of intimidation.

Recommendation 8: Ensure centrally provided digital systems are operational and updated in good time ahead of scheduled polls

The UK Government should improve the operation and functionality of the central digital portal for processing Voter Authority Certificate applications, to better support Electoral Registration Officers dealing with applications particularly during the period close to polling day. Administrators should be able to rely on a fully functional ERO portal especially in the immediate run-up to an election, when there is likely to be a peak in Voter Authority Certificate applications. Updates should not be released during the live election timetable for future sets of polls, to minimise disruption for EROs.

The UK Government should also ensure that any further digital infrastructure required to support new policy changes – in particular the new online absent vote application process – is available and fully operational in good time ahead of changes coming into force, to allow Electoral Registration Officers and Returning Officers to not only meet their legal duties but also provide the level of customer service that voters deserve.

Recommendation 9: Ensure that dependencies and delivery risks are carefully managed for future changes to elections

Further significant electoral administration changes are expected to be implemented ahead of elections in 2024, in addition to the new voter ID and accessibility policies that have been delivered for the first time this year. To ensure they can continue to deliver well-run elections that meet voters' expectations, electoral administrators need to be confident that they will have sufficient time and capacity and fully functioning operational resources to support them. Before making any final decisions about implementing the remaining Elections Act changes, the UK Government must carefully consider whether the necessary time and resources are, or will be, available. Any decisions must be informed by a robust analysis of available data and evidence about realistic levels of preparedness, particularly given the complex range of changes that must be delivered and the interdependencies between them. The UK Government should publish its assessment of the evidence and the risks to successful delivery of the next set of Elections Act changes, and set out its proposals for mitigating those risks. This assessment should be available to Parliament and the wider electoral administration community so that it can be considered alongside draft legislation bringing these changes into effect.

Supporting evidence Post poll 2023 England tables demographic analysis research 2023 England Electoral data 2023 data

- Democracy Club (2023), Local Elections 4 May 2023 -
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1f9r7yBJ2YWpfMsfXI2cVtQdbi806ouz/view> ■ Back to content at footnote 1
- House of Commons Library (2023), Local elections 2023: Results and analysis -
<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9798/CBP-9798.pdf> ■ Back to content at footnote 2

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Report: How the 2011 Northern Ireland Assembly election was run | Electoral Commission Search Report: How the 2011 Northern Ireland Assembly election was run You are in the Northern Ireland Assembly elections section Home Northern Ireland Assembly elections On this page Summary Planning for the election Polling day The count Moving forward Recommendations Our recommendations to the UK Government Our recommendations to the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland Our commitments Download our full report First published: 5 December 2019 Last updated: 7 August 2019 Summary There was no security disruption either on polling day or at the counts and the elections passed off peacefully. The vast majority of voters interviewed in our public opinion survey felt that the Assembly election was well run. However, the time taken to complete the single transferable vote (STV) counts continues to be a source of considerable frustration among political parties, candidates and the media in Northern Ireland. The administration of the combined elections and referendum in Northern Ireland was a significant challenge for the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland (CEO) and his staff.

The evidence suggests that the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland (EONI) had the capacity to deliver two elections and a referendum on the same day, and should be able to do so in the future – provided there is effective planning and resources in place. Planning for the election Planning began well in advance of polling day and our regular monitoring showed that the CEO and his senior staff put a considerable amount of time and effort into planning for the successful delivery of three polls on one day. However, it was evident that much less focus and attention had been given to planning for the counts, with Area Electoral Officers (AEOs) left to plan and manage their own counts. There was no evidence of an overall plan on how the counts should be delivered, and instructions on how to conduct the counts were very late in being sent to AEOs from the EONI head office. Sufficient funding was made available by the government to the CEO to deliver the elections and referendum in Northern Ireland. It remains difficult to benchmark the funding of electoral services in Northern Ireland in comparison to other parts of the UK. In Great Britain, through the Electoral Commission's performance standards regime, information is collected from local authorities about the cost of electoral administration, but these standards do not apply to Northern Ireland. Over 17,000 voters were added to the register during the period of 'late registration' and much of this can be attributed to the fact that poll cards were issued much earlier than at any previous election in Northern Ireland. The number of postal and proxy votes also increased at this election.

Candidates and agents were generally complimentary about the nominations process and the support they received from electoral administrators in advance of the polls. AEOs were responsible for the recruitment and training of approximately 6,000 election staff. This proved to be a particular challenge and placed a considerable burden on their preparations for polling day and the count. Although feedback from the EONI evaluation of the training was largely positive, it was clear at the count that presiding officers encountered significant difficulties completing their paperwork at the close of poll. The structure of the EONI and the combined polls highlighted the heavy reliance placed on a small number of staff within the EONI. AEOs in particular had significant workloads in preparing for polling day and the counts. There was evidence that they were overstretched and had to work long hours to get the job done. As a result, some were fatigued by the time it came to managing their counts. Polling day The overall conduct and management of polling day proved to be successful. The day passed off without any significant interruption and there were no reports of queues outside polling places when the polls closed at 10pm. The appointment of an

additional poll clerk proved to be of particular benefit given that three ballot boxes were used at each polling station. There was some confusion on polling day resulting in a number of voters being unable to distinguish between the Assembly and local council ballot papers. The number of ballot papers spoilt at STV elections continued to be high even though the same voting system was used for the Assembly and local council elections. There was frustration amongst candidates and political parties about the lack of clarity and consistency regarding the right to canvass outside polling places and a desire on their part to have the matter resolved before the next election in Northern Ireland. Some parties again suggested that there was a need for an exclusion zone outside polling places where canvassing would be prohibited. The count The STV counts were, not for the first time, the subject of sustained criticism from some candidates, political parties and the media. The primary cause of complaint concerned slowness and the general lack of information on how counts were progressing. As at previous Assembly elections the entire count process (verification and counting) lasted two full days. However, having to verify three sets of ballot papers simultaneously before counting began, caused significant delays in announcing turnout and first preference totals. Other factors also had an impact on the speed of the count, including staff failing to turn up at some count venues and the poor quality of paperwork returned by many presiding officers. There was also evidence of inconsistent practice and the lack of an overall plan for the Assembly and referendum counts. AEOs were also unclear about how the referendum count totals should be collated and communicated. As a result the referendum count total in Northern Ireland was not declared until 2am on Saturday 7 May, long after the result was known in the rest of the UK. The process of manually counting ballot papers in an election using STV is by its nature a time-consuming one and it appeared that many of those present at the count, including candidates, agents and the media, did not understand the verification and counting processes. Overall, there was a general lack of information on how the counts were progressing, and this contributed to a growing sense of frustration and tension amongst those present and in the media. This could have been avoided if better communication plans had been put in place, if regular updates through public announcements were made and through making better use of technology.

Moving forward After the election the CEO made a commitment to carrying out a full review of the arrangements in place for managing elections and conducting counts in Northern Ireland. We welcome this initiative. The difficulties encountered at the May polls mean it is imperative that the review's terms of reference are sufficiently wide to address the shortcomings identified in this report. The review should be led by the CEO with input from experienced electoral administrators and Electoral Commission representatives. One of its outputs should be a timetabled and resourced action plan for improving the future delivery of elections and counts in Northern Ireland. The accountability of the CEO to the electorate in Northern Ireland has been identified in previous Commission reports as an area that needs to improve. All electoral matters remain the responsibility of the UK Government and the Northern Ireland Assembly has no remit in this area. In order to enhance the confidence of the electorate, the UK Government should introduce improved accountability arrangements. These include extending to Northern Ireland the statutory framework of performance standards that apply in the rest of the UK, and considering how the people of Northern Ireland and their elected representatives can have greater visibility of, and a greater stake in, how the CEO manages electoral matters. Currently the CEO is the only electoral officer in the UK whose performance against independent standards is not reported publicly to electors. It is therefore difficult to make comparisons

about how well electoral services are administered in Northern Ireland compared to the rest of the UK. Although the structures in place for the delivery of electoral registration and elections are different, the provision of such comparative data is necessary, to benchmark the CEO's delivery against other Returning Officers in the UK and to make future improvements. In order to address this, the CEO has committed in his 2011/12 Business Plan to working with the Commission on the development of performance standards for elections and electoral registration in Northern Ireland. This has the potential to transform how elections and electoral registration are administered. We will work with the CEO in developing appropriate performance standards for Northern Ireland by April 2012. Recommendations Throughout this report we make a number of recommendations aimed at improving the provision of electoral services in Northern Ireland. These have the potential to enhance the delivery of elections from the perspectives of voters, those standing for election, and electoral administrators who manage elections and counts. Many of the recommendations in this report are addressed to the CEO and are relevant to the strategic review of elections and counts that he announced at our post-election seminar at the end of May 2011. We will work with the CEO in ensuring that the recommendations in this report are addressed in full. We have also made a number of recommendations to the UK Government, some of which will require legislative change. We have also set out a number of our own commitments to enhance electoral services in Northern Ireland and we will work with the CEO and the UK Government to ensure their implementation. Our recommendations to the UK Government To enhance the experience of voters, electoral administrators and candidates we recommend that the UK government addresses the following issues in advance of the next scheduled elections in Northern Ireland in 2014: Legislative change Amend the law to permit the name of the election being contested to be clearly printed on the ballot paper when elections are combined in any part of the UK. Amend or clarify the law in respect of the use of languages, other than , on electoral documentation in Northern Ireland Amend the Electoral Administration Act (2006) so that the performance standards regime that applies in Great Britain is extended to Northern Ireland. Policy reviews Review the deadlines for absent voting in Northern Ireland so that those who apply during the 'late registration window' can avail of an absent vote if they are eligible. Review the arrangements for postal voting in Northern Ireland to ensure that there is consistency across the UK. Consult with parties across the UK on the future of polling agents with a view to having their role either abolished or modified. Review freepost at combined elections in Northern Ireland, consulting political parties and relevant stakeholders to develop recommendations. Complete an equality impact assessment on candidate deposits and subscribers before making a final decision on the way forward in Northern Ireland. Consult stakeholders in Northern Ireland on what accountability arrangements could be put in place to enhance confidence and transparency in the CEO's decision making. Our recommendations to the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland To enhance the experience of voters and improve the administration of elections in Northern Ireland we recommend that the Chief Electoral Officer addresses the following issues in advance of the next elections in 2014: Poll cards Issue poll cards to electors at least four weeks before polling day. Review the messaging on poll cards for future elections informing voters that he has a legal obligation to send poll cards to all eligible voters, including those who have permanent postal or proxy votes. Electoral registration and absent voting Consider what else he could do to simplify electoral registration in Northern Ireland, without compromising the security of the system. Record the reasons why applications for

postal and proxy votes at elections in Northern Ireland have been rejected. Introduce a system to give voters applying for a postal or proxy vote the opportunity to refresh their signature. Ballot papers Conduct user-testing of ballot papers used at combined elections to alleviate the potential for voter confusion. Polling places Clarify what parts of a polling place party campaigners can access and canvass at on polling day and ensure that presiding officers are trained consistently on this issue. In the absence of legislation, work with political parties in developing a voluntary code of practice on canvassing outside polling places and have this in place for the next election in Northern Ireland. Review the design and content of the documentation used at the close of poll with a view to simplifying it for use at future stand-alone or combined polls. Training and management Review how training is organised and managed in advance of the next set of elections. Review the working practices of AEOs in the future management of elections and clarify their roles.

Counts Ensure that the verification of unused ballot papers is conducted in accordance with the law at all elections in Northern Ireland. Ensure that teams responsible for classifying doubtful ballot papers are trained in this aspect of the count. Review how new technology can be used to keep the public better informed of how election counts are progressing. Review the potential for conducting constituency-based counts for the 2015 Assembly election. Establish a broadcasters' liaison group to ensure that arrangements for media access and reporting at counts are improved. Local elections Publish details of the expenditure returns received from the councils on the cost of local elections on the EONI website. CEO strategic review Ensure that the strategic review of elections and counts is led by the CEO and draws input from experienced electoral administrators and Commission representatives. Complete the strategic review by September 2012 as outlined in the terms of reference. Share his final report of the strategic review of elections and the count with political parties and other key stakeholders. Our commitments We have given a number of commitments to enhance electoral services in Northern Ireland and we will work with the CEO, the UK Government and relevant stakeholders where appropriate, to deliver these. We will work with the CEO and the Northern Ireland Office to ensure that the recommendations contained in this report are addressed in full. We will report on the progress achieved in implementing the recommendations by October 2012. We will report separately on integrity issues arising at the 2011 polls across the UK in early 2012. We will report on the financial aspects of the 2011 elections in early 2012, after all campaign spending returns have been submitted. We will work with the CEO to consider what further action could be taken before the next election to instil greater confidence and trust in the electoral process in Northern Ireland. We will work with the CEO in addressing count issues in Northern Ireland with the aim of improving the effectiveness of the count model for the next set of elections using STV in Northern Ireland. We will work with the CEO in developing appropriate performance standards for elections and electoral registration in Northern Ireland by April 2012. We will work with the EONI to ensure improvements are in place for the delivery of the public helpline by the next election in 2014. Download our full report Report on the Northern Ireland Assembly election on 5 May 2011 Related content Report: How the 2016 Northern Ireland Assembly election was run Read our report about how the 2016 Northern Ireland Assembly election was run Report: The March 2017 Northern Ireland Assembly election Read our report about the 2017 Northern Ireland Assembly election Report on the May 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election Read our report on the May 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election Northern Ireland Assembly

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Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Who was at the meeting Apologies Declarations of interest Minutes of the previous Board Meeting (EC 87/20) Supplementary Estimate 2020/21 (EC 88/20) Performance report quarter 2, 2020/21 (EC 89/20) Governance matter (EC 90/20) Update on 2021 elections (EC 91/20) Update on voter education resources (EC 92/20) Update from Committee Chairs Chief Executive's update (EC 95/20) Commission Board action tracker (EC 96/20) Forward plan of Board business (EC 97/20) Any other business First published: 14 October 2021 Last updated: 14 October 2021 Meeting summary Date: Wednesday 2 December 2020 Time: 9:30am to 1pm Location: By video conference Date of next scheduled meeting: Wednesday 20 January 2021 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Present John Holmes, Chair Sue Bruce Anna Carragher Sarah Chambers Elan Closs Stephens Stephen Gilbert Alasdair Morgan Rob Vincent Joan Walley In attendance Bob Posner, Chief Executive Craig Westwood, Director, Communications, Policy and Research Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services Rupert Grist, Interim General Counsel David Bailey, Head of Strategic Planning and Performance Andy O'Neill, Head of Electoral Commission, Scotland (Item 7) Rhydian Thomas, Head of Electoral Commission, Wales (Item 7) Tim Crowley, Head of Digital Communications and Learning (Item 8) Sarah Barker, Senior Communications Officer (Item 8) Zena Khan, Senior Advisor, Governance Apologies There were no apologies received. The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and advised the Board that the renewal of the terms of office of both Elan Closs Stephens and Sue Bruce had been approved by the House of Commons and that the Royal Warrant had been received for Alasdair Morgan. Declarations of interest There were no new declarations of interest. Minutes of the previous Board Meeting (EC 87/20) Commissioners noted the lengthy statutory process for the appointment of Commissioners. This could impact on quoracy at Board meetings, but this was not presently likely. Resolved: That the minutes of the Commission Board meeting on 21 October 2020 be approved. Supplementary Estimate 2020/21 (EC 88/20) The Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and Corporate Services introduced the report and the supplementary paper analysing the proposed changes. The changes were mostly related to the postponement of the May 2020 elections, and the consequent ability to return a significant sum to HM Treasury. It was noted that there had been a delay in implementing the new Political Finance Online project due to supplier difficulties outside of the Commission's control. There was confidence that the project could be successfully completed using in house resources, including some extra recruitments. Roll-out of the system was now scheduled for September 2021. This would incur additional resources above the project budget. Action against the suppliers could not be ruled out. The Chair of Audit Committee had been briefed in detail. It was agreed that further regular updates would be given to the Board on the Political Finance Online project. Resolved: That the Commissioners approved the changes required for the 2020/21 budget and onward submission to the Speaker's Committee. Performance report quarter 2, 2020/21 (EC 89/20) Commissioners received the report, noting the stability within Human Resources. The status of some current party registration cases was discussed. Commissioners discussed the ways of working refresh of the office accommodation at Bunhill Row and the impact of public health guidelines for Covid-19 including working from home. Resolved: That the report be noted. Governance matter (EC 90/20) The Chief Executive introduced the report on proposed interim arrangements from 1 January 2021

pending the appointment of a new Chair. The Commissioners noted the position on the recruitment of the new Chair and also a new lead Commissioner in Northern Ireland.

Resolved: That pending the new Chair of the Commission being appointed and commencing duties, Rob Vincent should act as lead Commissioner as appropriate, including chairing the meetings of the Board, interacting with the other Commissioners, working closely with the Chief Executive and the Directors of the Commission, and engaging with key external stakeholders. Resolved: That other Commissioners, particularly Sarah Chambers, may also be asked to assist as necessary.

Update on 2021 elections (EC 91/20) The Commission directors provided a presentation covering the following key headlines:

- Planning to ensure that the May 2021 polls are as safe as can be in a Covid- 19 context, including planned public opinion research on attitudes to voting in this context in England and Wales
- Engaging with governments, including new legislation by both Scottish and Welsh governments
- Supporting electoral administrators
- Supporting voters, including through public campaigns
- Supporting and regulating campaigners

Commissioners discussed the impacts of Covid-19 restrictions, particularly in polling stations, managing expectations and providing assurance to members of the public on voting in person.

Resolved: That the presentation be noted.

Update on voter education resources (EC 92/20) Commissioners received a background paper along with a presentation introduced by the Head of Digital Communications and Learning, noting the following key points:

- Strong partnerships with the devolved administrations
- Promotion and dissemination of both digital and physical materials
- Stakeholder feedback, which had been very positive so far
- Future plans

Commissioners welcomed the progress on this area of work, and discussed learning providers, cost of materials, resources and future budgets. It was noted that feedback from educators and students from ages 16-18 year olds would be sought via surveys, and via plans to conduct focus groups in April 2021.

Resolved: That the report and presentation be noted.

Update from Committee Chairs Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo) (EC 93/20) The RemCo Chair provided the Commissioners with a brief update of the last RemCo meeting on 2 December 2020, covering the following:

- Feedback from staff session
- People strategy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)
- work Pay benchmarking exercise

Resolved: That the update be noted.

Audit Committee (EC 94/20) The Audit Chair provided the Commissioners with a brief update of the last Audit Committee meetings held on 11 November and 1 December 2020, covering the following:

- Internal and external audit plans
- Risk appetite workshop
- Business Continuity Plan review
- Schedule of policies
- Nation Audit Office update
- Board Effectiveness Review recommendations
- Deep dive – financial risk

It was noted that the deep dive on financial risk would go onto the Board forward plan of business for a future meeting.

Action: To update the Forward plan of Board business with ‘Deep dive – financial risk’

Resolved: That the update be noted.

Chief Executive’s update (EC 95/20) The Chief Executive introduced the report, drawing attention to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the work of the Commission. The Commission had come through this well so far, but there were still challenges. Commissioners were interested in the effect of the coronavirus pandemic on productivity, what the ‘new normal’, once we were through the pandemic, might look like, and the opportunity this represented for a fresh look at ways of doing things.

An update was provided on Ofcom being tasked by government with regulating online harms. It was noted that the Commission’s written submission to the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Select Committee (PACAC) enquiry within the UK Parliament would be circulated to all Commissioners.

Commissioners thanked the Chief Executive and teams for a comprehensive update. The possibility of streamlining the Chief Executive’s update to reduce resource required

to prepare it, without reducing key information, was noted. Action: The Director of Regulation to circulate the Commission's written submission to the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Select Committee inquiry. Resolved: That the report be noted. Commission Board action tracker (EC 96/20) Resolved: That the Commission Board action tracker be noted. Forward plan of Board business (EC 97/20) Resolved: that the Forward plan of Board business be noted. Any other business The Chair thanked Anna Carragher on behalf of the Commission Board and Executive Team for her contribution to the Commission Board for the past nine years. It was noted that she had probably been the longest serving member on the Board to date. Anna had brought a wealth of experience and significantly helped the Commission by her work in Northern Ireland. The Chief Executive thanked the Chair, John Holmes, on behalf of the Executive Team and staff as a whole for his leadership over the past four years. Alasdair Morgan thanked the Chair on behalf of the other Commissioners, and wished him well for the future.

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Board minutes: 19 September 2018 You are in the Electoral Commission Board section Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Apologies and introductions Minutes of the Commission Board meeting of 26 June 2018 Delivering the Commission's policy agenda Prosecutions policy Public awareness campaign for May 2019 – approach and budget Q1 performance and finance report Chief Executive's update Forward plan of board business 2018-19 Action tracker Chair and Chief Executive's meetings and meetings in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales Conclusion of the meeting First published: 18 July 2019 Last updated: 18 July 2019 Overview Date: 19 September 2018 Time: 9:30am Location: Boothroyd Room, 3 Bunhill Row, London Date of next scheduled meeting: 24 October 2018 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Holmes (JEH), Chair Sue Bruce (SB) Anna Carragher (AC) Sarah Chambers (SC) Elan Closs Stephens (ECS) John Horam (JRH) David Howarth (DH) Alasdair Morgan (AM) Bridget Prentice (BP) Rob Vincent (RV) Claire Bassett (CB) Ailsa Irvine (AI) Robert Posner (RP) Craig Westwood (CW) Louise Footner (LF) Nancy Bruseker (NB) Jennifer Hartland (JH) Tom Hawthorn (TH) Niki Nixon (NN) Louise Edwards (LE) Emma Hartley (EH) Katy Thomas (KT) Apologies and introductions Kieran Rix offered apologies and JEH introduced the new Head of HR, Jennifer Hartland. Declarations of Interest AC is a member of the Board of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland (which received money from the EU Peace 3 Programme, and the Corners Programme for individual artists). 2.2 AC is a Trustee of the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, which received EU funding, and, having stepped back from her WWT role during the Referendum, has now re-engaged with it (pro bono). AC is a Trustee of the National Heritage Memorial Fund (The Heritage Lottery Fund) (remunerated). AC was a Commissioner for the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland until 23 September 2015 (remunerated). DH in 2008 drafted and put forward in parliament an amendment to the then European Union (Amendment) Bill, proposing an EU referendum in the terms 'Should the United Kingdom remain in the European Union?' DH stood for election on a manifesto supporting an in-out referendum on the European Union. DH was a council member of Justice, an organisation which had in the past received EU funding. DH reported that the European Parliament subsidised a regular annual visit by his Public Policy students to Brussels. DH declared that in 2015 he was awarded a research grant of over €40,000 from the European Parliament. DH is a Fellow of Clare College, Cambridge (remunerated). DH is Professor of Law and Public Policy at the University of Cambridge (remunerated). DH is a Non-executive director of RAND (Europe) as well as a member of its Council of Advisers (pro bono). DH is a member of the Council of Advisers, Constitution Society, and Editorial Advisory Board of Parliamentary Affairs (pro bono). DH was a Liberal Democrat MP for Cambridge until 2010 (remunerated). DH was a member of Cambridge City Council until 2004 (remunerated). DH declared that his spouse is Bursar and Fellow of St Edmund's College, Cambridge. JRH was a member of the pro-Europe Conservative Europe Group. JRH is an Honorary Non-Executive Director, CRU Holdings Ltd (pro bono). JRH was made a Life Peer on 4 September 2013 and sits as a Member, House of Lords (remunerated). JEH is Chair of the Advisory Board, Cargo Logic Air (British Air Cargo Company established in 2015 by the Russian owner of the Volga Dnepr Group) (remunerated). JEH is Chair of the Board of International Rescue Committee, humanitarian NGO (pro bono). JEH is an advisor for MasterCard International (remunerated). JEH is a Council Member for the Governing Council, Radley College (boys' school) (pro bono). JEH is Chair of the Humanitarian Aid Memorial Steering Group (pro bono). JEH is a member of the Advisory Council, Wilton Park (Government-linked conference centre) (pro bono). SB is a Non-Executive Director for SSE plc. She is Chair of RemCo; a NomCo member; and a

member of SHEAC (Safety, Health, Environment Advisory Committee) (remunerated). SB is Convenor of Court at the University of Strathclyde (pro bono). SB is Chair of RSNO (pro bono). SB is the Independent Chair of the Nominations Committee for the National Trust for Scotland (pro bono). SB is Governor of Erskine Stewart's Melville Schools (pro bono). SB is a member/Court member of the Merchant Company of Edinburgh (pro bono). SB is a trustee of The Prince's Foundation (pro bono). SB is Chair of the Expert Panel on measures for the environment: Represents Scottish Government (remunerated). SB was previously Chief Executive (and Returning Officer) of Edinburgh City Council from 01/11/2011 to 31/08/2015 (though she usually gave RO fees to charity/other staff). ECS was appointed in July 2017 for three years as a non-executive Director of the BBC Unitary Board. Within her Non Executive role, Elan also Chairs the BBC Wales Committee, is a member of the N Ireland Committee and of the Fair Trading Committee. (remunerated). ECS is Member of the Authority of S4C, Welsh Fourth Channel, until end of October 2018. (remunerated). ECS is Deputy Lieutenant for the three counties of Dyfed (Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire). (pro bono). ECS is Chair of the Public Bodies Forum (Arm's Length bodies of Welsh Government (remunerated). ECS is a member of Strata Florida Trust (Charitable organisation) (pro bono). ECS is a member of Aberystwyth Arts Centre Advisory Committee (pro bono). ECS is Emeritus Professor and member of Court at Aberystwyth University (pro bono). ECS was a Board Non-Executive Director of the Permanent Secretary's Board of Welsh Court and Chair of Audit & Risk until April 2018 (remunerated). BP is a trustee of Age Exchange (reminiscence and inter-generational work for people with dementia) (pro bono). BP is a trustee for Foundation for Jimmy (working with young people to be good citizens) (pro bono). BP is Chair of Governors, Trinity Lewisham (all-through school) (pro bono). RV is Chair, Kirklees Cultural Education Trust (pro bono). RV is Non-executive Director, Bradford Community Health Trust (remunerated). RV is Director, New Ing Consulting (mentoring and technical assessment work with Local Government Chief Executives) (remunerated). RV was Chief Executive of Kirklees MBC between 2004 and 2010 (remunerated). RV was Implementation Director for the West Yorkshire Combined Authority from September 2013 to March 2014 (remunerated). RV was Chair of the Rotherham Improvement Board from September 2014 to March 2015 (remunerated). RV was advisor to Tower Hamlets Council on governance and decision-making issues from May to October 2015 (remunerated). SC was a panel member of the Competition & Markets Authority until 30 June 2018 (remunerated). SC is a panel member of the Judicial Appointments Commission (remunerated). SC is Chair of Legal Services Consumer panel (remunerated). SC sits on the Civil Aviation Authority Consumer Panel until 1 October 2018 (remunerated). SC is Chair of the renewable energy consumer Code Applications Panel (remunerated). SC is a member of the Determinations Panel of the Pensions Regulator (remunerated) Minutes of the Commission Board meeting of 26 June 2018 The minutes of 26 June were approved and the record of the catch-up call of 18 July 2018 was noted. Delivering the Commission's policy agenda CB introduced the paper, explaining that it followed work by various teams and the Executive Team to look at how the Commission should set its future priorities and develop plans. CB provided the context of these discussions, identifying some of the policy opportunities and challenges ahead. She noted that this paper was part of the Commission's planning to make the most of these opportunities and was coming to the Board at an early stage, when priorities were still being identified. CB outlined the need for this focus on policy to allow the Commission to raise its own profile and have both a proactive and reactive strategy to address policy issues and achieve practical goals. CB invited input and feedback

from Commissioners. TH explained that the list of policy priorities had been drawn from previous work to identify and track all existing recommendations and then prioritise these in line with the current corporate plan goals. The priorities did not exclude other policy recommendations and the team would still take advantage of opportunities to bring these forward when possible. The paper included discussion of likely policy priorities for the devolved offices. TH noted that the team would like to come back to the board in summer 2019 to report progress, particularly on digital campaigning. NN then spoke about the communication of these priorities. She explained that the aim was not just to respond to others but also to influence others. She noted that a key aim was to use communications expertise to promote the changes we were seeking - for example by producing memorable phrasing to get ideas across more quickly. The team were also looking at creating new communications opportunities along the lines of the Vote 100 'I vote' campaign, without forgetting roundtables and other traditional methods. As the plan for the policy agenda was staggered over three years, the communications around them would also be phased. RP noted that although the paper indicated that this work would be managed within approved resourcing, resource implications might be greater if the agenda were to take off and additional work were agreed. JRH suggested that the policy agenda should draw the distinction between those activities where the Commission's role was as advocate, while Government and Parliament had the executive power, and those where the Commission could take on the work itself. CB noted that his example of the accessibility agenda was a good one for the latter, as legislation would not be required for some aspects of our recommendations. SB noted that the communications plans might draw more press attention, and create a dialogue with a wider public, which would be welcome. She noted that accessibility was a high priority for Scottish government. She also observed that the expected Scottish electoral bill and the Welsh bill were distinct and should be addressed as such. ECS complimented the work, though she noted that the presentation of the recommendations could still be clearer. She suggested that a pocket sized prompt card on our priorities might be helpful for Commissioners in the future. RV said he was pleased to see the paper, though cautioned that it could be a long process to change public opinion on some issues. He suggested that the Commission's role was as a 'careful voice' to facilitate discussion, and warned against over-simplistic messages. CW explained that there would be a comms plan for each priority with its own strategy. The purpose of these strategies was to prepare the ground of the debates we hoped would follow. AC welcomed a change to a more proactive policy agenda. She suggested it would be helpful to have versions of the agenda specifically geared for the particular circumstances in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. AC asked if there was more work planned on the evidence base for the recommendations. She was advised that this work was planned and would be scheduled according to need. The planned Board discussion on research would feed into this. AM asked about policy positions no longer active in the Commission, and was advised these were documented in the tracker referred to earlier. A discussion followed on deprioritised activities. AM also noted that devolved governments and legislatures were in some cases doing things that were completely different, for example voting age in Scotland. The language of 'different policy priorities' did not quite address what might in some cases be different policies altogether. BP noted that different positions among the different legislatures could be an advantage in some respects. DH cautioned that it was important to check that evidence had not changed over the course of the 3 year programme, using the example of the extension of the franchise to those under 18. JEH summed up the discussion as the Commissioners

giving broad agreement to the proposals in the paper, and supporting the production of a ‘pocket explainer card’ of the recommendations, as well as the separation of Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. In further discussion, RV noted the importance of influencing the commentariat, while JRH reiterated the importance of research. CB added that in addition to deploying the Commission’s research capacity, the Commission was seeking to influence other researchers. The aim was a multilateral evidence base, which would be stronger than anything the Commission could do by itself. 4.19 JEH noted that the policy work of the Commission was not about advocacy for its own sake, but more about gathering the evidence, taking positions on that basis, and encouraging interest and discussion among stakeholders and the wider public. Referencing our corporate images, DH noted that the images used in communications should be consistent with the messaging. CW briefly updated the board on our recent corporate branding update, which helped to address that point. SC noted that the majority of the policy recommendations involved some influencing role, which the Commissioners themselves could help advance. It was agreed to include this in the communications plans. Prosecutions policy LE introduced the paper. The proposals included building limited capability to bring prosecutions, setting out how we would do this and ensuring transparency by including this in our published Enforcement Policy. LE advised that the policy proposed was based on an industry standard and the consultation would provide the organisation with an opportunity to discuss details. Many stakeholders were already aware of the consultation and were broadly supportive. Once the consultation had closed early in 2019, the team would use the Regulatory Steering Group to consider the response and agree any amendments to the proposed policy. The intention was to publish a new enforcement policy in May 2019, which would include the prosecutions language. It would then be possible to prosecute cases if necessary. DH queried the inclusion of financial gain as one of the bullet points against the public interest test. LE noted this was already written into the existing enforcement policy, and there had been some cases where financial gain had indeed played a role. SC counselled caution in proceeding, based on her experience at CMA, and noted that creating a ‘small prosecution capability’ would not be as easy as it sounded. Despite these notes of caution, she did agree that what was proposed was the right way forward. LE agreed that CMA would be consulted and their advice considered. BP agreed with SC, noting that it was important to maintain confidence in the Commission. She asked why the policy was described in the paper as outside the scope of statutory guidance. LE noted that the guidance issued by the Commission was much broader already than the statutory requirements, to support transparency. BP noted that clarity would be needed as to what would be passed to police and what prosecutions would be undertaken by the Commission. LE explained that the Commission had no intention to take over all the work of the police or CPS and would liaise where appropriate. The final guidance would be clear and consistent in explaining this. SC noted that one of the risks around establishing capability at the Commission could be that the police might be less willing to take on referrals. AC asked if the policy would come back to the Board; RP reported it would be discussed at the regulatory steering group, and brought back to the Board if a major issue arose. RV noted the risk of judicial review if the perception was that the selection of prosecutions was inconsistent. LE explained that the guidance would be careful to note the distinction between sanctions versus prosecutions. The guidance set out checkpoints as cases progressed, which included considering resources. We would of course always need to be able to justify decisions to prosecute or not prosecute, including publicly. ECS noted that consultation was coming at a very difficult time,

and suggested that the management of comms would be important. JEH asked if any political parties had already objected; LE responded no. In response to JEH's question on potential criticism about resourcing this new step, LE explained that the team was expanding their toolkit to deal with different scenarios. The goal was to look at the whole toolkit and establish how prosecutions fitted in overall. JRH strongly supported the move, though he cautioned that some criticism would be unavoidable, particularly around the notion of bias. AC asked for clarification as to the use of civil versus criminal sanctions. LE noted that the possibility of criminal conviction for groups with no political future (for example, referendum campaigners) could present more of a deterrent. SB noted it was important to have a discussion with a wider public audience, many of whom would support the Commission having more 'teeth'. She also noted that despite the fact that no prosecutions were possible in Scotland, it was important to consult nonetheless. She noted in passing that the appetite was there to allow the Commission to give higher fines in Scotland. JEH declared the Board's endorsement of the paper. Public awareness campaign for May 2019 – approach and budget CW kicked off the discussion with the presentation of the campaign team's award for their 'Got 5' campaign. The Board congratulated the team. EH explained the context for the forthcoming May 2019 elections in England and Northern Ireland. The planned campaign would build on the success of the award-winning 2018 campaign. She noted that the Commission had met its target for additions to the electoral register from its 2018 campaign, so would continue with a similar approach and some minor improvements. New opportunities would come from being able to evaluate the impact of the campaign in Northern Ireland in more detail now that online registration was in place. There were also discussions ongoing with Cabinet Office, to investigate the possibility for setting up bespoke landing pages on the gov.uk service. JEH enquired about messaging on registration duplication. EH responded that they were doing some extra messaging to try to reduce duplicate applications, and Comms were also discussing the issue with Cabinet Office. AC asked if the 'your vote is yours alone' campaign would be used in Northern Ireland. EH replied that it would, but potentially with some tweaking of the messaging. A discussion followed on communications during a difficult period, and how this would be accomplished. EH said the Commission had the requisite budget and networks to deliver the messaging, and would focus on our remit. The Board confirmed the plan and its budget. Q1 performance and finance report CB introduced the paper in KR's absence. She noted that the revised report aimed to respond to feedback from the Board to be more visual, and welcomed feedback on the new format. She also noted that the project updates were more recent than quarter 1. AM noted that some of the targets missed were due to excessive workload. He asked how this was being reconciled with the idea of a new prosecutions capability. RP responded that it was for the Commission to consider, in the planning round, whether the current circumstances around investigations and court cases were exceptional or the 'new normal'. CB noted that the missed targets were around event-driven work, and that, in future business planning, an increase in event-related resources could help the organisation to deliver these activities more consistently. At the December board meeting, the intention was to bring an 'in principle' budget and business plan in advance of the final documents. AM noted that numbers of staff leavers as presented could be more informative. CB replied that more comprehensive charts were available and considered by ET. RV also noted that more detailed information was provided to Remco. SB remarked that a staff turnover of 12% seemed quite high. In her experience, the outside London standard was nearer 8%. She also asked about the speed at which

leavers were replaced. CB advised that the impact of turnover depended on whether it was planned or not. The Commission had previously relied on fixed term contracts in some areas but was moving towards a higher number of more flexible permanent staff to provide a more stable base. The current strategy was not immediately to fill a vacant post, but take time to think what was really needed. ET were involved in every decision on posts, and each had to come forward as a business case at an ET meeting. SB commended the new format. ECS noted that the Electoral Coordination Board in Wales was working well. RV commended the efforts made to address the underspend issues. The report was noted. Chief Executive's update CB introduced the paper, noting that good progress had been made on contingency planning for a fresh election or referendum. She noted the court judgment on the recent judicial review, explaining that while the Commission had been prepared for the result to be announced, it was much more difficult to prepare for deliberate misinterpretation of the judgment, which had happened in some of the media coverage. It was however, a good indication of the sort of communication challenges the Commission might face in future. AI highlighted three areas of work, beginning with canvass reform. The work here would use DWP data to put resources where they were most needed. The three governments (Westminster, Wales, and Scotland) were to publish a joint policy statement in October, followed by a two-month period for consultation ahead of legislation. The aim was to bring about a culture change among ROs, alongside new guidance and a new performance standards framework. AI noted that work was continuing on preparations for the May 2019 elections, and that Cabinet Office plans for the 2019 electoral fraud pilots were also being developed. AI highlighted the work on the recall petition in Northern Ireland, noting that the Commission had a statutory duty to report on the petition. She noted also that there might be questions around the framework for such petitions, even if the analysis showed that the poll itself had been well run. RV reported on the observation visit he and SC had made to see the petition process in action. They had found that the administration of the process was good, though noted that six weeks appeared too long, and could paradoxically result in a low engagement in the process. He also noted that the Commission was the only observer. The note of their findings was to be circulated after the meeting. AC commented that the opening hours for the petition were perhaps unhelpful - 9-5 – though postal votes were available. She noted also that being seen to sign the petition was in its own way fraught, given the particular circumstances in Northern Ireland. In the case of the petition, merely being present was a 'giveaway' as to one's choice. This might need further thought. AI commented on the Northern Ireland assembly elections. The current understanding was that the Secretary of State would introduce primary legislation in October to stop elections for a fixed period, length to be determined. AC noted that the SoS had also given permission to civil servants to take decisions in the absence of lawmakers. A discussion followed on the role of the Commission in these matters, and how best to support democratic processes in Northern Ireland. It was agreed to take up the issues with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. RP provided an update on investigations, and touched on the result of the Supreme Court case. He noted that the Crown Court trial around the South Thanet constituency had been set for mid-October. Appeals from the referendum campaigners were due to be heard in the County Courts in early 2019. RP also noted that the team were actively undertaking a review of registered political party descriptions, and that the consultation on statutory codes for party and candidate spending was ongoing. RP explained the result of the judicial review of the Vote Leave case, and its potential implications, including on the wider electoral regime for candidates, political parties and non-party

campaigners. RP explained that the Commission would probably be seeking leave to appeal, and then considering whether an appeal itself should go forward. The decision to do so (or not) was delegated to the Chief Executive. RP also noted that Vote Leave were also likely to appeal. DH asked if the implication would be that the Commission would have to review older judgments in light of the change of law. RP said that the judgment could not have retrospective effect. However LE confirmed that the team were looking at where the judgment could impact other areas of our work, and what effect that might have on eg third party campaigners. This would be relevant to any appeal. CW noted that the Communications and Research aspects of the business had included a new section in the Chief Executive's update to increase the visibility of their work. KT noted the arrival of the new permanent Head of HR. She also briefly discussed the work of the Finance and Corporate services team, including business planning, budgeting, IT developments, FOI increases, and upgrade work. Forward plan of board business 2018-19 JEH noted that the next meeting would be a Commissioner day, and that an agenda would be circulated shortly. ECS noted that there had been a recent decision taken to hold a youth parliament in Wales. The date of the March 2019 board meeting was unclear and would be resolved promptly. Action tracker The action tracker was noted. Chair and Chief Executive's meetings and meetings in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales The paper was noted. Conclusion of the meeting At the conclusion of the meeting, the Chair expressed his warm gratitude, and that of the Commission as a whole, for the commitment, integrity and enthusiasm of the departing nominated Commissioners (BP, DH, and JH), and wished them well for the future. They had all made significant contributions and would be much missed.

Appendix 5 of the Code of Conduct for Electoral Commissioners | Electoral Commission Search Appendix 5 of the Code of Conduct for Electoral Commissioners You are in the Code of Conduct for Electoral Commissioners section Home Commissioners Code of Conduct for Electoral Commissioners On this page Information Management and Security Protected Information Data Protection Storage Portable Devices, (iPads, Laptops, Blackberrys etc) Incident reporting Portable Equipment Advice and Contacts First published: 31 January 2023 Last updated: 18 June 2023 Information Management and Security Everyone working with the Electoral Commission has a responsibility to protect sensitive and personal information at all times. This brief guide will provide you with some key measures to ensure that you are doing all you can to make sure that information is managed in a secure and responsible way. It will also point you in the direction of more detailed guidance, policies and support.

Protected Information

The Electoral Commission maintains three types of Information; UNCLASSIFIED – Most of the Commission's information falls into this category PERSONAL – This information would contain identification details of an individual, such as name; age; gender; address; phone numbers; bank account details and; nationality. If disclosed without permission, they could cause distress or damage and breach the person's privacy or human rights SENSITIVE – This is information given in confidence that might result in embarrassment and loss if revealed to unauthorised parties. For example: "commercial in confidence", "allegation casework" "enforcement actions" etc.

Data Protection

The Commission collects the personal information of a variety of individuals in the course of its business. As well as those who work for it, the Commission acquires personal data in a number of ways when it discharges its statutory functions, e.g. during an investigation into party's receipt of donations, in the course of maintaining the electoral register, when receiving and publishing political party Statements of Accounts and when sending out and receiving information electronically.

Responsibilities when handling this type of information include:

- Personal information should be stored securely and only accessible to those who have a specific reason to view it
- Personal information should not be shared within or outside of the Commission without explicit consent
- Personal information should only be used for the purpose that it was collected
- Personal information should be destroyed in a secure way

Personal information should not be kept any longer than necessary.

Storage

If saving electronic information it should be stored on the Commission's network which you can access through your virtual PC

Information must not be saved to non-Commission PCs or sent to personal email addresses

Best practice is to store paper information in folders, organised to facilitate finding information quickly

Personal and/or Sensitive information

should ideally be reviewed in electronic form negating the need to print off copies.

If in hardcopy format it must be held securely in locked cabinets.

When disposing of information, personal and/or sensitive information in paper form should be securely destroyed, i.e. shredded or returned to the Commission for disposal.

Information in electronic form should be permanently deleted.

Portable Devices, (iPads, Laptops, Blackberrys etc)

Ensure that the equipment is not unattended for any period of time and locked away when you have finished using it

If you have to leave a laptop unattended and switched on for a period of time, please ensure the machine is locked by simultaneously pressing the <Ctrl><Alt><Delete> keys and selecting 'Lock Computer' option from the menu

Take into account your surroundings when viewing information e.g. on a train where the screen may be overlooked

Unauthorised users (e.g. children, partners, etc), should be prevented from using the equipment

If attaching/detaching removable media to/from a laptop,

such as external hard drives or memory sticks, ensure that it is carried out carefully. Please follow the instructions from the IT Helpdesk. If you are in any doubt consult the IT Helpdesk team Avoid taking portable equipment to social venues such as bars, restaurants and clubs. Incident reporting Staff should immediately report any incidents where they suspect that the confidentiality of Commission information or, the security of its IT systems has been compromised. Examples would include; Information which has accidentally been sent to the wrong recipient Loss of information that was being transported from one location to another Loss of computer equipment Suspected access to an IT system by an unauthorised person Infection of a system by a computer virus. Such incidents should be reported to the IT helpdesk in the first instance. Portable Equipment You may be supplied with a Blackberry, laptop or other mobile device e.g. an iPad, for use on Commission business on a long or short term loan. It is also possible use a personal mobile device to access your Commission email account, this service is available on request from the IT helpdesk and is subject to approval by the Head of ICT. This is currently restricted to Apple iPads and iPhones. You should take all necessary steps to protect this equipment and any information stored on it from damage or theft and observe the following: Do not store personal or confidential information on portable devices. When using portable equipment outside EC premises, ensure that the equipment has the minimum amount of information stored on it and is not left unattended Avoid taking portable equipment to social venues such as bars, restaurants and clubs Portable equipment stored in the office should be locked away in a cabinet or desk drawer. If left in a car, it should be locked in the boot If you decide to use a personal mobile device to access Commission information you must still abide by the security and usage controls as set out below: You must not attempt to disable or circumvent the encryption software loaded on your laptop. You must use minimum six digit PIN code on your iPhone or iPad If you lose a piece of equipment or suspect that the information on it has been compromised, you must immediately report this to the IT Help Desk. The Commission reserves the right to remotely wipe any device that has connected to a Commission email account in the event that it is lost, stolen or misused to protect any information that may reside on it. Advice and Contacts For any further advice on this guidance, please contact the Information Management Team on 020 7271 0703/0554. For advice on IT systems and equipment or to report an incident please contact the IT Helpdesk on 020 7271 0599. Reviewed March 2023

Board minutes: 18 March 2020 | Electoral Commission Search
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Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Who was at the meeting Apologies and introductions Section 10 request by Scottish Government for the Commission to provide advice and assistance by considering the wording and intelligibility of a potential referendum question Declarations of interest Minutes of the Commission Board meeting of 26 February 2020, and the minutes from the meeting of the Audit Committee meeting on 25 February 2020 Governance update Update on legal proceeding Key messages for the annual report Review of Electoral Registration Officers performance standards Reappointment of member of Remuneration and Human Resources Committee Corporate planning 2021/26 - session 2 Forward plan of Board business Commission Board action tracker Meetings of note First published: 18 June 2020 Last updated: 21 June 2021 Meeting overview Date: Wednesday 18 March 2020 Time: 9:30am to 12:20pm Location: By video conference to Boothroyd Room, 3 Bunhill Row, London Date of next scheduled meeting: Wednesday 22 April Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Holmes, Chair Alasdair Morgan Anna Carragher Elan Closs Stephens Joan Walley Rob Vincent Sarah Chambers Stephen Gilbert Sue Bruce Bob Posner, Chief Executive Craig Westwood, Director, Communications, Policy and Research Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Amanda Kelly, Interim General Counsel David Bailey, Head of Strategic Planning and Performance David Meek, Senior Adviser, Governance Andy O'Neill, Head of Electoral Commission, Scotland (for item 2) Mel Davidson, Head of Support and Improvement (for item 8) Apologies and introductions No apologies. The Chair welcomed everyone to the all-virtual Commission Board meeting, and confirmed that, in the circumstances, the agenda would be varied, including a deferment of the scheduled item on policy priorities. Section 10 request by Scottish Government for the Commission to provide advice and assistance by considering the wording and intelligibility of a potential referendum question (EC 24/20) The Chair informed the Board that the Scottish Government had written to the Commission late on 17 March 2020 regarding this matter. This correspondence would be shared with the Board, who it was agreed should have time to consider it before discussing the Section 10 request. The Board noted that the work could not commence currently in any case as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic. This item should therefore be deferred to a future meeting. The Board requested that an estimate of the total cost and total time required of Commission staff in undertaking the assessment be provided to inform that discussion. The Chief Executive reminded the Board of previous legal advice received on participation by nominated Commissioners in this discussion. Action: That the letter received from the Scottish Government on this matter be circulated to Commissioners. Resolved: That this item be deferred for consideration to a later meeting. Declarations of interest No new declarations of interest. Minutes of the Commission Board meeting of 26 February 2020 (EC 22/20), and the minutes from the meeting of the Audit Committee meeting on 25 February 2020 (EC 23/20) Resolved: That the minutes of the Commission Board meeting on 26 February 2020 be agreed. That the draft minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee meeting on 25 February 2020 were noted. Governance update (EC 32/20) The Chief Executive provided an update on the impact of Covid-19 on the Commission and on its work. The elections in England and Wales scheduled for May 2020 had been postponed for one year. The Board discussed how the decision to provide advice to the UK Government on this matter was reached. The Chair confirmed that the Chief Executive made this decision in consultation with the Chair. The Director of Communications, Policy and Research

confirmed that the decision to postpone the elections had been made in time for the planned public awareness campaign to be cancelled. The Board heard that the release of our report on the UK Parliamentary General Election (UKPGE) would be slightly rescheduled. The May 2021 polls would be a very busy election day, with multiple elections on the same day using different electoral systems. Work had begun on understanding the implications for our work, including in relation to the support that could be provided to local authorities. There were still outstanding issues to resolve, such as any by-elections that would otherwise be held between March 2020 and May 2021. The Commission was also working to understand any impact on the annual canvass in Great Britain, noting the postponement of the canvass in Northern Ireland to 2021, and would continue to engage with Cabinet Office and others about this. The Director of Regulation confirmed that we had contacted all registered parties and campaigners to explain that our advice service would remain open, and that a sensible and pragmatic approach would be taken to financial returns due during this period. We had asked parties to keep us informed of any impact of Covid-19 on their ability to meet statutory deadlines. We had also continued our publication, monitoring, compliance and enforcement work. The Chief Executive advised the Board that Commission staff had moved to home working, except for a brief transition period for a small number of staff who were needed on site at our London offices. We were conscious of staff welfare in these circumstances, and support was being provided to all staff. We had spoken to the Speaker's Committee about updating our draft Corporate Plan and Main Estimate in light of the delay to the May 2020 elections. We had also had initial discussions with the Speaker's Committee on any potential impact on the renewal and/or appointment of Commissioners over the next six months. The Board welcomed the Commission's ability to carry out efficiently business-as-usual work from home, and encouraged the Commission to support stakeholders to do likewise. The Head of Strategic Planning and Performance explained the proposed changes to the urgency procedure, decision-making by electronic means, written comments, and the decision-making procedure. The Board agreed with the proposals, and noted that they would also apply to Committees and sub-committees of the Board. The Board requested revisiting the Standing Orders at a future meeting, and paying particular attention to the standing orders relating to when votes could be re-taken. The Board discussed the position of nominated Commissioners as relates to quorum and decision-making. The Chief Executive noted we were required to write the Standing Orders in this way, as nominated Commissioners must be in the minority in decision-making. We were bound to follow that position consistent with the intention of Parliament. Action: That the Chief Executive convene a meeting with the Chair and the nominated Commissioners to discuss further the role of nominated Commissioners. Resolved: That the proposed changes to our Corporate Governance Framework be agreed. Update on legal proceeding (EC 28/20) The Chief Executive (who declared a conflict of interest) and the Head of Strategic Planning and Performance left the meeting for this item. The Interim General Counsel provided an update on legal proceedings involving the Commission. The Board agreed with the recommendations in the report. Action: That regular updates on the litigation would be provided in the Legal Matters section of the Chief Executive's update. Resolved: That the Board agreed to defend the potential proceedings brought against the Electoral Commission and its Chief Executive alleging defamation and misuse of private information. That the Director of Finance and Corporate Services as Deputy Accounting Officer's decision to fund the Chief Executive's legal costs and to keep him indemnified against monetary award made against him be endorsed. That the Deputy Accounting Officer's conclusion that the

recommendations were consistent with ‘Managing Public Money’ be noted. Key messages for the annual report (EC 27/20) The Board recommended that the list of issues arising from the year should include the number of recall petitions that took place during the year, separate from the comments on the elections that were held. There should also be a more detailed explanation on the level of complexity involved in the investigations undertaken during the year. The Board also requested that the recent report from the Law Commissions on electoral law reform be highlighted, and mention be made of ensuring the accessibility of elections. Resolved: That the paper be noted. Review of Electoral Registration Officers performance standards (EC 25/20) The Director of Electoral Administration and Guidance explained that the next canvass in Great Britain would run under the new legislation for the reformed canvass, subject to approval of the one remaining piece of required legislation by the Scottish Parliament and subject to any further changes that might emerge as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic. We had focused on supporting Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) with the implementation of canvass reform. The proposed performance standards work formed a key part of this. We had developed a new framework designed to help EROs and the Commission better understand performance and to identify and drive improvements where necessary. We had focused on working with EROs to help them make better use of the data they collect to understand the impact of their activities and to evaluate their practices. We would use this data to improve our reporting processes so we could make clear publicly what we knew about ERO performance. We were unable to complete the consultation process on the original timeline due to delaying the start of the process as a consequence of the UKPGE. However, we had been able to speak to stakeholders over the past three months, including at all Association of s branch meetings across England and Wales and with the Scottish Assessors’ Association. Feedback was broadly positive. The consultation period was ten weeks, and closing at the end of March 2020. We had been issuing reminders as the deadline approached, and would continue to do so. The Director of Electoral Administration and Guidance explained the difficulties in setting targets for EROs, which could be strongly influenced by the circumstances in individual local authorities. The proposed changes would allow for reports on performance to be run more regularly, rather than waiting nine to twelve months after the event as was currently the case. More regular reporting would allow the Commission to highlight issues and drive performance improvement. The new standards should reduce the burden on EROs as the data reports should be automated within software systems. We would provide tools and templates so that local authorities could report on their performance locally. The Board discussed ways to evaluate success in the new system, and ways to report on how the system as a whole was performing. The Director of Electoral Administration and Guidance confirmed that this was being explored. Action: The Director of Electoral Administration and Guidance to provide an update to the Board in Spring 2021 once the standards have been implemented. Resolved: That the paper be noted and that the Director of Electoral Administration and Guidance undertake approval of the final performance standards framework. Reappointment of member of Remuneration and Human Resources Committee Resolved: That Rob Vincent be reappointed to the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee, and that he be reappointed as Chair of that Committee Corporate planning 2021/26 - session 2 Commissioners were asked to send suggestions of stakeholders to consult with to the Head of Strategic Planning and Performance. Resolved: That the item be noted. Forward plan of Board business (EC 29/20) Action: That for the present Board meetings include an update on Covid-19 and how this affects the Commission. Resolved: That the paper be noted. Commission Board action

tracker (EC 30/20) Resolved: That the paper be noted. Meetings of note (EC 31/20) The Chair highlighted key points from a meeting earlier in the week with Chloe Smith MP. Resolved: That the paper be noted.

3. Putting voters first in Wales | Electoral Commission Search

3. Putting voters first in Wales You are in the Corporate Plan for Wales 2022/23 to 2026/27 section Home Our plans and priorities Corporate Plan for Wales 2022/23 to 2026/27 On this page Raising public awareness Removing barriers to registering and voting Ensuring laws for parties and campaigners are clear and followed Ensuring the electoral system works effectively First published: 25 April 2022 Last updated: 25 April 2022 Summary To have a healthy democracy, voters need to be engaged in our electoral process, and confident that elections are free and fair. We will work to increase voter engagement and confidence in Wales and the wider UK by: raising public awareness of the electoral process removing barriers to registering and voting ensuring laws for parties and campaigners are clear and followed ensuring the electoral system works effectively Raising public awareness Public awareness of the electoral system – including how to register and vote – is key to voter engagement and confidence. Our research demonstrates that public awareness of how to register and vote is currently high. In February 2021, 93% of those surveyed (both in Wales and UK wide) as part of our annual public opinion tracking survey stated they knew how to register to vote, and 92% were confident they knew how to cast their vote. It is important that we continue to maintain and increase this awareness, and we will continue to refine and deliver effective public awareness activity ahead of elections in Wales and other parts of the UK. We will ensure the information we provide to voters is accessible and transparent, keeping pace with developments in digital communications, and ensuring our public information services are tailored to voters' needs. We will develop and expand our learning work, producing political literacy resources to help people understand how to get involved in our democracy. We will continue to undertake public awareness campaigns and work with the wider electoral community and partner organisations. Following the extension of the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds and foreign nationals resident in Wales, we will continue to work to ensure new voters understand their eligibility and can confidently participate in the 2022 local government elections and 2026 Senedd election. We will also continue to work alongside all relevant partners to promote greater consistency in political education, and increase political knowledge and understanding amongst young people to ensure they can fully engage in our democratic system in Wales. This will include developing the good work already achieved with the publication of education resources and the further development of an education and learning programme in Wales. Removing barriers to registering and voting Our research shows that the current electoral system could be improved to meet the needs of all eligible voters. Results from our 2021 UK wide public opinion tracking survey show that people with a disability are more likely to be dissatisfied with the process of voting (10%) than those without a disability (6%). We already know what many of the barriers people experience are, but we will do further work to identify issues with registering and voting, and will then take action to address them. We will broaden the range of third sector organisations we work with to understand the challenges, and will collaborate with policy makers and other partners to identify solutions. This includes influencing the development of new policies, to ensure additional barriers are not introduced. We will deliver effective targeted voter awareness activities for the groups identified, and will specifically support under-registered groups to engage in the democratic process. We will also continue to explore the feasibility of modernising the voting process itself, aware of the changing needs of voters in our digital age. Ensuring laws for parties and campaigners are clear and followed The legitimacy of elections is dependent on clear laws which are understood and respected by parties and

campaigners. We will ensure voters have accessible information about parties and campaigners participating in elections, including transparency on how they are funded and what they spend. We will raise public awareness of the rules on party and campaigner registration, donations, and campaign spending, and will help voters take action if they see something which concerns them. We will continue to maintain the official registers of parties and non-party campaigners, and will seek to remove barriers to campaigning to ensure that voters hear from a wide and diverse range of campaigners. We will improve voter access to our Political Finance Online database by updating and upgrading the search functionality. Where political financial data is incomplete, we will continue to enforce the law to ensure transparency and increased voter confidence in the system. We provide more details on how we will support parties and campaigners to comply with the law in Section 4 of this Corporate Plan.

Ensuring the electoral system works effectively Key to voter confidence is an electoral system that works effectively. People should be confident elections are well-run, and should trust in the legitimacy of the results. Our 2021 public opinion tracking survey showed that 75% of people in Wales are confident that elections are well-run (compared to 80% UK wide). We will continue to conduct significant research to report on how elections have been run, including detailed understanding of voters' experiences. This will enable us to raise concerns and make evidence-based recommendations where appropriate, with the ultimate aim of maintaining public confidence in the electoral system. We outline our plans to ensure the delivery of free and fair elections in Section 5, including our work to support resilient local electoral services. Navigation 2. The Electoral Commission in Wales Section 2 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan for Wales 4. Supporting and securing campaigner compliance with the law in Wales Section 4 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan for Wales

Report on the May 2022 local elections in England | Electoral Commission Search Report on the May 2022 local elections in England You are in the England local council elections section Home England local council elections Currently reading: of 4 - Show page contents On this page Voting at the elections Campaigning at the elections Delivering the elections Supporting evidence Summary This report looks at how the May 2022 elections in England were run, how voters and campaigners found taking part, and what lessons can be learned for the future. We have reported separately on elections held in Northern Ireland , Scotland and Wales . On 5 May elections took place in many areas of England, including in all London boroughs. There were also six local mayoral elections and the South Yorkshire combined authority mayoral election. Overall, people were confident that these elections were well-run and were highly satisfied with the process of registering to vote and voting. Turnout at these elections was broadly consistent with previous elections, although it remains low. Almost everyone who voted was able to use their preferred method and found it easy to fill in their ballot paper, but we continue to see a small proportion of postal ballot packs rejected. s engaged with voters in a range of ways ahead of the elections and felt able to get their views across effectively. Voters generally found it easy to access information about the elections, but this did not necessarily translate to them feeling well-informed about the elections and who they could vote for. A notable proportion of candidates told us that they experienced some form of abuse or intimidation. Robust debate is an essential feature of election campaigns, but this must not lead to threats, abuse or intimidation that discourage candidates from standing for election or campaigning. We will work with the UK's governments and the wider electoral community to make sure we understand what is driving candidate abuse and intimidation, and to ensure this issue is addressed as a matter of urgency. The pattern of elections was less complex this year than in May 2021, with fewer combinations of elections and unscheduled elections. However, the resilience of electoral administration teams remains a concern, with staffing and booking venues posing a significant challenge in some areas. The range and scale of changes to be introduced by the Elections Act adds to this concern, with some significant changes intended to be delivered for the first time in England at the May 2023 local elections. Effective implementation will rely on the detailed secondary legislation being in place in time to allow the necessary preparations to be made. Voting at the elections The experience of voters at the May 2022 elections Most people were confident that these elections were well-run and were highly satisfied with the process of registering to vote, and 96% of voters were satisfied with the process of voting. This is consistent with findings from recent elections. Polling station voters felt confident that they could vote safely in person and almost everyone who voted was able to use their preferred method and found it easy to fill in their ballot paper. Almost everyone who voted by post said that they knew how to complete and return their postal vote, and found the postal voting instructions useful. However, we continue to see a small proportion of postal ballot packs rejected. Overview On 5 May 2022, there were elections for local councillors in many areas of England, including in all London boroughs. There was also a combined authority mayoral election in South Yorkshire and six local authority mayoral elections. A total of 22.4 million people across England were registered to vote in these elections. Voters continue to have positive views about how elections are run After each election we ask members of the public who were eligible to vote for their views on voting and elections, which helps us understand if views have changed since the last comparable set of elections. Satisfaction with the registration and voting

process remains high. People continue to have high levels of satisfaction with the process of registering to vote and voting. Our research shows that: 79% of people in England were satisfied with the process of registering to vote. This is consistent with the levels of satisfaction reported by people after the most recent comparable elections held in 2018. 96% of voters in England were satisfied with the process of voting. This is an increase from 2018 when 90% of people were satisfied. Older age groups are more likely to say that they are satisfied with the process of registering, while people who say that they have been 'limited a lot' by health or disability over the previous 12 months are slightly less likely to be satisfied with registering and with voting. Almost everyone (97%) who voted in person at a polling station felt safe voting with relevant Covid provisions in place. 1% said they felt fairly unsafe while the remaining 2% said they did not know. Most people were confident that the elections were well-run. More than seven-in-10 (73%) people said they were confident that the elections were well-run. Just under one-in-10 (9%) said they were not confident, and people who didn't vote were more likely to say they were not confident the elections were well-run than voters. When we asked people why they were not confident that the elections were well-run, the most commonly chosen reasons were: there wasn't enough information about the candidates (32%) there wasn't enough information about the elections (25%) I did not see any candidates campaigning / canvassing (25%) media / TV / press coverage was biased (23%) campaigning was based on incorrect information / made untrue claims (21%). Views about the safety of voting and whether electoral fraud is a problem were also consistent with the most recent comparable elections. In 2022, 81% of people in England said they thought voting was safe from fraud and abuse. When asked if they thought electoral fraud was a problem, 19% of people in England said that they thought it was. This is consistent with the 21% who saw it as a problem after the 2018 elections. Concerns were raised before the elections in some areas that voters' rights to a secret ballot could be compromised. It is vital that voters can cast their vote in secret, and anyone attempting to interfere with how a person votes is breaking the law. We work closely with the police and the electoral community to ensure the secrecy of the ballot. Our guidance for Returning Officers and polling station staff makes clear that voters must go to polling booths individually so that their right to a secret vote is protected. We also have a role in raising public awareness; ahead of every election, in partnership with Crimestoppers and the Cabinet Office, we run the 'Your Vote Is Yours Alone' campaign. This targets areas with historic concerns around electoral integrity to empower people to protect their vote and encourage them to report any concerns. In Tower Hamlets, where specific concerns had been expressed about the risk of electoral fraud, the Returning Officer and the police took a range of additional actions to help ensure the secrecy of the ballot at this year's polls. This included assigning an additional member of staff to each polling station to help direct voters individually to polling booths and police officers being on duty at polling stations throughout the day, so that anyone with concerns about intimidation or fraud was able to raise these with the police. We worked closely with them to provide guidance and advice. A range of communications were sent to voters and campaigners, highlighting that everyone must be able to vote in secret and free from intimidation and undue influence. At all polling stations there were prominent posters displayed both outside of polling stations and at the point of issue of ballot papers to reinforce the message that voters must enter the polling booth alone. On polling day, we visited a selection of polling stations and observed a small number of cases where someone tried to go with a voter into the polling booth. We also saw polling station

staff stopping this happening, so that voters could cast their vote in secret. An accredited observer organisation, Democracy Volunteers, has reported that their observers 'saw several challenges to the electoral process' and 'once again these focused around the challenge of family voting, where more than one person attempts to vote together in a polling booth, or affect, direct, or oversee the vote of another', concluding that family voting 'continues to be a challenge, despite the many actions taken by polling staff to attempt to prevent it at these elections.'¹ It is completely unacceptable for anyone's vote to be watched or pressured inside a polling station, but concerns remain in this area. We are committed to tackling any such influence, working in partnership with polling station staff and the police. We will continue to work with the electoral community to identify opportunities to enhance our guidance and training for polling station staff to reinforce the importance of secrecy and the actions that should be taken to address any issues that arise on polling day. Throughout the year, all police forces across the UK send us data about allegations of electoral fraud that they receive and investigate. We will publish the full data in the spring, including the number, type, and outcome of any allegations relating to the May 2022 elections. Turnout at these elections was consistent with previous comparable elections Turnout at these elections (33.6%) was broadly consistent with previous comparable elections, although it remains low compared with some other types of elections. Overall, estimated turnout decreased by one percentage point compared to the last time there were comparable elections for district, metropolitan, unitary councils and London boroughs in 2018. There was a larger decline in turnout in elections in London, with a decrease of 3.4 percentage points. The most common reasons given by people who told us that they didn't vote were: lack of time / too busy / I was busy at work (18%) I'm just not interested in politics / fed up with politics (11%) there was no point in voting because it was obvious who would win / my vote wouldn't have made a difference to the outcome / my vote doesn't count (9%) I was away on 5 May / voting day (8%) I didn't like the candidates / parties / they didn't represent my views (7%) People were confident that they could vote using their preferred method In England, people can choose to vote in one of three ways: they can vote in person at their polling station, by post, or by proxy (asking someone they trust to vote on their behalf). If their situation changes close to an election due to work or disability, people can appoint an emergency proxy up to 5pm on polling day. Ahead of the 2021 elections, the law was changed so that anyone who had to self-isolate close to polling day because they had tested positive for Covid, or had been in close contact to someone who had tested positive, could also appoint an emergency proxy. This change remained in place for the 2022 elections in England. People knew that other options were available if they didn't want to vote in a polling station Most people said that they found it easy to find information on how to vote either in person at a polling station or remotely by post or proxy. Our research showed that: 73% of people said they found it easy to get information about the different methods of voting they could choose from 82% of people who voted in a polling station and 84% of people who voted by post said they found it easy to get information about different methods of voting 10% of postal voters told us that these elections were the first time they had voted by post. The most common reasons for choosing to do so were convenience and being too busy to go to the polling station, with most finding it easy to understand how to apply for their postal vote Voting using their preferred method was possible for most voters The majority of people (80.4%) were eligible to vote in person, while 19.5% were sent a postal vote and 0.1% (20,191) appointed a proxy, of which 1,417 were an emergency proxy. This represents a

slight increase in the number choosing a postal vote compared to the last time these elections took place in 2018, but is similar to the proportion who did so at the elections in 2021. Most people who voted were able to use their preferred method: 95% of voters said they were able to use their preferred method of voting, compared to 4% who said they were not voters aged under 34 were slightly less likely than other age groups to have used their preferred method to vote, while voters identifying as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic were less likely than white voters to have voted using their preferred method. Most people were confident they knew how to vote without making a mistake. Nearly all voters said that they found it easy to fill in their ballot paper or to complete their postal vote, but some votes continue to be rejected and not included in the count. Most voters found filling in the ballot paper very easy. Nearly all voters (97%) said that it was easy to fill in their ballot paper, with three-quarters (76%) saying they found it very easy. Only 1% of voters said that they found it difficult. Data from electoral administrators shows that 0.5% of all ballot papers (approximately 39,500) were rejected and not included in the count. The most common reason for ballot papers to be rejected was because they were unmarked, with this accounting for almost three-quarters (72%) of all rejected ballot papers.

Most people who voted by post were confident they knew how to vote without making a mistake. Almost everyone who voted by post said that they knew how to complete and return their postal vote and found the postal voting instructions useful. Our research showed that: 96% said that they found useful the written instructions included with their postal vote on how to vote and return the vote. 96% said it was easy to complete and return their postal vote, compared to 4% who said it was difficult. Data from electoral administrators shows that, in the metropolitan, London borough, unitary and district elections, 2.8% of returned postal votes (approximately 80,000 votes in total) were rejected and were not able to be included in the count. The most common reason for postal votes being rejected was that the personal identifiers (their signature and/or date of birth) that voters provided on the postal voting statement did not match those that they had previously provided to the Electoral Registration Officer. This is the same as the last time these elections took place. Other reasons for postal votes being rejected included where voters did not provide either or both of their personal identifiers, or where the ballot paper or postal voting statement was missing. The Elections Act includes a new requirement for voters to reapply for a postal vote every three years. This may help to ensure that voters' personal identifiers are up-to-date and accurate, and we will monitor whether this change has an impact on the number of rejected postal votes at future elections. We will also continue to explore ways of improving the electoral system to better meet voters' needs. As part of this, we will consider evidence about whether changes to postal voting documents or processes could help to reduce the number of postal ballot packs that are rejected at future elections.

Campaigning at the elections

The experience of campaigning at the May 2022 elections felt that they were able to get their views across to voters, using a range of face-to-face, online and printed campaign methods. Traditional campaigning methods (leafletting and canvassing) were the most popular. A notable proportion of candidates responding to our survey said that they experienced some form of abuse or intimidation. In most cases this involved verbal or online abuse, and the majority of instances came from members of the public. We will work with the UK's governments and the wider electoral community to make sure we understand what is driving candidate abuse and intimidation, and to ensure this issue is addressed as a matter of urgency. Although voters generally found it easy to access information about the elections, this did

not necessarily translate to them feeling well-informed about the elections and who they could vote for. A perceived lack of information also affected people's confidence that these elections were well-run. Transparency about who is responsible for political campaign activity online remains important for voters. New transparency requirements are expected to come into force for UK Parliament and local elections from the end of 2023. Campaigning at the elections overview More than 15,000 candidates stood for election to local authorities on 5 May 2022. Three quarters of those candidates stood for either the Conservative, Labour or Liberal Democrat parties, and 15% stood for the Green Party. Candidates standing for other parties represented 7% of the total. A further 3% of candidates were independents who did not stand for any political party. A total of 37 candidates stood for election as directly-elected mayors across the six local authorities where those positions were also contested. There were six candidates for the South Yorkshire combined authority mayoral election. 2 s were able to engage with voters but some raised concerns about intimidation s engaged with voters in a range of ways ahead of the elections and the majority felt able to get their views across effectively. Our research does, however, find that some campaigners raised concerns about intimidation. s used a variety of methods to communicate with voters At the 2022 elections, people continued to receive information about candidates and parties from a range of different sources, and in a variety of formats. The most common ways people reported seeing information on parties and candidates were: leaflet or flyer, either from a candidate / political party (49%) or another source (23%) word of mouth / mentioned by friends / family / carer (12%) social media (generic posts or adverts which did not seem targeted) (10%) newspapers (10%) posters or billboards (10%) I talked to a candidate / candidates directly (10%) Older age groups (65+) were more likely than the youngest age group (18 to 24) to say that they had seen a leaflet or flyer from a candidate or political party, and to say that they had spoken to a candidate or political party. Younger age groups were more likely to mention seeing information on social media. Findings from our survey of candidates were consistent with what voters reported, with traditional campaigning methods (leafletting and canvassing) being the most popular, specifically: over half of the candidates (51%) told us that their most used campaigning method was leaflets, newsletters or flyers, with 90% of candidates saying this was one of their top three campaigning methods door-to-door canvassing was second most popular, with three-quarters (76%) listing it in their top three methods Social media was the most popular digital campaigning tool, compared with targeted emails, website or in-app advertising or other types of digital campaigning. Around a third (35%) of candidates said social media was their third most used campaigning method, although it was primarily used to support more traditional campaigning methods. Free methods of digital campaigning were more popular than paid-for tools with candidates who responded to our survey. We found that: just under two-thirds of candidates (64%) said they posted on social media about their campaign a third (33%) said they asked supporters to share their posts almost a third (31%) said they emailed their supporters only 16% of respondents said that they paid for adverts on social media Most candidates did not experience problems campaigning, but some raised concerns about abuse and intimidation Just under three-quarters of candidates (74%) responding to our survey said that they felt able to get their views across to voters effectively. While not directly comparable, due to the different elections taking place and the sample not being representative of all candidates who stood at the elections, this is an improvement on 2021 when fewer than half of respondents to the survey said this. Due to the improved public health situation, official restrictions

on campaign activities were no longer in place, but Covid did continue to affect campaigners. Three-quarters (76%) of candidates who responded to our survey said that Covid affected at least one aspect of their campaign, with a quarter (26%) of respondents saying that it impacted a lot on their ability to enlist volunteers and get assistance with campaigning. When asked about whether they had experienced some kind of problem with threats, abuse or intimidation, more than half of the candidates (60%) told us that they did not have a problem at all. Our research with candidates did highlight some significant concerns about abuse towards campaigners, specifically: two-fifths of respondents (40%) said they experienced some kind of problem, rating this as a 2 or above on a scale from 1 to 5 just under one in 10 (8%) reported having a serious problem (rated 4 or 5 out of 5) nearly a fifth (18%) witnessed threats, abuse or intimidation towards those campaigning on their behalf of those that said they experienced some kind of abuse, the most common sources were verbal (62%) and online (52%), and most reported receiving it from members of the public (71%) one in 10 (10%) of those who said that they experienced threats or abuse told us that these would discourage them from standing as a candidate again in the future Evidence collected by the Local Government Association has also highlighted the democratic impacts of abuse and intimidation, including the impact on local councillors and candidates' willingness to stand for election. 3 This research also found that there is a growing feeling that abuse and intimidation, particularly online, are becoming normalised. The Elections Act 2022 introduces a new electoral sanction for those found guilty of intimidating candidates, campaigners and elected representatives. Banning someone from standing for elected office, as well as imposing criminal sanctions, such as a prison sentence or fine, will strengthen the deterrent against this intimidating behaviour. Robust debate is an essential feature of election campaigns, but this must not lead to threats, abuse or intimidation that discourage candidates from standing for election or campaigning. Recommendation 1: Urgent action needed to prevent abuse and intimidation Recommendation 1: Urgent action needed to prevent abuse and intimidation Urgent action is needed to tackle and prevent abuse and intimidation of candidates and campaigners at elections. Candidates and campaigners should be able to participate freely in the democratic process, ensuring that voters can hear from a range of voices during elections. Tackling these problems will require coordinated action from a range of partners, including central and local government, police forces, social media companies and political parties and campaigners themselves. We will work with the UK's governments and the wider electoral community to understand what is driving abuse and intimidation and to develop effective responses to protect candidates and campaigners at future elections. People want more information about candidates and campaign material Many voters found it easy to find information about these elections, but this did not necessarily mean that they felt they had enough information. Our research also confirmed that people continue to value transparency about who is responsible for political campaign activity online at elections. Most people find it easy to get information but some do not feel well-informed about candidates Our research after the election found that: just under two-thirds of people (64%) said that they found it easy to find information on what the election was about / for a similar proportion (61%) felt that they found it easy to find information on the candidates and parties running for election Although the majority of people asked said they found it easy to find information, this did not necessarily mean that they felt they had enough information. Our research found that: four in 10 (42%) people agreed that that they had enough information on candidates to make an informed choice, but almost a third

(32%) disagreed younger age groups (18-34) were less likely to agree they had enough information to make an informed decision compared to older age groups (65+) non-voters were more likely to say they did not have enough information to make an informed decision, with 46% of non-voters disagreeing that they had enough information, compared to 26% of voters four in 10 (43%) felt they knew what the local elections were about, but three in ten (30%) did not agree There is also evidence that a perceived lack of information affected people's confidence that these elections were well-run. Our research found that many of those who were not confident the elections were well-run said this was because there wasn't enough information about the candidates (mentioned by 32% of people who were not confident) or about the elections more generally (mentioned by 25%). Transparency about who is producing election campaign material is important to build trust Our research after the elections confirmed that people continue to value transparency about who is responsible for political campaign activity online at elections. We found: two-thirds of people (64%) agreed that it is important for them to know who has produced the political information they see online half (51%) said they would trust digital campaigning material more if they knew who produced it one-in-three (31%) said that they cannot find out who has produced the political information that they see online The UK Government has introduced legislation that will require most campaigners to include information to identify who has promoted or published their online campaign material in future. This new digital imprint requirement will help voters understand who is targeting them online with information at elections and referendums in future. These changes are expected to come into force from the end of 2023. We will monitor any impact of the new digital imprint requirement on people's levels of confidence in political information online. Candidates were able to access strengthened support to understand and comply with election law We increased the opportunities for candidates and parties to access our support to understand and comply with political finance law both before and after the elections. We continue to recommend that candidate nomination requirements should be proportionate to reduce barriers to standing for election. Increasing opportunities for supporting candidates and parties We provide guidance to candidates and agents to help them understand their obligations under political finance laws and campaign with confidence. As part of our commitment to delivering more proactive support for candidates and parties and ensuring those taking part in elections have the right information, we held pre-election webinars to explain the law. The event for candidates and agents in England was attended by 160 people and the feedback was positive, and we received a number of requests for webinars to be held more regularly. We also held virtual advice surgeries that allowed candidates and agents to book an appointment to speak to one of our expert advisers and discuss specific issues around the spending and donation law. Due to the take up and demand, particularly from new and independent candidates, we offered further advice surgeries after the elections and in advance of the reporting deadlines, to provide support with spending returns. Our approach has been informed and led by the evidence and feedback we received in our most recent survey of the regulated community. We will continue to focus on delivering more bespoke advice and guidance resources so that parties and campaigners can easily understand the political finance law, regardless of their size or experience. Candidate nomination requirements should be proportionate To minimise the travel and personal contact involved in completing nomination forms during the Covid pandemic, the Government legislated to reduce the number of subscribers required by candidates to stand in elections in England in 2021. This change did not remain in place for the May 2022

elections. Our survey of candidates at these elections found that most thought the nomination process was clear and well run, with 84% of respondents agreeing that it was easy to get the number of signatures required to secure their nomination. Despite this, some respondents questioned the purpose of having this requirement at all.

"Having to collect 10 signatures seems pretty pointless, it's high enough to be a task that takes time but not high enough to be a barrier to anyone standing (and I don't want any for local elections!)." "I suffer with disabilities meaning that going outside and getting 10 signatures was hard to do. We only needed 2 signatures last time, however, this has gone back up to 10. My agent had to collect the signatures instead. This was a barrier for me as a disabled person wanting to run for council."

Recommendation 2: Review subscriber requirements for nominating candidates

Recommendation 2: Review subscriber requirements for nominating candidates We continue to recommend that the Government should review whether the range of current subscriber requirements are proportionate for different elected offices, taking into account evidence from this year's elections and conclusions from our Standing for Election review in 2015 . This would help to ensure candidates do not face

unnecessary barriers to standing for election, giving voters a more diverse range of views to choose from. We are aware the Government intends to introduce legislation to reduce subscriber requirements for local elections ahead of the next scheduled elections in May 2023.

Delivering the elections The experience of electoral administration at the May 2022 elections The pattern of elections was less complex this year than in May 2021, with electoral administrators facing fewer combinations of elections and unscheduled elections. Our evidence indicates that these elections were relatively more straightforward to manage, with fewer issues emerging. However, the resilience of electoral administration teams remains a concern, with staffing and booking venues posing a significant challenge in some areas. Early clarity on legislative changes remains essential to allow Returning Officers and their teams sufficient time to plan for elections. The Elections Act makes a range of significant changes to how elections are run, and effective implementation will rely on the detailed secondary legislation being in place in time to allow the necessary preparations to be made. We continue to recommend that legislation is clear six months before it is required to be implemented or complied with by Electoral Registration Officers or Returning Officers.

Delivering the elections overview Elections took place in 165 local authorities in England with local elections to district council, metropolitan borough and unitary authorities as well as all 32 London boroughs. There were also six local mayoral elections. The South Yorkshire combined authority mayoral election covered four local authority areas, including two which would not otherwise have had elections. Elections were also held in over 1,000 town and parish councils. There were 167 local authorities that did not have elections this year and, compared to 2019 and 2021, the pattern of elections in England this year was less complex, with fewer combinations of elections and unscheduled elections taking place. Local authority elections teams were responsible for delivering electoral registration, nominations, absent voting, polling stations and the counting of votes for the elections. Our evidence shows that these elections were well-run, and voters and campaigners reported high levels of confidence.

However, underlying concerns relating to capacity and resilience remain, and there were a small number of issues that had an impact in some areas. The capacity and resilience of electoral administration teams remains a significant challenge We received feedback from around a quarter of local authorities after the elections.

This relatively low response rate combined with the comments received from electoral

administrators suggests that, in comparison with last year, these elections were more straightforward to manage. But the feedback also shows that elections teams still struggled to recruit staff and find suitable venues for polling stations and the count. Reduced complexity helped administrators to run the elections effectively. Alongside the continued effort and commitment of Returning Officers and electoral administrators, the less complex pattern of elections in England this year, with fewer combined polls, appears to have supported the delivery of well-run elections. There were a small number of minor errors with printed materials, but Returning Officers and their teams worked quickly to mitigate these and we will support them in learning any lessons for future polls. However, in one area there was a more significant issue at the count which had the potential to reduce the confidence of candidates, agents and voters in the count process and therefore the result. In the elections to Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, a significant number of postal votes were not included in the final result for one ward, which has led us to conclude that the Returning Officer did not meet elements of the performance standards. The issue had no impact on the overall result. The Returning Officer has since commissioned an independent report on the conduct of the election by the Association of s, to help ensure lessons can be learned ahead of future polls. We are also continuing to work with the Returning Officer to support them as they review their election processes. Despite this broadly positive picture, the capacity and resilience of the electoral system remains a concern. The range and scale of changes to be introduced by the Elections Act adds to this concern, with some significant changes intended to be delivered for the first time in England at the May 2023 local elections. We have previously highlighted concerns about the resilience and capacity of electoral administration structures in the UK, which are not helped by the challenges of delivering elections within an outdated and increasingly complex electoral law framework. We will continue to work in partnership with the electoral community, the UK Government and local authorities to develop and deliver proposals to support resilient electoral services. Alongside this, we continue to call on the Government to set out how it will simplify and modernise election law, building on the comprehensive and well-supported recommendations of the UK's Law Commissions. Some Returning Officers struggled to find enough staff to work on polling day and at the count Recruiting staff to work at the elections remained a problem. This was highlighted by many of the electoral administrators responding to our survey. Administrators highlighted problems around finding experienced polling station staff and a high number of recruits dropping out ahead of polling day. While Covid had less of an impact on the administration of elections this year than last, it still remained a factor, despite many of the restrictions required in 2021 being removed. "We had significant numbers of staff not taking up their positions again and this seems to be an increasing problem. We were lucky in that our neighbouring authority did not have elections and loaned us a number of staff. If they had also had elections we'd have been struggling to fill vacancies. We appointed many more Presiding Officers who had had no experience of working in a polling station than we are usually comfortable with" "Staffing was a big issue this year as we are still feeling the effects of the pandemic. A lot of our staff were taking holidays, had hospital appointments etc. that had previously been postponed. We also had around 30 polling station staff that had tested positive the week of the election and so had to pull out" "The delivery of this election was challenging even though Covid restrictions had been removed, with our main issue this year relating to staffing which is expected to present ongoing challenges in future with Elections Act

requirements for example staff additional responsibilities and more staff required to work in polling stations" The scale and pattern of elections taking place this year meant that some electoral administration teams could call on neighbouring local authorities for support. But this is not a sustainable long-term solution, particularly at future England-wide or UK-wide elections. The changes being introduced by the Elections Act have the potential to increase the challenge of recruiting and retaining skilled and trained polling station staff for future elections. This is due to the additional responsibilities that poll clerks and Presiding Officers will need to deliver, such as checking the identification of voters. We have formed a sub-group of the Electoral Coordination and Advisory Board (ECAB) to discuss and identify solutions to the staffing, resilience and capacity challenges experienced by Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and their teams. An immediate area of focus for the sub-group will be on addressing the challenges of recruitment of polling station staff. Fewer suitable venues were available for polling stations and the count Booking venues for polling stations and the count is another aspect of managing the elections that administrators highlighted as a continuing challenge. In part, this appears to be an ongoing impact of Covid, as some venues have permanently closed while others have increased hire fees. Comments suggest that the problem of securing appropriate venues is also exacerbated by difficulties with booking school buildings. "Schools are continually a problem, with school administrators fighting to not be used as polling stations. Some schools/headteachers are now being deliberately difficult and uncooperative in an attempt to force the Returning Officer away. Where we have to as a result move to either another building or a temporary mobile station, this is at significantly greater cost to the authority." The ability for administrators to be able to access suitable venues is key to ensuring the smooth delivery of the elections and a positive experience for all voters. The changes being introduced by the Elections Act will place additional demands on electoral administrators, as they will have to make sure polling station venues can be made suitable for disabled voters to support them to vote independently and in secret, as well as having space to allow voters to show their ID in private where required. We will continue to work closely with ECAB to explore options for addressing the challenges of finding suitable venues for polling stations and the count. "We are dealing with an ever-decreasing pool of available polling venues. Schools are down to the minimum and churches and other venues are either closing or becoming too expensive. The number of temporary buildings is likely to increase which is a concern in the light of the additional processes required at polling stations under the Elections Act." Early clarity on legislation is essential to support effective planning Early confirmation of legislative changes allowed Returning Officers to plan with certainty for the elections this year. The Elections Act makes a range of significant changes to how elections are run, and effective implementation will rely on the detailed secondary legislation being in place in time to allow the necessary preparations to be made. Legislative changes were made clear in good time to give Returning Officers the certainty they needed In 2021, owing to the uncertainty created by the public health situation, changes were made to nomination processes and emergency proxy rules shortly before the elections. This created additional challenges and risks to the delivery of those elections. In comparison to last year, feedback from administrators about changes to legislation was more positive. Confirmation of the changes to nomination processes and the extension of changes to the emergency proxy vote rules were communicated in good time. "The confirmation that Covid emergency proxy voting arrangements [were] to be

extended for 5th May was received in good time.” “[...] Reversion to 10 signatures on nomination papers and continuation of Covid emergency proxies was communicated in good time. [...]” We continue to recommend that the UK Government ensure that legislative changes are clear six months before they are required to be implemented or complied with by Electoral Registration Officers or Returning Officers in order to enable them to plan effectively. This is especially important given the range and scale of changes to be introduced by the Elections Act. Returning Officers need early clarity to be able to deliver significant changes introduced by the Elections Act

Significant new policies from the Elections Act are expected to be delivered for the first time at next year’s local elections in England, including introducing a requirement for voters to show identification before they can vote at polling stations. These will present new challenges for voters, campaigners and electoral administrators in England. There have been significant delays in the development and delivery of the secondary legislation that will set out the detail of how these changes will operate. Both the Commission and the wider electoral community need to undertake preparatory activity, which cannot be done without this detail. We are committed to supporting the effective implementation of voter ID and the other changes introduced by the Elections Act, but it remains vital that they are delivered in a way which ensures accessibility, security and workability. We know that electoral administrators are concerned about the short time now available before the new provisions are due to come into effect – whether they have scheduled polls in May 2023 or not – and that they will need to start taking steps soon to get ready for them. Given these delays, we are concerned about whether the voter ID requirement can be delivered in a way which is secure, accessible and workable, ahead of the next scheduled elections in May 2023 as planned. We are continuing to develop our plans for how we will support electoral administrators to prepare for and deliver the changes. We published some initial planning guidance in August to highlight key areas of planning that electoral administrators can take forward now, even in the absence of the detail on how the provisions will work. This guidance is based on our current knowledge of UK Government implementation plans.

Recommendation 3: Ensure that the electoral community have sufficient clarity and funding to effectively prepare for Elections Act changes

Electoral administrators need clarity and certainty in order to plan and prepare to deliver well-run elections in advance of the important polls that are scheduled to take place during the next two to three years. The UK Government should work with the electoral community to ensure they have clear and accurate information about how and when changes in the Elections Act are going to be implemented. This includes ensuring legislation is clear at least six months before any new changes are due to be implemented, so that Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and electoral administrators have enough time to prepare. The UK Government should also ensure that the changes in the Elections Act are supported with the necessary funding required for the electoral community to be able to continue to deliver well-run elections.

Supporting evidence England local elections May 2022 Public opinion research tables 2022 England Electoral data 1. Democracy Volunteers (2022), Final Report – UK Local and Assembly Elections 2022 (<https://democracyvolunteers.org/uk-2022-final/>) ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. Democracy Club (2022), Local Elections Briefing (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FsXy8lqwO7uWaRC8g-WAgiKpBDb9BMGK/view>); House of Commons Library (2022), Local Elections 2022: Results and analysis

(<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9545/CBP-9545.pdf>) ■

Back to content at footnote 2 3. Local Government Association (2022), Debate Not

Hate: The impact of abuse on local democracy

(<https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/debate-not-hate-impact-abuse-local-democracy>)

■ Back to content at footnote 3 Page history First published: 21 September 2022 Last updated: 21 September 2022 Related content Report on the May 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election Read our report on the May 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election Report on the May 2022 Scottish council elections Read our report on the May 2022 Scottish council elections. Report on the May 2022 elections in Wales Read our report on the May 2022 elections in Wales. Looking back at the May 2022 elections Read our latest blog post on looking back at the May 2022 elections.

You are in the section Home What is the Elections Act? The UK government is making changes to the UK electoral system. The Election Act contains measures that affect: elections and the way we vote campaigning and the rules on campaign spending and funding parliamentary oversight of the Electoral Commission about the Act Changes to elections and the way you vote Requirement to show ID at polling stations about the UK Government's voter ID proposal. Changes to postal voting The UK Government has proposed a number of changes to postal voting. . Changes to proxy voting about the proposed changes to voting by proxy, where someone you trust votes on your behalf. Changes to elections and the way you vote Improving the accessibility of elections Read about the proposals to make it easier for people with disabilities to vote.

Preventing undue influence Read about the proposals to simplify and clarify the offence of undue influence (when someone uses, or threatens to use, force or violence to make someone vote a certain way). Changes for EU Citizens about proposed changes to EU Citizens' rights to vote and stand in elections. Changes to elections and the way you vote Changes to overseas voting about proposals to remove the 15 year limit on voting rights for British citizens living overseas. Changes to the voting system for mayoral and PCC elections Read about the proposals to change the voting system for mayoral and Police and Crime Commissioner elections in England and Wales. Changes for campaigners and spending and donation rules Introducing digital imprints about the proposed changes to digital imprints on election material. Preventing candidate intimidation Read about the proposals for a new penalty for intimidating candidates, campaigners or elected representatives. Changes to notional spending Read about the proposals to clarify the rules that relate to notional spending for candidates and agents. Changes to legal requirements for parties and non-party campaigners about proposals to change the law affecting parties and non-party campaigners. Changes to how Parliament oversees our work The Electoral Commission's ability to bring prosecutions about the proposal that would stop us from being able to bring prosecutions against those who break electoral law relating to parties and campaigners. A strategy and policy statement for the Electoral Commission about the UK Government's proposal for the Electoral Commission.

Scottish Parliament Political Parties Panel minutes: 4 March 2021 | Electoral Commission Search Scottish Parliament Political Parties

Panel minutes: 4 March 2021 You are in the Party panels section Home How we make decisions Party panels On this page Preparations for the Scottish Parliamentary Election 2021 Polling stations Counting of votes EC guidance update Campaigning under Covid-19 Briefings for parties Public awareness Police Scotland Scottish Government update Scotland Office/Cabinet Office update Scottish Boundary Commission update EMB update Electoral Commission update Dates of future meetings First published: 27 May 2021 Last updated: 29 September 2021 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Hardy, Scottish Green Party (Chair) Matt Edmonds, Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party Scott Martin, Scottish National Party Lorraine Reid, Scottish National Party Paul Moat, Scottish Liberal Democrats Fiona O'Donnell, Scottish Labour Party Isabel Drummond-Murray, Scottish Boundary Commissions Penelope Curtis, Scottish Government Maria McCann, Scottish Government Iain Hockenhull, Scottish Government James Newman, Scottish Government Chris Highcock, Electoral Management Board for Scotland Pete Wildman, Scottish Assessors Association (Chair of Electoral Registration Committee) Helena Brice, Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland Rachel Winham, Royal Mail Superintendent Gerry Corrigan, Police Scotland Dame Susan Bruce, Electoral Commissioner, Scotland Alasdair Morgan, Electoral Commissioner Andy O'Neill, Head of Electoral Commission, Scotland Sarah Mackie, Manager, Electoral Commission, Scotland Martin McKeown, Senior Adviser, Elections & s, Scotland Catherine Heggie, Partnerships & Information Officer, Scotland Lindsey Hamilton, Business Support Officer (Minutes) Apologies Malcolm Burr, Electoral Management Board for Scotland Minutes of the last meeting Subject to clarification amendments submitted by Isabel Drummond-Murray the minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 January 2021 were approved. Preparations for the Scottish Parliamentary Election 2021 Legislative matters relating to Scottish Parliamentary election 2021 Iain Hockenhull (IH) confirmed the order to make the changes to proxy voting had been approved. Electoral registration, postal voting, proxy voting Pete Wildman (PW) said that the SAA TV Ad campaign had reached 2.1 million people across the country. The Household Notification Letter had received a positive response with over 70,000 requests for postal votes, not including downloads or parties. He said people could email a scanned or photocopied postal vote application and if received by 5pm on 6 April would receive a postal vote for the 6 May Scottish Parliament election. If they missed that deadline, they could still vote in person or appoint a proxy. He confirmed the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) letter had promoted a lot of interest. Chris Highcock (CH) confirmed there would be a number of sweeps to ensure pick-up on polling day Action: PW agreed to email Rachel Winham a list of ERO addresses in Scotland. Martin McKeown (MMcK) referred to the Electoral Commission's Code of conduct which directed parties to return applications within two days and to check absent voter lists to reduce the potential for duplication. Polling stations Chris Highcock (CH) talked about the directions the EMB had put in place, advice around one day of polling; the appropriate allocation of in-person polling station numbers to avoid long queues; the dates when poll cards would be sent out and he listed the health and safety measures which would be in polling places. Action: He said he would discuss out with the meeting how parties could get early communication of the locations of polling places. Counting of votes CH talked about the arrangements for the commencement of counts and stressed that physical distancing would mean they would take longer and mean less available space for counting agents, or guests of the RO, but allow an appropriate degree of scrutiny and safety. The subject of Covid

testing of staff was still under discussion but being considered. EC guidance update MMcK confirmed core guidance for parties had been published and spending return forms would be published shortly. All core guidance for candidates was on line and spending return forms published this week. There would also be a supporting document setting out what would be different at this election. He suggested early contact with Regional and Constituency Returning Officers who would give information on the conduct of elections locally. ACTION: He would send round a link to the RRO/RO Contact details. Campaigning under Covid-19 Penelope Curtis, said the Minister for Parliamentary Business had updated on preparations for the safe running of the election but also outlined how campaigning was likely to take place. The Scottish Government update included a link to that statement which sought to align campaigning activity as closely as possible to the updated strategic framework. It was anticipated leafleting by volunteers could begin from 15 March, subject to a decision taken that restrictions would be eased. Face to face door step campaigning could commence from 5 April. The public health test would be that infection rates across Scotland had reached 50 per 100,000 across Scotland and the test positivity rate under 5%. Any individual local authority exceeding these figures would have to suspend campaigning until figures dropped below that level. She said public acceptance and reaction to campaigning would be absolutely key and not all would welcome it. Briefings for parties MMcK said he and Andy O'Neill (AON) had engaged with parties, particularly new ones, to get across key messages regarding rules they needed to be aware of, (e.g. new imprint rules). He said the offer was still there if parties wanted to meet. Public awareness Sarah Mackie (SMa) talked about the Commission's registration campaign, 'Got 5' which would launch on 9 March. She said the democratic engagement area of the website provided resources for stakeholders, including animations on how to vote, how to complete ballot papers and what to expect in the polling station. SMa also said that an animation about how postal votes are processed and kept secure would also be shared. She reported the Scottish Parliament website was developing a video on how the voting system worked. The Commission's household booklet would be distributed from the week beginning 22 March with accessible versions available week commencing 15 March. A link to the booklet has been circulated, but SMa asked that members do not share this until the accessible versions were available. There had been requests from parties to be added to the press distribution list and she asked anyone who wished to be added to send her a request (in line with GDPR regulations). Catherine Heggie (CHe) reported that the 'Welcome to your vote' campaign would begin on 9 March, was aimed at 16 & 17 year olds and newly-enfranchised foreign nationals and would run until the registration deadline. Digital and print resources were available for partners to use across their channels, as well as a voting factsheet for newly-enfranchised citizens and learning resources for 14-18 year olds. Police Scotland Superintendent Gerry Corrigan (GC) reported the policing structure was in place and key risks were public order, terrorism, cyber threat and candidate safety though he stressed no specific threat had been identified. The police intended to provide all candidates with personal safety advice in relation to being a candidate and would support ROs in facilitating the throughput of people at polling places. They would engage, explain and encourage to abide by the rules, with enforcement activity as a last resort in extreme circumstances. He said they were keen to have sight of guidance going out to canvassers so their knowledge would be in tune. He said planning meetings were well under way and divisional points of contact well linked to local authorities so building a knowledge of where polling places were to develop a local picture. On

polling day and the day of the count, police operation command centre would be maintaining a national overview of anything developing for a police perspective.

Scott Martin (SM) asked if a 24 hour point of contact telephone list existed. ACTION: GC said he would communicate back on this over the next few days. Scottish Government update MMCC asked if anyone had questions regarding the previously circulated update. She said the SSI had gone to committee that morning. Scotland Office/Cabinet Office update Helena Brice (HB) asked if there were any questions regarding the previously circulated update. Scottish Boundary Commission update Isabel Drummond-Murray said there was not much to report, she had postponed the meeting with the parties about the 2023 review and were now focussed on the islands review work. She said she would be back in touch in May to set up a meeting after the election. Action: Isabel Drummond-Murray to arrange meeting with parties through EC after the election. Royal Mail update Rachel Winham (RW) commented on performance concerns from stakeholders but assured all that postal votes and election materials were a priority and contingency plans were in place. Priority mailboxes were emptied two to three times a day and managers would make sure mail with purple flashes were pulled out. There was also Sunday working. She said candidate mail could be tracked through the network and would be delivered by day 3 for addressed and day 7 for unaddressed with an update provided to any party. Final sweep information would be going out to EROs soon. She said they would be sending out packs with details of their guide and election sort details and asked to send out to candidates after close of nominations and particularly to help with Independent candidates. A meeting with parties' printers had taken place and one to one meetings about a party's mailing could be held. Pete Wildman (PW) reported that as at 1 March, 770,000 postal votes had been registered and the number was climbing daily. He could not give a definitive figure now but said it would be in excess of that. ACTION: AON said he would send Rachel Winham the Electoral Commission research. SM asked if there was an indication on uptake of postal votes at recent by elections. PW reported pre by election postal vote levels of 13.6% in the Borders which rose to 22%, an increase of 8.4% where normally would only see 1% increase. In December, postal vote demand was 16.6% and now was just over 18%. He predicted that figure would change and people do leave it to the last minute to apply. EMB update CH said they had interacted with ROs, EROS and government around the practical delivery of the election. Electoral Commission update AON said all had been covered in previous discussion. Sue Bruce informed the panel there was a preferred candidate for the position of Chair of the Electoral Commission and his name was John Pullinger who was a past president of the Royal Statistical Society. He had gone through processes led by the Speaker's Committee and on Monday had been involved in a public session with them. If they agreed it would go for debate and be subject for the Royal Warrant. Alex Attwood Northern Ireland had been appointed as smaller parties Commissioner and the Royal Warrant was in processing. The Commission was also recruiting for a country Commissioner for Northern Ireland. Dates of future meetings AON said a date approximately 10 days after the election would be set for the next meeting as well as dates from autumn onwards to May 2022 for the Scottish council elections.

Results and turnout at the 2017 UK general election | Electoral Commission Search Results and turnout at the 2017 UK general election You are in the UK general elections section Home UK general elections On this page Overview Electorate Turnout Postal voting Proxies and waivers First published: 28 June 2019 Last updated: 28 June 2019 Download You can download the: full dataset as an XLS full dataset as a CSV (zip file) Overview This report provides analysis on participation in and the administration of the UK Parliamentary general election (UKPGE) held on 8 June 2017.

For this, data was collected from Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers across Great Britain and the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland (EONI).

This comprised the Declaration of Result of Poll, the statutory Form K 'Statement as to Postal Ballot Papers' and an additional data form, specified by the Commission, which included data relating to electoral registration, turnout, absent voting and rejected ballots. The election resulted in a hung parliament, with no party winning an overall majority. The Conservatives won 317 seats (42.2% of votes) compared with 262 seats (40.0% of votes) for Labour, 35 seats for the SNP (3.1% of votes), 12 seats (7.4% of votes) for The Liberal Democrats and 10 seats (0.9% of votes) for The DUP.

Table 1.1: Summary Electorate Postal voters Turnout Postal vote turnout In-person turnout Rejected ballots Postal votes rejected England 39.3 m 18.2% 69.3% 85.3% 66.2% 0.2% 2.4% South East 6.5 m 17.8% 71.4% 85.5% 68.7% 0.3% 2.0% West Midlands 4.1 m 15.0% 67.1% 86.0% 64.4% 0.3% 3.7% North West 5.3 m 19.5% 68.0% 84.3% 64.6% 0.2% 2.7% East Midlands 3.4 m 18.2% 69.4% 86.6% 66.0% 0.2% 2.5% London 5.5 m 16.7% 70.2% 83.0% 68.1% 0.3% 2.4% Yorkshire & Humber 3.9 m 19.3% 66.5% 85.8% 62.4% 0.2% 2.4% East 4.4 m 17.1% 69.9% 85.8% 67.0% 0.2% 1.9% South West 4.2 m 18.9% 72.1% 86.9% 69.0% 0.2% 2.2% North East 1.9 m 26.6% 66.1% 84.9% 60.0% 0.2% 2.2% Scotland 4.0 m 19.4% 66.8% 82.9% 63.3% 0.1% 2.0% Wales 2.3 m 19.4% 68.7% 84.4% 65.3% 0.2% 2.2% Northern Ireland 1.2 m 1.9% 65.6% 89.0% 65.2% 0.4% 4.0% UK 46.8 m 18.0% 69.0% 85.1% 65.9% 0.2% 2.4%

Electorate The election gave 46.8 million registered electors the opportunity to vote. Despite a small decrease (2.7%) in Scotland from the 2015 UK general election, this was the largest ever electorate for a UK-wide poll. Table 2.1: Electorate, 2010

- 2017 2010 2015 % change 2010-15 2017 % change 2015-17 England 38.3 m 38.7 m 1.1% 39.3 m 1.4% Scotland 3.9 m 4.1 m 6.1% 4.0 m -2.7% Wales 2.3 m 2.3 m 0.7% 2.3 m 0.8% Northern Ireland 1.2 m 1.2 m 5.8% 1.2 m 0.5% UK 45.6 m 46.4 m 1.7% 46.8 m 1.0% Across the UK, an estimated 1.3 million electors (2.7% of the electorate) were added to the electoral register during the weeks leading up to the election. 1 Across Great

Britain, an estimated 2.4 million applications to register were received in the weeks leading up to the election. More than a third (36.9%) of these were recorded as duplicates 2 and an estimated 226,565 individuals applied to register after the registration deadline. Returning Officers reported that approximately 10,500 individuals tried to vote on election day despite not being registered. This data is inconsistently reported and we did not receive a complete data return from all constituencies. 3 Overseas voters Across Great Britain, there were approximately 285,000 registered overseas voters (0.6% of the electorate). This ranged from 0.1% in 20 constituencies to 6.0% in two London constituencies (Dulwich and West Norwood, and Streatham). 4 Table 2.2: Overseas voters Region Overseas voters % of electorate

England 260,987 0.7% South East 56,208 0.9% West Midlands 17,162 0.4% North West 24,916 0.5% East Midlands 18,269 0.5% London 60,386 1.1% Yorkshire & Humber 17,156 0.4% Eastern 28,218 0.6% South West 31,182 0.7% North East 7,490 0.4% Scotland 15,731 0.4% Wales 8,480 0.4% Great Britain 285,198 0.6% Turnout The measure of turnout referred to in this report, 'ballot box turnout', includes all valid votes cast ('valid vote turnout') and votes rejected at the count. Total turnout refers to valid

votes cast, votes rejected at the count, and those rejected at the postal ballot verification stage before the count. Table 3.1 confirms that only a small fraction of votes cast are not allocated to candidates standing for election. This figure has decreased slightly from 2015 and 2010. Table 3.1: Turnout Electorate Valid vote turnout Ballot box turnout Total turnout Difference valid vote - turnout (pp) 2017 UK
 46.8 m 68.8% 69.0% 69.3% 0.5 England 39.3 m 69.1% 69.3% 69.7% 0.5 Scotland 4.0 m 66.7% 66.8% 67.1% 0.4 Wales 2.3 m 68.5% 68.7% 69.0% 0.5 Northern Ireland 1.2 m 65.4% 65.6% 65.7% 0.5 2015 UK 46.4 m 66.2% 66.4% 66.9% 0.7 England 38.7 m 66.0% 66.2% 66.7% 0.7 Scotland 4.1 m 71.0% 71.1% 71.5% 0.5 Wales 2.3 m 65.7% 65.8% 66.3% 0.6 Northern Ireland 1.2 m 58.1% 58.4% 58.5% 0.4 2010 UK 45.6 m 65.1% 65.3% 65.8% 0.7 Ballot box turnout across the UK was 69.0%, which is higher than turnout at the 2015 and 2010 elections. At a constituency level, turnout ranged from 53.5% in Glasgow North East to 79.9% in Twickenham. The largest increase from 2015 was in Foyle, where turnout increased by 12.0%. Table 3.2: Constituencies with lowest and highest turnout Lowest turnout Glasgow North East 53.5% Leeds Central 53.8% Glasgow East 55.0% West Bromwich West 55.2% Manchester Central 55.6% Highest turnout St Albans 79.3% Winchester 79.3% Oxford West and Abingdon 79.5% Richmond Park 79.5% Twickenham 79.9% Rejected ballot papers The proportion of ballots rejected at counts was 0.2%. This compares with 0.3% in 2015. Table 3.3: Rejected ballots at the count, 2015 - 2017 2015 2017 Change (pp)
 England 0.4% 0.2% -0.1 Scotland 0.1% 0.1% 0.0 Wales 0.2% 0.2% 0.0 Northern Ireland 0.7% 0.4% -0.3 UK 0.3% 0.2% -0.1 The highest level of rejected ballots was in Northern Ireland (0.4%) and the lowest in Scotland (0.1%). At a constituency level, 81 constituencies rejected 0.1% of ballots. As was the case in 2015, the highest rejection rate was seen in the seat of the Speaker of the House of Commons, Buckingham, where 3.6% of ballots were rejected. Across the UK, the majority of rejected ballots (71.9%) were rejected due to being unmarked or wholly void for uncertainty. Almost a quarter (24.9%) were rejected due to voting for more than one candidate. Table 3.4: Reasons for rejected ballots, 2017 No official mark Voting more than once Writing or mark by which the voter could be identified Unmarked or wholly void for uncertainty Rejected in part England 0.9% 24.0% 1.8% 72.8% 0.5% Scotland 0.1% 21.7% 1.0% 77.3% 0.0% Wales 0.1% 25.3% 1.9% 72.7% 0.0% Northern Ireland 0.6% 50.0% 4.3% 45.1% 0.0% UK 0.8% 24.9% 1.9% 71.9% 0.4% Postal voting The total number of postal votes issued for the general election was 8.4 million, representing 18.0% of all electors. This compares with 16.4% in 2015 and 15.3% in 2010. At a constituency level, postal voters ranged from 1.0% in Belfast West to 44.3% in Newcastle upon Tyne North. As was the case in 2015, the biggest increase from the previous election was in Scotland, where postal voting increased by 1.8pp from 17.6% to 19.4%. Postal voting remains much less common in Northern Ireland (1.9%) where different rules are in force. Table 4.1: Postal voting 2015 - 2017 2015 2017 Change (pp)
 England 16.7% 18.2% 1.5% Scotland 17.6% 19.4% 1.8% Wales 17.7% 19.4% 1.7% Northern Ireland 1.4% 1.9% 0.5% UK 16.4% 18.0% 1.6% The proportion of postal voters returning their ballot papers always exceeds the turnout among 'in person' voters: this year, 85.1% postal electors used their postal vote compared with 65.9% who turned up to vote in person. Postal votes accounted for 21.6% of all votes included at the count. This compares with 20.5% in 2015 and 18.8% in 2009. Table 4.2: Postal vote vs in-person turnout
 Postal vote turnout In-person turnout 2017 85.1% 65.9% 2015 85.8% 63.2% 2010 83.2% 62.6% Rejected postal ballots Postal voting packs (PV) require voters to provide their signature and date of birth (DOB). These identifiers are then matched against those provided at the time of application. If the signature or date of birth is missing or does not match, the postal vote is rejected and is not included at the

count. Since 2014, Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) have been required to notify electors if their postal vote has been rejected and give the reason(s) for rejection. They can also request the elector to provide an up-to-date signature.

Table 4.3: Rejected postal ballots
Rejected ballots as % of envelopes returned 2017
2.4% 2015 3.3% 2010 3.8% The rate of rejection of postal votes has decreased to 2.4% from 3.3% in 2015 and 3.8% in 2010. This trend was consistent across the UK, ranging from a decrease of 0.9 percentage points in England and Scotland to a decrease of 1.8 percentage points in Northern Ireland. This trend mirrors decreases across local elections in 2017 and suggests that the new policy may be having a positive impact.

Almost half (48.5%) of all rejected ballots are rejected due to mismatched information. In a third of cases (33.2%), postal ballots were rejected because voters returned their postal voting envelopes but failed to include either the ballot paper itself or the verification statement or both. Table 4.4: Reasons for postal vote

Statement rejection	2015	2017	Change (pp)	Missing information	Signature	5.5%	5.4%
-0.1	Date of birth	4.4%	5.0%	0.6	Both	10.7%	7.9%
Signature	25.0%	19.9%	-5.1	Date of birth	20.4%	21.3%	1.0
forms	Ballot paper	10.1%	24.0%	13.9	PV statement	14.9%	9.2%
			-5.7			-1.7	Missing

It is worth noting that these percentages represent very small numbers of postal votes. For example, although 48.5% of rejected postal votes were rejected due to mismatched information, this represents 1.2% of covering envelopes received and 0.3% of all votes cast. The vast majority of postal voters did correctly file their returns. Proxies and waivers A total of 283,928 electors appointed a proxy (0.6% of the electorate). This compares with 0.3% in 2015. The number of emergency proxies issued across Great Britain was 14,096. This is considerably higher than in 2015 wheA concession granted under the terms of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 was that postal electors in Great Britain who either had a disability, or were illiterate, or were unable to furnish a consistent signature could apply for a waiver to use their date of birth as their sole identifier. n 8,901 emergencies were issued. In 2017, 51,452 waivers were granted, representing 0.1% of the electorate. This is consistent with 2015. At a constituency level, the proportion of waivers granted ranged 0.01% in four constituencies in England, to 0.7% in Bassetlaw. Appendices Appendix A There remain inconsistencies in the ways in which local authorities record and report information.

We continue to notice differences in the coding of information by different electoral management software. For example, customers of one electoral management software supplier consistently report a higher proportion of 'mismatching' than others.

Inconsistencies relating to the reasons for and total number of postal vote rejections on the Form K appear to result from the potential for differences in interpretation and treatment. For example, in the treatment of the numbers of covering envelopes and ballot papers returned, covering envelopes may be sent in without the A envelope or postal voting statement enclosed, while the missing document may or may not be sent in a separate covering envelope later, or multiple ballots may be returned in one envelope. When local authorities are contacted about such anomalies they are often unable to provide revised figures or clarify why the data were coded in that way. In practice, we use a calculation of field B6 minus field C18 as a surrogate for the total number of postal votes rejected regardless of whether or not it is the same as recorded in field C19. The different breakdown of reasons for rejection collected on the additional data form does not always match this B6 minus C18 calculation. However, the discrepancies seem less severe and the categories have the advantage of being embedded in software and of having greater 'common sense' meaning. It would seem sensible to consider replacing fields B15-17 on

Form K with three other aggregated categories: rejections for mismatching; rejections for missing identifier information; rejections for absent documentation. As it is, field B15 is largely redundant given that almost all authorities now verify 100% of postal vote returns. There is no field that captures the number of postal voting statements received by the Returning Officer or at a polling station before the close of poll. In practice, we use field B6, 'Number of covering envelopes received by the Returning Officer or at a polling station before the close of poll' as a surrogate but we know that, as mentioned, electors can return multiple postal ballots in one envelope or return envelopes without any ballots. Appendix B Please fill out one Form K for every constituency Form K: STATEMENT AS TO POSTAL BALLOT PAPERS REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE ACTS Parliamentary Election Constituency: Date of Poll: A. Issue of postal ballot papers 1. Total number of postal ballot papers issued under regulation 71 2. Total number of postal ballot papers issued under regulation 77 (spoilt and returned for cancellation), regulation 78 (lost or not received) and regulation 78A (cancelled due to change of address) 3. Total number of postal ballot papers cancelled under regulation 86A (where the first ballot paper was cancelled and retrieved) 4. Total number of postal ballot papers issued (1 to 3) 5. Total number of ballot papers cancelled under regulation 78A B (1). Receipt of and replacement postal ballot papers 6. Number of covering envelopes received by the Returning Officer or at a polling station before the close of poll (excluding any undelivered or returned under regulation 77(1) (spoilt), regulation 78(1) (lost) and regulation 86A (cancelled ballot papers)) 7. Number of covering envelopes received by the returning officer after the close of poll, excluding any returned as undelivered 8. Number of postal ballot papers returned spoilt for cancellation in time for another ballot paper to be issued 9. Number of postal ballot papers identified as lost or not received in time for another ballot paper to be issued 10. Number of ballot papers cancelled and retrieved in time for another ballot paper to be issued 11. Number of postal ballot papers returned as spoilt too late for another ballot paper to be issued 12. Number of covering envelopes returned as undelivered (up to the 25th day after the date of poll) 13. Number of covering envelopes not received by the Returning Officer (by the 25th day after the date of poll) 14. Total numbers 6 to 13 (this should be the same as that in 4 above) B (2). Receipt of postal ballot papers – Personal Identifiers 15. Number of covering envelopes set aside for the verification of personal identifiers on postal voting statements 16. Number of postal voting statements subject to verification procedure rejected as not completed (excluding prior cancellations) 17. Number of postal voting statements rejected following verification procedures due to the personal identifiers on the postal voting statement not matching those in the personal identifiers record (excluding prior cancellations) C. Count of postal ballot papers 18. Number of ballot papers returned by postal voters which were included in the count of ballot papers 19. Number of cases in which a covering envelope or its contents were marked "Rejected" (cancellations under regulations 77, 78, 78A and 86A are not rejections and should be included in items 2, 3, 5, 8, 9 and 10 above) Date: Signed: Returning Officer Authority: Additional data form 1) How many proxies were appointed for these elections? 2) How many emergency proxies were appointed for these elections? 3) How many waivers were granted for these elections? 4) How many postal votes were rejected for: a) Want of a signature b) Want of a date of birth c) Want of both d) Mismatched signature e) Mismatched DoB f) Both mismatched g) Ballot paper unreturned h) Postal voting statement unreturned 5) What was the total number of polling stations used? 6) How many covering envelopes were returned on polling day before 10pm? 7) How many

covering envelopes were returned on the day after polling day before 10pm? 8) Total number of new electors added to the register via the first interim notice of alteration (11.05.17). 9) Total number of new electors added to the register via the second and final notices of alteration. 10) Total number of applications to register received after the registration deadline (22.05.17). 11) Total number of applications received in time to be processed for the first interim notice of alteration (02.05.17) 12) Total number of duplicate applications received in time to be processed for the first interim notice of alteration (02.05.17). 13) Total number of applications received between the last date for applications for the first interim notice of alteration (02.05.17) and last date for applications for the final notice of alteration (22.05.17) 14) Total number of duplicate applications received between the last date for applications for the first notice of alteration (02.05.17) and last date for applications for the final notice of alteration (22.05.17) 15) How many people tried to vote on polling day and were found not to be registered? 1. Data provided for 63.5% of electoral register entries in GB capturing additions between the second and third notices of alteration. NI estimate based on data provided for 3 May – 1 June. ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. Data provided for 62.2% of electoral register entries in GB capturing applications between the second and third notices of alteration. ■ Back to content at footnote 2 3. Data received from 449 constituencies across the UK. ■ Back to content at footnote 3 4. Data received from 612 constituencies across Great Britain. ■ Back to content at footnote 4 Related content Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run Report: Electoral registration at the June 2017 UK general election Read our report about electoral registration at the 2017 general election Report: Political finance regulation at the June 2017 UK general election Read our report about political finance regulation at the 2017 general election Report: Voting in 2017 Read our report about voting at the general election in 2017

The process to challenge a sitting MP: review of the 2019 recall petitions |
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Signing the recall petitions Transparency and secrecy Running the recall petition
Background First published: 10 October 2019 Last updated: 10 October 2019 Summary
There have been two petitions during 2019 to recall the MPs for the constituencies of
Peterborough and Brecon and Radnorshire . Both Petition Officers (POs) delivered all
their duties as required under the Recall Act 2015 and provided a high standard of
service. There were no significant problems which affected people eligible to sign or
wishing to campaign. Only one recall petition had been held before, in 2018 in the
North Antrim constituency . The experiences of these three recall petitions have
provided us with valuable evidence about how the existing petition rules work in
practice, in different parts of the UK types of constituencies political contexts.
There are some areas where applying electoral rules to a process which is not an
election has led to administrative challenges and issues with transparency and
secrecy, and we have made recommendations for changes to the rules and processes for
running future recall petitions. Our recommendations Recommendations for the UK
Government The UK Government should now review the policy and legislation for recall
petitions to identify changes that would improve the experience for electors and the
administration of future petitions. The Government should: Identify the appropriate
length for a reduced petition period of less than six weeks. This should start by
considering whether a four-week period would be sufficient. Review the scope of who
can observe the process in signing places to extend transparency and scrutiny, while
ensuring that secrecy is maintained for people signing the petition. Review the
recall petition regulations for Northern Ireland to ensure there is appropriate
access to inspect the marked register if there are concerns about fraud at future
recall petitions. Consider whether eligible electors should be given the chance to
complete an equivalent to the signing sheet to indicate that they oppose the
petition. Set out more clearly what time signing places should close on the final day
of the petition period and the deadline for receipt of postal signing papers, and
when and how the Speaker should be notified of the petition result. Keep the rules
for donations and spending by campaigners under review as more experience is gained
at future recall petitions, to ensure there is appropriate oversight and regulation
of campaigner spending. Recommendations for Petition Officers and Returning Officers
We also recommend that Petition Officers and Returning Officers should review their
plans for running future recall petitions: Petition Officers for future recall
petitions should ensure they offer some extended opening hours for people to sign the
petition, beyond the minimum hours of 9am to 5pm. Returning Officers should review
their contingency planning to include arrangements for delivering any recall
petitions which could potentially take place in their constituencies, particularly to
identify possible locations for signing places. Signing the recall petitions In both
Peterborough and in Brecon and Radnorshire more than 10% of the people eligible to
sign the recall petition had done so by the end of the six-week signing period. This
meant that the sitting MPs would be recalled and a by-election would be held to fill
the vacant seat in each constituency. Chart 1: Percentage of eligible people who
signed the recall petitions in Brecon and Radnorshire and Peterborough Signing the
recall petitions Length of the signing period Data provided by both Petition Officers
(POs) shows that the majority of people who decided to sign the petitions did so

early in the six-week signing period: In Peterborough 79% of all those who went to a signing place or returned a postal signing sheet (22% of all those eligible to sign) did so within the first two weeks of the signing period In Brecon and Radnorshire 70% of all those who went to a signing place or returned a postal signing sheet (14% of all those eligible to sign) did so within the first two weeks of the signing period

In both constituencies the number of people signing the petition each week began to reduce after the first two weeks of the signing period, and the threshold had been reached. However the full duration of the petition process had to take place before the outcome could be counted and announced. Chart 2: Proportion of eligible people who had signed the petitions during the signing period Postal signing sheets People could also choose to sign the petition by post. Many of the signatures recorded in both constituencies were from people who had completed and returned postal signing sheets to the PO. This included a significant proportion that were returned within the first two weeks of the signing period. Table 1: Number of postal signing sheets issued and returned Peterborough Brecon and Radnorshire Total number of postal signing sheets issued 13,395 (19% of all those eligible to sign the petition) 8,795 (17% of all those eligible to sign the petition) Number of postal signing sheets returned during first two weeks of signing period 6,914 (45% of all signing sheets recorded during first two weeks) 3,288 (46% of all signing sheets recorded during first two weeks) Total number of postal signing sheets returned by the end of the signing period 7,848 (41% of all signing sheets recorded during the signing period) 3,790 (37% of all signing sheets recorded during the signing period) Everyone who had previously applied to vote by post at UK Parliamentary elections in these constituencies was automatically sent a postal signing sheet at the beginning of the signing period. This meant that a significant proportion of people in Peterborough and Brecon and Radnorshire received a postal signing sheet without having to make a new application to express their view by post. By contrast, in Northern Ireland postal voting is only available at elections to people who can provide a reason why they cannot be reasonably expected to go to their polling station. Only 4% of people eligible to sign in North Antrim were sent a postal signing sheet. We have not been made aware of any significant problems with the process for signing by post. Almost everyone in our public opinion survey in Peterborough who said they signed by post felt it was easy to do so, including over two-thirds who said it was very easy. Views on the length of the signing period Some people who were involved in the petitions felt that the signing periods were too long, and could possibly be shortened. Their feedback highlighted concerns that: Providing signing locations and staff for a six-week period was a significant public expense, and managing the petition was an additional burden on local authority resources and capacity. Public interest in the petition reduced significantly over the course of the six-week period. Some staff in signing places reported that they had been quiet during most days of the recall petition. Our research with the public in Peterborough found that more than two thirds (69%) of people felt that there was enough time during the signing period, while one in five (21%) felt the period was too long. People who didn't sign the petition were much less likely to say they felt the period was too long (9%, compared with 30% of those who did sign) and were slightly more likely to say the period was too short. Evidence from the recall petitions in Peterborough and Brecon and Radnorshire suggests that there is scope to reduce the length of the signing period without significantly reducing access for those people who want to sign. We recommend that the UK Government should review the rules for recall petitions to identify the appropriate length for a reduced petition period of less than six weeks. This should

start by considering whether a four-week period would be sufficient. Signing places and opening hours POs can designate up to 10 signing places for a recall petition, which must be open from 9am to 5pm on Monday to Friday, for a total of six weeks. POs can also choose to offer additional, extended opening hours. The decisions taken by the POs in Peterborough and Brecon and Radnorshire on signing places and opening hours are set out in Table 2.

	Peterborough	Brecon and Radnorshire
Number of signing places	10	6
Extended opening hours	Opened at 7am on Tuesdays. Closed 10pm on Thursdays	Opened at 8am on Tuesdays. Closed 8pm on Wednesdays
Number of people signing during extended opening hours	1,410 (7% of the total)	483 (5% of the total)
Views on signing places and opening hours	The POs in both Peterborough and Brecon and Radnorshire said that the length of the signing period made it harder for them to find suitable venues for signing places which were available for the full six-week period. They also only had a relatively short timeframe, 10 working days, to do this. Both found that they were unable to use venues that had been tried and tested as polling stations at elections, because they had already been booked during the signing period. Data from POs about when people signed the petition (shown in Table 2 above) shows that a significant number of people took advantage of the extended opening hours offered by the PO to sign the petitions. We recommend that POs for future recall petitions should ensure they offer some extended opening hours beyond the minimum hours of 9am to 5pm.	The POs in both Peterborough and Brecon and Radnorshire said that the length of the signing period made it harder for them to find suitable venues for signing places which were available for the full six-week period. They also only had a relatively short timeframe, 10 working days, to do this. Both found that they were unable to use venues that had been tried and tested as polling stations at elections, because they had already been booked during the signing period. Data from POs about when people signed the petition (shown in Table 2 above) shows that a significant number of people took advantage of the extended opening hours offered by the PO to sign the petitions. We recommend that POs for future recall petitions should ensure they offer some extended opening hours beyond the minimum hours of 9am to 5pm.
On 10 May 2019 we received a copy of a letter sent to the PO from Glyn Mathias (a former Electoral Commissioner) and Sir Paul Silk (former parliamentary official) who were both eligible to sign the petition in Brecon and Radnorshire. The letter set out their concerns about the administration of the recall petition. These concerns primarily related to the number of signing places that had been allocated, the location of two of the signing places within council office buildings rather than being located in the centre of town, and the opening times of the signing places. We did not find any evidence to substantiate this claim. While the PO in Brecon and Radnorshire met the obligations to provide signing places under the Recall Act 2015, we suggest that for future recall petitions POs should consult with the Electoral Commission about the number of signing places and their suggested locations as part of their planning process. The PO and her staff suggested it would be useful for all Returning Officers as part of their contingency planning process to carry out a review of their arrangements to include planning for potential recall petitions which could take place in their local authority. This would mean they would be able to refer to their contingency planning documents if a recall petition was held. They suggested a useful starting point could be polling station reviews that occur every five years. We recommend that Returning Officers should review their contingency planning to include arrangements for delivering any recall petitions which could potentially take place in their constituencies, particularly to identify possible locations for signing places. If the overall length of the signing period is also reduced, this would also help POs to find suitable available venues to use as signing places for the full duration of the signing period. POs should make sure that there are enough to mean that there is a site close enough to be easily accessible for all electors. Our research in Peterborough asked what people thought about the signing places. Overall, as shown in Chart 3, around two-thirds of all people surveyed indicated they thought it was easy to get to their allocated signing place. A majority of those who said they had signed the petition in person also indicated that the building was appropriate for use as a signing place and that it was accessible.	Chart 3: Views on accessing signing places in Peterborough Transparency and secrecy	
It is important to	Transparency and secrecy	

ensure that people who are entitled to sign a recall petition feel able to express their views freely, while also having confidence that petition processes are well-run and that any allegations of fraud can be investigated. Restrictions on transparency and secrecy are more significant for a recall petition, compared with an election, because it is obvious what position someone signing a petition is taking: they have made an active choice in favour of the proposal to recall the current MP. By contrast, polling station observation or inspection of the marked register after an election shows only that a ballot paper was issued to an individual elector, and does not indicate whether they cast a vote for a particular candidate or party. There are some areas of the petition process, discussed below, that could be clarified for POs, electors and the public more widely to ensure that the appropriate levels of secrecy and transparency are in place. The UK Government should review the law in these areas. The Government could also consider whether all eligible electors should be given the chance to complete an equivalent to the signing sheet to indicate they oppose it. This could reduce the risk of compromising secrecy for individuals, particularly if access to independent observation of the process in signing places were to be extended. Transparency and secrecy Observing the recall petition Unlike at elections, only Electoral Commission representatives can observe all parts of the recall petition signing process during the whole six-week period. For both petitions, Electoral Commission representatives observed the petition process in signing places (including days with extended opening hours), the daily process for verifying the number of signing papers completed that day, and the final count. Individuals who are accredited under the Electoral Commission's electoral observation scheme are only able to attend the final counting of signatures, while accredited organisations are not entitled to observe any stage of the process. No accredited individual observers attended the counts. Limiting observation in this way helps to ensure secrecy for those signing a recall petition, and also prevents others from estimating whether the 10% threshold has been reached before the end of the petition period. However, it does also mean that transparency and scrutiny of the signing process are limited. We recommend that the UK Government should review the scope of who can observe the process in signing places to extend transparency and scrutiny, while ensuring that secrecy is maintained for people signing the petition. Secrecy of the petition and access to the marked register The petition regulations provide some secrecy protections for people signing the petition. POs should take into account the need for privacy when allocating signing places in their constituency. During the petition period it is also an offence to publish a statement that could indicate if an individual has signed the petition or not, or to publish any forecasts about the result of the petition. After the conclusion of a recall petition in Great Britain, a marked copy of the electoral register (showing who had signed the petition) may be made available by the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) for public inspection on request. The ERO is only required to make those documents available in response to a request for inspection if they are satisfied that fraud may have taken place at the petition. These secrecy measures are intended to limit the scope for undue influence and pressure on people to sign or not sign a petition, while maintaining protections against fraud. We are not aware of any complaints about the secrecy of the signing places, intimidation or fraudulent signing during either of the petitions. Our research in Peterborough found: only 6% of people who said that they had signed the petition in person indicated that there was not enough privacy inside the signing places 17% of people who said that they had signed the petition in person indicated that there was not enough privacy around the signing places almost two-thirds of

people agreed that signing with a signature was sufficiently anonymous around half agreed that the process meant that they could sign in secret In Northern Ireland there is no provision in the legislation to allow the marked register to be inspected in cases of suspected fraud, or for the PO to supply it to the police, the Electoral Commission or anyone who requested it. We recommend that the UK Government should review the recall petition regulations for Northern Ireland to ensure there is appropriate access to inspect the marked register if there are well-founded concerns about fraud at future recall petitions. Running the recall petition In both constituencies the petitions were well-run. Most people in Peterborough said they were confident that the petition was well-run (87%), with almost all of those who actually signed the petition saying they were confident (96%). However, both POs faced practical challenges in running the petitions in their constituencies. These were increased, in the areas outlined below, by a lack of clarity in some areas of the legislation, POs having to take on new responsibilities and difficulties in POs having to use electoral management software to run a petition which is not the same as an election. POs were also faced with planning and delivering other electoral events which impacted on resourcing the petitions. Running the recall petition Closing the recall petition and announcing the result Under the Recall Act there is a requirement for the PO, or assigned member of staff, to verify the number of signing papers completed during each day of the petition period. However the Recall Act lacks clarity in relation to the final count and does not set out: what time signing places should close on the last day the deadline for receiving postal signing papers; or timings for the count (except that it should take place “as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of the signing period”). As a result, the POs in Peterborough and Brecon and Radnorshire took different decisions about the deadline for returning postal signing papers and started counting at different times, which were both different from the decision made by the PO in North Antrim. Table 3: Comparison of arrangements for closing the petition and count start times

Peterborough Brecon and Radnorshire North Antrim Signing places closed 5pm on Wednesday 1 May 5pm on Thursday 20 June 5pm on Wednesday 19 September Deadline for returning postal signing papers 5pm on Wednesday 1 May Midnight on Thursday 20 June Midnight on Wednesday 19 September Count started Straight after the signing places closed at 5pm 9am on Friday 21 June 0.01am on Thursday 20 September There is no evidence that these different approaches had an impact on the running of the count, and feedback from our representatives at the counts was that they worked well. However, to ensure a more consistent experience for those wishing to sign at future recall petitions, the legislation should specify what time signing places should close on the final day of the petition period and the deadline for receipt of postal signing papers. Once the signing papers have been counted, the PO must notify the Speaker of the House of Commons of the result before an announcement is made. However there is no provision in law as to how this should happen and in what form the notification should be made. The POs in all three constituencies agreed with the Speaker in advance that they would send an email, and once this was acknowledged they could then publish the result. We recommend that the UK Government should review the recall petition legislation to set out more clearly when and how the Speaker should be notified. Registering campaigners At elections and referendums, the Electoral Commission is responsible for registering political parties and non-party campaigners wishing to spend over a certain amount. At recall petitions, uniquely, the registration of campaigners is undertaken by POs. People or organisations wishing to campaign for or against the recall petition, and intending to spend over £500, must

notify the PO that they want to be a registered campaigner. POs must also receive donation and spending returns from registered campaigners within 30 days of the end of the regulated period of the recall petition. A total of eight people and organisations registered to campaign during the petitions. They submitted donation and spending returns to the POs after the petitions. At time of publication reported donations and spending had not been received for one individual and one trade union in Peterborough. Table 4: Registered campaigners and value of reported donations and spending Peterborough Brecon and Radnorshire Registered campaigners Two political parties, two Trades Unions and one individual Three political parties Spending £6,988.79 £13,365.87 Donations £3,212.11 £10,324.50 These spending returns are made available for public inspection by the PO and copies sent to us, but there is no provision for returns to be scrutinised by a statutory agency. This differs from the Political Parties Elections and Referendums Act (PPERA) rules for elections and referendums, where it is required for the Commission to receive spending returns from political parties and campaigners so we can check that these comply with the law. However, the Recall Act appears to have been based on the Representation of the People Act (RPA) requirements for candidates at UKPGE who are required to send their spending returns to the RO and not directly to us. The lack of statutory scrutiny of donation and spending returns means that there could be significant spending on activity intended to influence electors at future recall petitions that is not fully monitored to check that campaigners have complied with the law. We recommend that the UK Government should keep the rules for donations and spending by campaigners under review as more experience is gained at future recall petitions, to ensure there is appropriate oversight and regulation of campaigner spending. Other challenges to running the recall petitions The use of electoral management software (EMS) is an established part of running electoral events. Using it for a recall petition, which despite having many of the same processes is not an election, was not straightforward for POs and their staff. The EMS systems used by the POs did not provide templates for recall petition paperwork, and were not able to run two events with different timetables in parallel. This was more challenging as both signing periods overlapped with other electoral events – the 2 May local government election in Peterborough and the European Parliamentary election in Brecon and Radnorshire held on 23 May. Although recall petitions may not frequently overlap with other electoral events in future, it would assist POs if EMS providers were able to develop their systems to manage multiple events on different timetables and to produce templates for use in recall petitions. Background Why did the petitions take place? The Recall of MPs Act 2015 introduced a process where a sitting MP can lose their seat in the House of Commons if there is a successful petition to recall them. All those in the relevant constituency who are eligible to vote at a UK Parliamentary election can sign. They can choose to do so in person, by post or by appointing a proxy. Over 10% must do so for the MP to be recalled. The Commission is required to publish a report, following the petition. This process was first used in 2018, when a petition in North Antrim to recall Ian Paisley MP was unsuccessful. We published our report on the North Antrim petition in November 2018. There have been two more recall petitions in 2019. The first was in Peterborough following Fiona Onasanya MP's conviction on 19 December 2018 on charges of perverting the course of justice. On 29 January 2019, Ms Onasanya was sentenced to three months in prison. Her appeal against the conviction was rejected by the Court of Appeal on 5 March, and the Speaker of the House of Commons gave notice to the Returning Officer in Peterborough that a recall petition was to take place. The petition took place between 19 March and 1 May. The second was in

Brecon and Radnorshire. This was a result of Chris Davies MP's conviction on 23 April 2019 of having made a false expenses claim relating to setting up his constituency office after the 2015 UK Parliamentary General Election. On 24 April, the Speaker of the House of Commons notified the Returning Officer in Powys that a recall petition was to take place. The petition took place between 9 May and 20 June. Roles and responsibilities The constituency's Returning Officer, acting in the role of Petition Officer, is responsible for opening and running a recall petition. Their role includes setting the opening date of the petition, which must be no later than 10 days, or as soon as reasonably practical, after the notification from the Speaker of the House of Commons. They must also publish a register of people eligible to sign the petition and notify them that the petition is taking place. A total of 69,673 people in Peterborough and 53,032 in Brecon and Radnorshire were able to sign the petition. People were notified by letter why the petition was taking place, what the outcome would be, how they could sign and information about their allocated signing place. In Peterborough, our public opinion survey found that almost three quarters of people could remember receiving a letter telling them that a recall petition was going to take place. During a recall petition, local police forces have a role investigating any breaches of the rules set out in the Recall Act and to enforce compliance with the law. The Commission provides advice and guidance to help people to understand the rules. We can also seek forfeiture of impermissible donations, if necessary, by court order. Feedback from people in Peterborough Due to its proximity to the May 2019 local elections, we were able to extend our post-election public opinion research to cover the recall petition in Peterborough. This allowed us to increase our understanding of people's awareness and perceptions of the Peterborough recall petition. Research agency BMG conducted 159 telephone interviews between 3 and 23 May 2019, with a sample of people who would be eligible to vote at a UK Parliamentary general election in Peterborough. Quotas were set on age and gender to ensure that the respondents were as representative as possible of the population of the area. Data are weighted to correct any demographic differences between the interviewed sample and known population profile from the census population data. Supporting evidence Peterborough recall petition - topline report Peterborough recall petition - weighted data tables Related content Past elections and referendums Read our reports and view data about past elections and referendums Types of elections about the types of elections in the UK. Report: Voting in 2017 Read our report about voting at the general election in 2017 Testing the EU referendum question Find out about our testing of the EU referendum question

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Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Apologies and introductions Declarations of interest Update on May polls Modernising electoral registration project Confirmation of actions arising from the 24 April 2019 Board Effectiveness review Performance Report Quarter 4 2018/19 Update on Ways of Working Forward plan of Board business 2019/20 Action tracker Chair and Chief Executive's meeting and meetings of note in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland First published: 17 July 2019 Last updated: 12 August 2019 Meeting overview Date: Wednesday 5 June 2019 Time: 9:30am to 12:30pm Location: Boothroyd Room, 3 Bunhill Row, London Date of next scheduled meeting: Wednesday 26 June 2019 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Holmes, Chair Alasdair Morgan Alastair Ross Anna Carragher Elan Closs Stephens Rob Vincent Sarah Chambers Stephen Gilbert Sue Bruce (Videoconference) Bob Posner, Chief Executive Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation Craig Westwood, Director, Communications and Research Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services David Bailey, Head of Strategic Planning and Performance David Meek, Senior Adviser, Governance Mark Williams, Policy Manager, Electoral Policy Jo Crofton-Diggins, Head of ICT and Facilities Amanda Kelly, Legal Counsel Tom Hawthorn, Head of Policy Katy Knock, Policy Manager Phil Thompson, Head of Research Apologies and introductions Joan Walley sent her apologies. The chair welcomed Amanda Kelly to her first meeting. Declarations of interest No new declarations of interest. Minutes of the Commission Board meeting of 13 March, 9 April, and 24 April 2019, and Commissioner Day on 24 April 2019 (EC 26/19, 27/19, 28/19, and 29/19) Resolved: That the minutes of the Commission Board meeting on 13 March, 9 April, and 24 April 2019 be agreed. The record of the Commissioner Day on 24 April was noted. Update on May polls Bob Posner introduced the item and commented that the work arising from an election could last up to two years after polling day in some instances. The chair thanked staff for their efforts throughout the recent polls. This was endorsed by the Board. The Board heard that the local authority elections had run well. However, the late confirmation by government of the European Parliamentary election had been a factor in the delivery of that poll. Despite this, the internal structures we had developed to prepare for unexpected electoral events had worked well to support the delivery of the European Parliamentary election. Lessons learnt from this contingency planning would inform future electoral events. Due to the compressed period prior to the registration deadline, and despite efforts by ourselves and local authorities to publicise the requirements, a number of non-UK European Union citizens resident in the UK were unable to complete their registration on time. Some were turned away from the polling station on election day. It would not be possible to quantify how many people were affected in this way, but we had asked for more information from Electoral Registration Officers and Returning Officers, including about when the registration forms were sent out, and what their response rate was. In addition there were overseas voters who did not receive their ballot in time, which had previously been the case in other recent unscheduled polls. We had previously identified and informed government and parliament of a number of areas where legislative changes were required to improve ease of registering for non-UK European Union citizens resident in the UK and ease of voting for overseas electors. The Board heard of the new ways that information was gathered to support the monitoring of campaigners and political parties during the regulated period. This was a more intelligence-based approach than in the past. It also included the use of online ad libraries. The data

collected through the ad libraries was used to identify sources of advertising spending; in some instances we then contacted those people to determine whether their spending should have been reported to us. However, these libraries did not provide as much assurance as we would like, as their definition of digital political campaigning was not the same as in law. The Board also heard of the approach we took to determine the level of monitoring of political parties. Risk factors that related to each party were considered before a risk rating was assigned based on a range of factors, including the experience of individuals involved in the party and our previous interactions with them. There was also an expectation that we would meet with parties with higher risk profiles while they were compiling their returns. The Board received an update on the registration campaigns run prior to the local elections and the European Parliamentary election. These campaigns significantly exceeded their targets for registration before both polls. The communications team had started to analyse more detailed information on how these campaigns performed, and would publish an evaluation later this year. This information would also inform next year's campaign.

The Board also heard about the "Your vote is yours alone" campaign, through which we provided resources to local authorities to raise awareness of electoral fraud. The Board was told about the second round of voter identification pilots. The pilots ran in ten local authority areas during the local elections. These local authority areas covered a greater range of areas than previous pilots, which allowed for a broader range of evidence. There would be further analysis of data, informing our statutory report on the pilots, and the Board would return to the issue at its next meeting.

The Board asked about the visit to the Brexit Party, and heard that it was normal for us to contact parties close to polls. Bob Posner noted that in other regulatory areas such activity was a normal aspect of life. Political finance regulation was a heightened area of sensitivity, and as we were increasingly regulating in real-time, we sometimes needed to respond to issues during campaigns. The Board heard about the scope of the review of the Brexit Party, and that the visit had resulted in a large number of emails and phone calls. Where appropriate, we had notified the police of the content of a few of these emails and phone calls. Action: For the next meeting's item on the voter identification pilots, include information on other forms of voter fraud (postal, proxy etc), so the Board can understand the proportionality that Voter identification pilots seek to address. Confirm the number of parties that applied for registration before the European Parliamentary election but were not able to be processed in time. Modernising electoral registration project (EC 30/19) Ailsa Irvine introduced the item, and provided an update on different feasibility studies that assessed potential routes to improving the registration system. The Board heard that this work had put us in a strong position to inform and influence public debate on issues relating to electoral registration reform. The Board also heard that we were establishing a contact campaign that would involve a number of meetings with key stakeholders likely to be interested in the information that we had collated in the report. The Board commended the work of the team in producing the report, and discussed the different approaches to ensuring that the paper contributed helpfully to the public debate on changes. A proactive approach was recommended. The Board encouraged staff to be clear about how data collected for this purpose would be used and managed. Resolved: That the paper be noted. Confirmation of actions arising from the 24 April 2019 Board Effectiveness review (EC 31/19) Bob Posner introduced the paper, and sought confirmation of the actions noted in Appendix A of the paper. Rob Vincent recalled that the actions needed to include more systematic appraisal of individual members of the Board. Resolved: That the paper be agreed with the addition

of appraisal of individual members of the Board. Performance Report Quarter 4 2018/19 (EC 32/19) Bob Posner introduced the paper and noted the key areas where future action would be targeted. The Board discussed whether we had done enough to effectively communicate the roles of the organisation. On the rate of staff turnover, it was noted that this was at least partly a function of the number of fixed-term contracts and the nature and size of the organisation. Kieran Rix spoke to the underspend in the last financial year as being well within acceptable public sector accounting expectations, and gave a brief overview of expected spending for the 2019/20 financial year. Resolved: That the paper be noted. Update on Ways of Working (EC 34/19) Ailsa Irvine introduced the item and provided a reminder of the objectives of the project. Jo Crofton-Diggins provided an update on the accommodation negotiations for the London office, and on the required investment in technology. There was discussion on how to use our office space more effectively and more efficiently. Resolved: That the paper be noted. Forward plan of Board business 2019/20 (EC 35/19) Resolved: That the paper be noted. Action tracker (EC 36/19) Resolved: That the paper be noted. Chair and Chief Executive's meeting and meetings of note in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland (EC 37/19) Resolved: That the paper be noted.

Letter: Spending by Britain Stronger in Europe at the 2016 EU referendum | Electoral Commission Search Letter: Spending by Britain Stronger in Europe at the 2016 EU referendum You are in the Key correspondence section Home Key correspondence On this page Letter summary Read our letter in full First published: 15 January 2018 Last updated: 16 July 2019 Summary of the letter Date: 15 January 2018 To: The Rt Hon Priti Patel MP Address: House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA From: Louise Edwards, Head of Regulation Format: Sent by post Full letter Dear Ms Patel Assessment decision: spending by Britain Stronger in Europe at the 2016 EU referendum Further to our letter dated 8 January 2018 we have now completed an assessment into your complaint about Britain Stronger in Europe (BSiE) and other 'remain' campaigners in the 2016 EU referendum. You raised concerns about whether BSiE had failed to report joint spending in its return for that referendum, and whether it had exceeded its spending limit as a result. The relevant offences are set out in sections 118(2) and 122(4) of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 ("PPERA"). Following an assessment, the Commission has determined that it does not have reasonable grounds to suspect BSiE committed these offences. We will not be opening an investigation into this matter.

Scope of the assessment Your letter dated 29 December 2017 raised two complaints. As you are aware from our earlier letter, we did not assess your complaint about campaigners that registered in the final month of the campaign; your letter did not provide evidence that the rules may have been broken in any of these regards. This assessment did look at your complaint that Britain Stronger in Europe may have failed to report joint spending with the Liberal Democrats, the Labour Party and Conservatives IN by way of paying for campaign materials and/or coordinating campaigns via a daily phone call. In particular you were concerned that BSiE and the aforementioned referendum campaigners may have coordinated their campaigns to the extent that the rules on joint spending in schedule 1 paragraph 22 of the European Union Referendum Act 2015 applied.

Further, you alleged that taking those rules into account, BSiE may have exceeded its spending limit and may have submitted a false spending return. The assessment We have conducted an assessment into this matter in accordance with our Enforcement Policy. In doing so, we reviewed the information highlighted by your letter together with other publicly available information, as well as BSiE's spending return and our records from the referendum. We also spoke to senior figures from BSiE. Payments for campaign materials You highlight payments in your letter as follows: 'Britain Stronger in Europe paid for campaign materials worth £52,062.23 for the Liberal Democrats between 15 April 2016 and 8 June 2016 and campaign materials worth £22,829 for Labour on 15 April 2016. In addition, the Labour Party paid for materials worth £7,265.65 for Britain Stronger in Europe on 26 May 2016'. We are aware of these payments from the referendum spending returns of the campaigners concerned. The spending on campaign materials for the Liberal Democrats was incurred as part of a commercial agreement with the Liberal Democrats. This was not joint spending under the rules. In respect of the Labour Party, the £22,829 you refer to is recorded as joint spending by BSiE. We are satisfied that this was correctly reported under the rules. The £7,265.65 you refer to as paid by the Labour Party to BSiE was incurred as part of a commercial agreement between BSiE and the Labour Party. We are satisfied that this was not joint spending.

Coordination between BSiE, Conservatives IN, the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats You refer to extracts from two books published since the referendum that describe daily telephone meetings of certain 'remain' campaigners chaired by BSiE and ground campaigning by the Labour Party. Following examination we are satisfied that while liaison took place there is no evidence of

joint spending as a result. The evidence indicates that the meetings were advisory in nature, focussed on communications and did not involve or result in decisions on referendum spending, or the coordination of campaign activities across campaigners, as part of a common plan or other arrangement. We are also satisfied that any instances of working together resulting in referendum spending between BSiE and other campaigners, including spending associated with the coordination of volunteers by BSiE, has been reported. Assessment outcome We have determined, following our assessment of the available evidence, that we do not have reasonable grounds to suspect that BSiE committed offences pursuant to either section 118(2) or section 122(4) of PPERA in relation to joint spending. We will not be opening an investigation into this matter. While we appreciate that you felt that an investigation was justified, our decision has been taken after careful examination of the evidence. As with any regulatory matter, should new evidence come to light that makes it appropriate for us to look again at this matter, we would do so. The Commission recognises the ongoing public interest in the campaign finances of the EU referendum. Since that referendum the Commission has published the conclusions of investigations into campaigners for both the 'leave' and 'remain' outcomes. More investigations are ongoing, and their conclusions will be published in due course. The Commission will continue to investigate where evidence causes us to suspect the campaign finance rules were broken. Related content Letter: Coronavirus and its impact on the May polls Read our letter to Chloe Smith MP (Minister for the Constitution and Devolution) from March 2020 Letter: To Google about digital campaigning at the EU referendum Read our letter to Google from November 2017 Letter: To Twitter about digital campaigning at the EU referendum Read our letter to Twitter from November 2017 Letter: To Facebook about digital campaigning at the EU referendum Read our letter to Facebook from November 2017

8. Underpinning this work | Electoral Commission Search 8.

Underpinning this work You are in the Corporate plan 2022/23 to 2026/27 section Home Our plans and priorities Corporate plan 2022/23 to 2026/27 On this page We demonstrate independence and integrity We are a skilled organisation where diversity is valued We are a learning organisation where improvement is continuous and resources are used efficiently First published: 25 April 2022 Last updated: 25 April 2022 Summary The preceding sections of this Corporate Plan summarise the work we will undertake to achieve our five strategic objectives. We will ensure we are equipped as an organisation to meet these objectives, focussing on the key enabling activities summarised below.

1. We demonstrate independence and integrity The electoral system depends on the Electoral Commission being an independent non-partisan body, and we therefore hold ourselves to high standards of integrity. We work hard to ensure we are respected for our expertise, and that our advice and decision making are free from bias. Given our unique role, our integrity needs to be clear and demonstrable. We will continue to demonstrate our integrity by: taking decisions on the evidence and being transparent about the reasons for them basing our policy positions and recommendations on analysis of evidence effectively communicating our work and views providing responsive services to those we support maintaining effective governance arrangements Taking decisions on the evidence and being transparent about the reasons for them In making decisions, of a regulatory nature or otherwise, we will proceed based on the law, evidence, fairness and proportionality, and in accordance with sound governance processes. Our published policies, such as our Corporate Governance Framework and Enforcement Policy, provide a clear understanding of how we operate and make decisions. Wherever and to the extent it is appropriate for us to provide reasons for decisions we will do so, including in accordance with freedom of information and data protection law. To that end we will continue to publish the outcome of every investigation, and highlight instances where learning from investigations could assist other campaigners in understanding and applying the law. We are accountable to the Courts for our decisions and the reasons for them, as well as being accountable to parliaments. Basing our policy positions and recommendations on analysis of evidence Our recommendations must be evidence-based and underpinned by research if they are to be trusted, adopted and taken forward. We will continue to conduct research to understand how elections and referendums have been run and experienced. We will continue to develop our evidence base on all issues that impact the electoral system – from voters' perceptions of the legitimacy of elections, to challenges faced by electoral administrators. We will embed the horizon-scanning approach that underpins our policy development work, and will continue to identify challenges and recommend solutions. Effectively communicating our work and views We want to ensure our work and our considered views have impact. We will therefore use plain and avoid jargon to aid understanding, and will communicate clearly to all audiences. We will continue to make our services and the information we provide accessible. Providing responsive services to those we support We support our stakeholders – including voters, campaigners, and electoral administrators – with accessible information and guidance on all aspects of the electoral system. They come to us for advice and support, and expect a responsive service that meets their needs. We will continue to consult our stakeholders to understand their expectations of our services, and will make improvements based on their needs. We will maintain high standards of customer service. Maintaining effective governance arrangements We outline our governance arrangements in Section 12 of this Corporate Plan. 2. We are a skilled organisation where diversity is valued We want our workforce to feel valued

and be supported to achieve their potential. In the next five years we will: implement refreshed working practices to reflect wider changes in our work environment and culture attract, retain and develop the people we need maintain and improve high standards of leadership and management, with a focus on developing our people further embed equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of our work Implement refreshed working practices to reflect wider changes in our work environment and culture The coronavirus pandemic has impacted our working practices and resulted in new behaviours and approaches. We will learn from this to ensure that we retain the benefits, embedding more flexible working in ways that benefit our people, the Commission as a whole and our stakeholders. We will ensure our culture and behaviours reflect these values. We will also strengthen our approach to internal communications, working hard to keep our people connected, informed and motivated. We provide more information about how we will utilise technology to support new working practices below. Attract, retain and develop the people we need Our people are the core of our organisation. We will enable them to be skilled, with the diverse expertise needed to deliver our work. We will ensure they are capable, with a focus on being effective in everything they do, and committed, with a passion for democracy and our role in supporting it. We don't take these qualities for granted, and we will continue to implement our People Strategy to ensure we continue to attract, retain and develop the best team possible. Maintain and improve high standards of leadership and management, with a focus on developing our people Learning is a key part of our people's day to day work, and we are committed to supporting their development. We will continue to achieve high standards of leadership, management and people development, consulting our people to ensure we support their specific needs. Further embed equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of our work We value diversity, and aim to be an open and inclusive organisation. We celebrate the breadth of thinking, skills and experience that our people bring to our organisation. And, we are committed to being an inclusive regulator, with strategies and processes that reflect the diversity of those we serve. We will deliver a renewed equality, diversity and inclusion strategy. We will implement the Business in the Community Race at Work Charter. And, we will work to increase and support diversity at senior levels, including representation on our Commission Board. 3. We are a learning organisation where improvement is continuous and resources are used efficiently The world around us is changing rapidly. We need to adapt fast to be successful. In order to do this we aim to be rigorous in learning from experience and seek continuous improvement in all that we do. With pressures on public spending set to continue, it is crucial that we continue to manage our costs and make effective use of our technology, funding, time and resources. In the next five years we will: procure and implement value for money IT systems that improve service delivery maintain our financial strategy to keep the Commission within approved budgets continue to develop techniques to learn from experience, seek continuous improvement and become more efficient and effective develop a corporate environmental strategy that meets policy and legislative requirements for reduced environmental impact We will do this through effective leadership and management within a five-year financial plan that is aimed at costs of no more after inflation in 2026/27 than it does in 2021/22. Procure and implement value for money IT systems that improve service delivery Technology and data are crucial to our work. Our website and Political Finance Online database allow us to publish vital information which is in the public interest, bringing transparency to our democracy. Our internal systems are key to ensuring the quality of our work, and enable us to effectively manage risk. We will continue our programme

to procure and implement new IT systems. We will ensure our infrastructure is up to date and fit for purpose. We will launch our new Political Finance Online database to make it easier and faster for parties and campaigners to submit financial data. We will also implement a new customer relationship management tool. Maintain our financial strategy to keep the Commission within approved budgets We detail our financial strategy in Section 8. With pressures on public spending and a need to ensure value for money, our spend on core services will be no higher in real terms at the end of the Corporate Plan period than it is at the beginning. We will work to increase the value we deliver for parliaments. Continue to develop techniques to learn from experience, seek continuous improvement and become more efficient and effective Technology enables us to run an efficient workplace, but our processes are also key to ensuring the quality of our work. We will embed quality management processes across all our services and functions. We want to improve the way we make decisions, and will also make better use of our knowledge. We will develop and implement a new knowledge management framework. We want to meet the needs of voters, parties and campaigners, electoral administrators and parliaments, and will undertake research to understand their expectations of our services. Develop a corporate environmental strategy that meets policy and legislative requirements We outline our plans to reduce the environmental impact of the electoral system in sections 2 and 5 of this Corporate Plan. We are also committed to reducing the environmental impact of our organisation. We will enhance our expertise, ensuring we have the environmental skills we need. We will carry out an environmental audit. We will develop and implement an action plan to achieve our environmental targets in line with legislation. This will include reducing waste and increasing recycling where possible. Navigation 7. A modern and sustainable electoral system Section 7 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan 9. Managing our costs Section 9 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan

Reforming electoral law A modern electoral register Transparent digital campaigning of elections introduction Historically, the UK has robust and effective electoral rules. But many of the laws that set out how our elections are run have not been properly updated since the nineteenth century. Many of them are large, complex, and no longer fit for purpose. This needs to change. We've identified four areas where things can be improved. We are working with the UK's governments, parliaments, and other important groups to make this happen. Improvements We want: an electoral registration system fit for today everyone to be able to vote with confidence, regardless of their access needs electoral law that is easier for everyone to follow everyone to be able to see who is spending money to campaign and influence voters at elections and referendums, regardless of the channels Related content Elections Act about the UK Government's Elections Act and what it means for voting and campaigning Modernising elections research This qualitative research looks at public attitudes to voting and the information available around elections.

You are in the May 2018 voter identification pilot schemes section Home Our research Voter identification pilots May 2018 voter identification pilot schemes First published: 24 July 2019 Last updated: 24 July 2019 Impact on public confidence There is some evidence to suggest that requiring voters to show identification had a positive impact on public confidence in the May 2018 elections: People in areas where the pilot schemes took place were less likely to think that electoral fraud took place at the May polls than those in other areas where elections were also held in May 2018 Across the pilot areas as a whole people were more likely to say they thought electoral fraud was not a problem than they were in January 2018 People who voted in polling stations in the pilot scheme areas, and therefore experienced the process of showing identification, were more confident in the security of the voting system than non-voters in those areas Intro However, this picture is not consistent within the individual pilot areas and there is evidence that wider local circumstances also have an impact. Overall findings from the pilot schemes Perceptions of electoral fraud People in the pilot scheme areas were significantly less likely than those in other areas with elections in May 2018 to say that fraud took place at the elections. Our research also showed that in the pilot scheme areas there was a notable increase in the proportion of respondents saying that electoral fraud was not a problem between January and May 2018 (24% compared with 42%). At the same time, fewer people saw it as a serious problem (19% compared with 9%). This significant change in views between before and after polling day was not seen in other areas with elections in May 2018. In these areas the number of people who thought that electoral fraud was not a problem remained broadly consistent between January and May (37% compared with 33%). This was also the case for people who thought that electoral fraud was a problem (24% compared with 29%). The extent to which people's views about electoral fraud changed between before and after polling day also varied by individual pilot areas. People in Bromley and Watford were significantly more likely to say that electoral fraud was not a problem after polling day than before (increasing from 21% to 57% in Bromley and 34% to 57% in Watford). In the other three areas there was only a small increase in the proportion who said electoral fraud was not a problem. There is some evidence to suggest that local circumstances may affect the changes we can see in these surveys. For example, in our January survey, out of the five pilot scheme areas, people living in Woking were much more likely to say that they thought that electoral fraud was a problem than in the other areas. This could reflect relatively recent high profile cases of electoral fraud in Woking. Perceptions of voting in polling stations being safe from fraud and abuse The proportion of people in the pilot scheme areas saying that voting in polling stations was safe from fraud and abuse did not change significantly between January and May 2018 (90% and 86%).¹¹ Across the pilot areas as a whole, the strength of confidence did increase between January and May: the proportion of people saying it was very safe increased from 43% to 57%. There was no evidence of a similar change in the other areas with elections in May 2018, which suggests some effect from the pilots. However, it is worth noting that we did not find this increase in Watford either, where the proportion saying that voting in a polling station is very safe from fraud and abuse fell between January and May 2018. Our survey results also show that people who voted in the pilot areas, and therefore experienced showing their identification, were more likely to say voting in a polling station was very safe from fraud and abuse than those who didn't vote (64% compared with 43%). Overall impact of an identification requirement There is inconsistent evidence from the May

2018 pilot schemes about whether a requirement to show identification at polling stations in Great Britain would improve confidence in the security of the voting system overall. There were some significant differences between the pilot scheme areas. A majority of people in Bromley (63%) and Gosport (57%) said that an identification requirement would make them more confident in the security of the voting system. In the other three areas a majority of people said it would make no difference, although around a third of people did say it would make them more confident. The experience of showing identification may have had a positive effect on levels of public confidence. People who voted in polling stations in pilot areas were more likely than those who didn't vote to say that the requirement to show identification would make them more confident in the security of the voting system (52% compared with 37%). Forty seven per cent of people in the pilot scheme areas thought that a requirement to show identification would make them feel more confident in the security of the voting system, and 62% thought this in the other areas where there were elections in May 2018. Beyond the pilots: the impact on public confidence at future elections The evidence from the pilot schemes suggests that showing identification in polling stations may have had some positive impact on the level of public confidence in the security of the system. Overall, however, the evidence is mixed as the impact was not consistent across all of the pilot areas. It is worth noting again the impact of the relatively low levels of engagement with local elections. As set out above, voters who engaged with the election were more likely to be more confident than non-voters and it may be that any potential impact on confidence from an identification requirement is limited when turnout at polling stations is low. Further work, including in future pilot schemes, would be needed to help the Government and Returning Officers better understand any connection between a voter identification requirement and public confidence in the election. Related content Register to vote All you need to register to vote is 5 minutes and your National Insurance number. Our Commissioners Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run

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Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Who was at the meeting Apologies and welcomes Declarations of interest Minutes of the previous Board Meeting (EC 80/20) Minutes of electronic business (EC 81/20) Commission Board action tracker (EC 82/20) Forward plan of Board business (EC 83/20) The challenges, risks, and issues around frontline delivery (EC 84/20) Corporate planning 2021/2026 (EC 85/20) Chief Executive's update (EC 86/20) First published: 14 October 2021 Last updated: 14 October 2021 Meeting summary Date: Wednesday 21 October 2020 Time: 9.30am to 1pm Location: By video conference Date of next scheduled meeting: Wednesday 2 December 2020 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Holmes, Chair Sue Bruce Anna Carragher Sarah Chambers Elan Closs Stephens Stephen Gilbert Alasdair Morgan Rob Vincent Joan Walley In attendance: Bob Posner, Chief Executive Craig Westwood, Director, Communications, Policy and Research Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services Rupert Grist, Interim General Counsel David Bailey, Head of Strategic Planning and Performance Carol Sweetenham, Head of Projects Mike Cheetham, RSM (Internal auditors) (Item 8) Anna Simmonds, RSM (Internal auditors) (Item 8) Bola Raji, Senior Advisor, Planning and Performance (Item 8) Isabella Coventry, Senior Advisor, Risk and Benefits (Item 8) Zena Khan, Interim Board Secretary Melanie Davidson, Head of Support and Improvement (Items 1-7) Philippa Saray, Regional Manager Eastern and South East England (Items 1-7) Heather Bush, Regional Manager, Eastern and South East England (Items 1-7) Adrian Green, Regional Manager, South West and London (Item 7) Kathryn Dunn, Regional Liaison Officer (North West), (Items 1-7) Amy Symons, Improvement Manager, Support and Improvement (Item 7) Stephen Baker, East Suffolk Council (Item 7) Graham Farrant, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council (Item 7) Paul Redfern, Independent Advisor to Audit Committee (Items 1 to 9) Matt Pitcher, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council (Item 7) Apologies and welcomes There were no apologies. The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and thanked Amanda Kelly in her absence for work done over the past year as she hands over to Rupert Grist, Senior Lawyer, who will be acting General Counsel pending the arrival of Binnie Goh, the new General Counsel in the New Year. The Chair advised that Alastair Morgan was attending the meeting as an observer until such time as his re-appointment as a Commissioner by Royal Warrant was received. Declarations of interest There were no new declarations of interest. Minutes of the previous Board Meeting (EC 80/20) Resolved: That the minutes of the Commission Board meeting on 23 September 2020 be approved. Minutes of electronic business (EC 81/20) Resolved: That the Commission Board minutes of items of electronic business from 16 September 2020 be approved. Commission Board action tracker (EC 82/20) The Board requested an update on the Commission's response to the Committee on Standards in Public at the next meeting. Action: That an oral update on the Commission response to the Committee on Standards in Public Life be provided at the December meeting. Resolved: That the Commission Board action tracker be noted. Forward plan of Board business (EC 83/20) The Board discussed the forward plan and noted the Audit Committee change of date from October to November. Commissioners requested an update on the election process for the Scottish and Welsh Parliament elections with particular focus on planning in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Action: An update on the election process for the Scottish and Welsh Parliament elections be included as part of the May 2021 election update items on the January and February meeting agendas. Resolved: That the forward

plan was reviewed. The challenges, risks, and issues around frontline delivery (EC 84/20) The Chief Executives of two local authorities joined the meeting to provide an update on the challenges facing local government and the impact of these on how electoral services can be delivered effectively and efficiently. The Board heard of the importance of the successful delivery of elections, and considered the particular challenges and opportunities of delivering the elections in May 2021 against the backdrop of the coronavirus pandemic, including a likely rise in postal voting, and possible staffing difficulties. Both Chief Executives also stressed the need to make progress on modernising electoral processes to reflect the digital age, if younger voters were not to be alienated, and the rapidly changing local authority landscape as authorities were merged and reorganised. Financial pressures were meanwhile increasing. There was a case for greater collaboration between authorities, for example in dealing with suppliers. The Board heard that the local authorities appreciated the support they received from the Commission and in particular its regional teams. They paid tribute to the electoral community who continued to deliver largely well-run elections despite the financial pressures. The Board noted the emphasis on the importance of modernising the electoral process and keeping it aligned with public expectations and the needs of voters, while still respecting the need for security and public confidence. After the local authority representatives had left the meeting the Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance, provided a progress update to the Board on work being carried out by the Commission to research voter attitudes in relation to modernisation of the electoral process, and on work to develop and implement a strategy to help increase local authority resilience and capacity, with an emphasis on the consideration to be given to sub-national electoral coordination structures in England. The Board discussed the possibility of involving Commissioners in this. Action: A more regular opportunity to hear directly from local authorities to be built into the forward plan. Action: An update at each Board meeting on the state of preparations for the May 2021 elections to be added to the forward plan. Resolved: That the points made in discussion be noted, and that Stephen Baker and Graham Farrant be thanked for their contribution to the discussion.

Corporate planning 2021/2026 (EC 85/20) The Board received an update on progress with the development of the Corporate Plan for 2021/2026. They discussed the need to balance ambition and realism in recognition of the current operating context and to put voters at the centre of the plan. The Board considered whether the plan was currently too internally focused and whether external stakeholders had been sufficiently engaged on the development. The Board considered the issue of the timing of the plan and the appointment of the new Commission Chair, as well as the reports expected from the CSPL and PACAC It was noted that we have a current five year corporate plan in place and the Board considered whether it would be preferable to take forward a one year Budget Estimate and supporting narrative for 2021/22 to allow the new corporate plan to be developed in discussion with the new Chair. It was agreed that whilst work on the new corporate plan should be continued, the Speaker's Committee and the devolved administrations should be approached to establish whether they would agree to a delay to allow discussions with the new Chair. A one year Budget Estimate and supporting narrative could then be produced for 2021/22. Action: Work to continue on the Corporate Plan 2021/2026 with a view to agreeing it with an incoming Chair, and that a one-year Budget Estimate and supporting narrative should be produced for 2021/22. Confirmation of this approach to be established with the Speaker's Committee and the devolved administrations. Resolved: That the work so far on the Corporate Plan 2021/2026 had the right elements in it, but more work was

needed, for example to ensure the context of the post-COVID world was fully reflected, as well as the relationship between our work and that of other players such as the ICO. Resolved: That the Audit Committee further consider the risk appetites associated with the draft Corporate Plan 2021/2026. Chief Executive's update (EC 86/20) The Board discussed the update and particularly noted the ongoing implications on Commission work and staff of the coronavirus pandemic. The Board noted the preparations for May 2021 elections and the regular review of contingency plans. Resolved: That the update be noted.

Requirement to show ID at polling stations | Electoral Commission Search
Requirement to show ID at polling stations You are in the Elections Act section
Home Elections Act On this page Changes Our role First published: 5 July 2021 Last updated: 2 February 2023 Summary The UK Government has introduced a new requirement that voters will have to show an accepted form of photo ID to vote in a polling station. This requirement applied for the first time at the local elections taking place in 230 areas of England in May 2023. about voter ID, including the accepted forms of ID and how to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate. Changes From 4 May 2023, voters in England needed to show photo ID to vote at polling stations in some elections. This applied to: Local elections and by-elections Police and Crime Commissioner elections UK parliamentary by-elections Recall petitions From October 2023 it will also apply to UK General elections. Voters in Wales will need to show ID at Police and Crime Commissioner elections and at recall petitions. They will not need to show photo ID to vote at a polling station at Senedd elections or local council elections. Voters in Scotland will not need to show photo ID at Scottish Parliament elections or at council elections. If voters don't have accepted photo ID, they can apply for a free voter ID document, which is known as a Voter Authority Certificate. Our role Support to voters As part of our duty to inform voters about democracy and elections, we are responsible for making sure that voters know they need to bring an accepted photo ID to vote. We launched a new public awareness campaign in January 2023. The campaign explains that voters will need to show an accepted form of photo ID in polling stations, and the types of photo ID they can use. It also explains how and when voters can apply for the free Voter Authority Certificate, if they do not have an accepted form of ID. We're working closely with civil society organisations to produce tailored resources for voters who we know are less likely to have the ID they need to vote. Support to local authorities We will provide updated guidance and resources to support electoral administrators to deliver the new voter ID requirement. The guidance will include how to manage and process applications for the Voter Authority Certificate, and procedures for polling station staff to follow. We are also supporting local authority communications teams by providing a range of resources, such as template press releases and social media content, to help them to raise awareness of voter ID with their residents. Political parties We will use a variety of channels to ensure that political parties and campaigners are aware of the new voter ID requirement, and how voters can apply for the free Voter Authority Certificate. This will include updates to the code of conduct for campaigners. Reporting on 4 May local elections in England We've published our initial research on the implementation of the voter ID policy at local elections in England in May 2023. The research pulls together initial data from polling stations and the results of large-scale public opinion research. We are running more research and will publish a full, more in-depth report in September 2023. Related content Elections Act about the UK Government's Elections Act and what it means for voting and campaigning About the Elections Act about the Elections Bill, including the measures it contains and which elections it applies to. Changes to postal voting The UK Government has proposed a number of changes to postal voting. . Changes to proxy voting about the proposed changes to voting by proxy, where someone you trust votes on your behalf.

Modernising electoral registration: feasibility studies Overview We want to see big changes to the electoral registration system in the UK. Summary The launch of the government's online registration service was a big leap forward. It's helped those less likely to be registered, like young people and British citizens overseas. But people's expectations in a digital age are constantly evolving, and voter registration needs to keep up. We're calling on the UK government to build on this success and make electoral registration even simpler and more accessible to voters.

Changes we want to see We want to see: better use of public data, like from other government services, to make registration easier for voters electoral registration being encouraged all year round, not just in the run up to an election a more joined-up electoral registration system to reduce duplicate registrations and encourage registration all year round Changes like these will:

create opportunities for electoral registration to be automated, or integrated with other public services help electoral registration officers identify and potentially register eligible citizens, while keeping the electoral register up to date reduce the overall costs of the electoral registration system by making it more efficient improve accessibility by providing more ways to register to vote What's happening now We've been exploring a number of options, like the use of public data, automated and automatic registration, and ways to detect and manage duplicate applications. Creating a more efficient system is possible. Read our report Related content Modernising electoral registration: feasibility studies Read our studies about how electoral registration can be modernised in practice Reforming electoral law Find out about electoral law and the changes we want to see Transparent digital campaigning Find out about digital campaigning and the changes we want to see of elections Find out about the accessibility of elections and the changes we want to see

9. Managing our costs in Wales | Electoral Commission Search

You are in the Corporate Plan for Wales 2022/23 to 2026/27 section Home Our plans and priorities Corporate Plan for Wales 2022/23 to 2026/27 On this page Budgets 2022/23 – 2026/27 Funding Draft devolved funding shares 2022/23 – 2026/27 Focus on accountability and funding First published: 25 April 2022 Last updated: 25 April 2022 Summary Our budget varies from year to year depending on the cycle of elections. Our event budget reflects the costs associated with each year's elections. This varies significantly year-to-year owing to the cycle of elections, and will change if unscheduled polls are added which need to be delivered effectively. This is presented as a separate budget line to allow for more effective control and scrutiny of our core budget. Spending on core budgets includes our work supporting voters, electoral administrators, parties and campaigners outside of the cycle of elections, as well as our corporate overheads. Our core budget will be no larger at the end of the period, after inflation, than it was at the beginning (using HM Treasury's preferred measure for public spending and inflation assumptions where available). While we would always seek to manage our costs within these budgets, increases to the rate of inflation or changes to our work programme to reflect changes outside our control represent the main risks to our spending plans. Budgets 2022/23 – 2026/27 £ millions 2022/23 2023/24 2024/25 2025/26 2026/27 Core expenditure 14.04 14.06 14.51 15.10 15.22 Event 6.08 4.21 5.52 6.64 4.94 The Elections Bill 5.05 3.23 2.77 2.41 2.53 Operational Spending 25.17 21.50 22.80 24.15 22.69 Policy Development Grants 2.00 2.00 2.00 2.00 Depreciation 1.33 1.46 1.46 1.46 1.45 Provisions 0.05 0.05 0.05 0.05 Total Spending plans 28.55 25.01 26.31 27.66 26.19 Capital provisions 0.10 0.10 0.14 0.10 0.10 Capital budget 1.42 0.49 1.63 0.53 0.53 Our capital budgets reflect planned and forecast needs to invest in capitalised IT hardware and software. The levels of capital spending in 2024/25 and 2026/27 represent new or renewed leases for offices in Cardiff and Edinburgh. We remain committed to having continued presence in all parts of the UK, and as we take advantage of increasingly flexible ways of working we will keep our office needs under continuous review. Funding We are jointly funded by the Senedd, the UK Parliament, and the Scottish Parliament. The box below explains more about how that works. Draft devolved funding shares 2022/23 – 2026/27 2022/23 2023/24 2024/25 2025/26 2026/27 Budget on finding basis (£m) 22.96 21.80 23.18 24.37 22.93 Senedd £m 1.42 1.25 1.25 1.65 1.79 % 6.18% 5.74% 5.39% 6.75% 7.80% UK Parliament £m 19.70 19.03 20.35 20.25 18.33 % 85.81% 87.27% 87.78% 83.12% 79.96% Scottish Parliament £m 1.84 1.52 1.58 2.47 2.81 % 8.01% 6.98% 6.83% 10.13% 12.24% Focus on accountability and funding Focus on accountability and funding As part of the devolution of powers relating to elections, the Wales Act 2017 made provision for the Commission to become accountable to the Senedd. The Scotland Act 2016 also makes the Commission accountable to the Scottish Parliament, and we remain accountable to the UK Parliament. The direct costs of delivering our functions for each parliament are funded by that parliament, with overheads (including depreciation but not capital budgets or provisions) shared according to population. Cost shares can vary due to changes in work programme or electoral cycle. In Wales, as a result of the Senedd and Elections (Wales) Act 2020, the Llywydd's Committee oversees our funding and corporate accountability. In Scotland, this role is undertaken by the Scottish Parliament Corporate Body, and in the UK Parliament by the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission. Scrutiny and accountability on specific aspects of our work is generally undertaken by specific policy committees, such as the Senedd's Local Government and Housing Committee. Each year in the autumn we submit an estimate of

income and expenditure to the committees, accompanied by our plans for the coming year (or five years when we submit a Corporate Plan). The committees then consider these according to the timetables in each parliament. The plans, budgets and other information that we submit to the committees are as required by each committee. We will continue to work with the committees, the parliamentary officials and other relevant partners to ensure effective accountability. Navigation 8. Underpinning this work in Wales Section 8 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan for Wales 10. Measuring our performance in Wales Section 10 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan for Wales

Our corporate governance framework | Electoral Commission Search

Our corporate governance framework You are in the How we make decisions section

Home How we make decisions On this page Part 1: Vision, approach, principles and accountability Part 2: The Commission Board and Committees Part 3: Roles, responsibilities and code of conduct for Commissioners Part 4: Commission's business and delegated powers Annexes First published: 11 October 2019 Last updated: 18 June 2023 Part 1: Vision, approach, principles and accountability The Commission The Commission (in Welsh, Comisiwn Etholiadol) is an independent body corporate, established by the United Kingdom Parliament under the provisions of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (the Act), amended by subsequent legislation. The Commission 1 has the statutory functions given to it by that and other legislation (a summary of applicable legislation is at Appendix B of this document). The Commission is accountable to the UK Parliament, and specifically to the Speaker's Committee of the House of Commons which is appointed in accordance with the provisions of the Act. The role of the Speaker's Committee and its relationship with the Commission is described in Annex B. The Commission is also directly accountable to the Scottish Parliament and the Senedd in relation to the exercise of its devolved Scottish and Welsh functions. The Commission's duties as defined in statute can be found in Part 4, which also describes which powers are delegated from the Board to sub-committees of the Board or to the Chief Executive. The following is a summary of the Commission's main activities:

- register political parties and other campaigners at elections and referendums
- make sure people understand and follow the rules on party and election finance
- take enforcement action where appropriate so that parties and campaigners know they need to comply with the rules and voters can be confident they are complying
- publish details of where parties and candidates and other campaigners get money from and how they spend it
- support the delivery of well-run electoral events
- provide timely and accurate guidance and advice to Returning Officers (ROs) and Electoral Registration Officers (EROs)
- set performance standards frameworks and support ROs and EROs to deliver well- run elections
- deliver public awareness campaigns and facilitate others' support for those campaigns, so that people register to vote and are able to take part in elections and referendums
- run any referendums held in accordance with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000

Vision Our vision is to be a world-class public sector organisation – innovative, delivering great value and getting right what matters most to voters and legislators. We plan to achieve this vision through a five-year work programme with four goals:

- Our goals are: to enable the continued delivery of free and fair elections and referendums, focusing on the needs of electors and addressing the changing environment to ensure every vote remains secure and accessible to ensure an increasingly trusted and transparent system of regulation in political finance, overseeing compliance, promoting understanding amongst those regulated and proactively pursuing breaches to be an independent and respected centre of expertise, using our knowledge and insight to further the transparency, fairness and efficiency of our democratic system and help adapt it to the modern, digital age to provide value for money, making best use of our resources and expertise to deliver services that are attuned to what matters most to voters. This goal underpins and supports all of our work
- Our values Our governance procedures aim at all times to reflect our values – making an impact, engaged, authoritative, independent, and transparent.
- Governance In its governance, the Commission will at all times: observe the highest standards of propriety involving impartiality, integrity and objectivity in relation to the stewardship of public funds, the management of Commission business and the

conduct of its business, maintaining at all times the Commission's independence pursue the Commission's vision for free elections that support a healthy democracy maximise value for money through ensuring that its work is performed in the most economical, efficient and effective way, within available resources be accountable to Parliament for the activities of the Commission and the extent to which performance targets and objectives have been met reflect the Commission's wider commitments to carry out its work and the use of money and resources made available to it in the interests of voters be consultative in style, and transparent and responsive to all stakeholders ensure that there is in place an effective system of internal control to enable the Commission to meet its corporate objectives act lawfully, consistent with the Commission's statutory duties and responsibilities The Board will review its governance arrangements annually to ensure that they remain fit for purpose, support delivery of the Commission's vision, and reflect the Commission's values and principles. Accountability The Commission demonstrates its accountability to its stakeholders by: as required, submitting to the Speaker's Committee, the Scottish Parliament Corporate Body (SPCB), and the Senedd's Llywydd's Committee, a five-year plan and estimated requirements for relevant resources during that five-year period, both of which are published externally annually submitting to the Speaker's Committee, the SPCB, and the Llywydd's Committee, an annual plan and estimated requirements for relevant resources during that period laying its Report and Accounts annually before the UK Parliament, the Scottish Parliament, and the Senedd the appointment of the Chief Executive as Accounting Officer audit of its accounts, and of the efficiency and effectiveness with which it uses resources, by the National Audit Office consultation on new areas and programmes of work a clear complaints process covering services provided by us to our stakeholders Part 2: The Commission Board and Committees The Commission Board Together the Commissioners constitute the Board of the Commission and ensure that the Commission discharges its functions as set out in the Act and other associated legislation. They set the strategic direction, monitor the Commission's performance and are responsible for ensuring that it acts within its statutory remits. The Chair and Commissioners are appointed by His Majesty the King on the recommendation of the House of Commons. They may be reappointed for a further period after expiry of their initial term, Commissioners are appointed for a period not exceeding ten years. There shall be nine or ten Commissioners. A Commissioner may cease to hold office or be removed in accordance with the grounds set out in Schedule 1, paragraphs 3-5 of the Act. Appointments will terminate at the end of the period specified for each Commissioner, unless the Commissioner is reappointed before the period expires. Appointments may also be terminated at the request of the Commissioner. Together the Commissioners constitute the Board of the Commission and ensure that the Commission discharges its functions as set out in the Act and other associated legislation. They set the strategic direction, monitor the Commission's performance and are responsible for ensuring that it acts within its statutory remits. The Chair and Commissioners are appointed by His Majesty the King on the recommendation of the House of Commons. They may be reappointed for a further period after expiry of their initial term, Commissioners are appointed for a period not exceeding ten years. There shall be nine or ten Commissioners. A Commissioner may cease to hold office or be removed in accordance with the grounds set out in Schedule 1, paragraphs 3-5 of the Act. Appointments will terminate at the end of the period specified for each Commissioner, unless the Commissioner is reappointed before the period expires. Appointments may also be terminated at the request of the Commissioner. Committees reporting to the Commission

Board The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee The Remuneration and Human Resources Committee Committees reporting to the Commission Board Accordion The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee The Board has established an Audit and Risk Assurance Committee to support it, and to support the Chief Executive as Accounting Officer in her/his responsibilities for ensuring the adequacy of risk management, internal controls, efficient and effective use of public funds and financial governance arrangements within the Commission. This includes: accounting policies the annual report and accounts of the Electoral Commission, including the process for review of the accounts prior to submission for audit; and management's letter of representation to the National Audit Office matters relating to the National Audit Office the adequacy of management response to issues identified by audit activity expenses proposals for tendering for audit services, or for the purchase of non-audit services from contractors who provide audit services The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee comprises three members and meets at least three times a year. Three Commissioners are appointed by the Board to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. The Board appoints an Independent Adviser to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee who is a suitably qualified independent person who has no connection with the Commission. The Commission Board also appoints the Chair of the Committee. The Chair of the Commission may not be appointed as a member of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. Members of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and the independent adviser will normally serve for three years, unless a member ceases to be a Commissioner or asks to stand down. They may be re-appointed for a further period, normally not exceeding three years. The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee minutes will be circulated to the Board and a report of the work of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee will be presented annually to the Board.2.9 The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee's terms of reference are attached at Annex G. The Remuneration and Human Resources Committee The Commission's Remuneration and Human Resources Committee comprises three Commissioners and meets at least three times a year. The Commission Board appoints the Chair of the Committee. The Remuneration and Human Resources Committee has responsibility for: approval of significant changes to organisational structure and/or overall staff terms and conditions of employment and any impact of the change such as termination of contracts approval of significant changes to the structure of the Executive Team supporting the Chair in the recruitment of the Chief Executive, including recommending to the Board the composition and membership of the Appointment Panel recommending to the Board the framework for the remuneration of the Chief Executive, if different from the framework applying to all other staff agreeing the annual negotiating remit for staff pay awards (including the Executive Team) recommending to the Board the composition and membership of the Appointment Panel for the Independent Adviser / Chair to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee setting the fee of the Independent Adviser to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee It also acts as an advisory group on the extent to which organisational development and strategic Human Resource matters support the Board's strategic direction for the Commission. Members of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee will serve for three years, unless a member ceases to be an Electoral Commissioner or asks to stand down. They may be re-appointed for a further period not exceeding three years. The minutes of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee will be circulated to all members of the Board at its next available meeting, for information. The Committee's terms of reference are included at Annex H.

Part 2: The Commission Board and Committees continued Development and strategy events

The Commissioners may also attend development and strategy events, referred to as

'Commissioner Days'. The purpose of such events will be to provide an opportunity for Commissioners to reflect more thoroughly on strategy and key issues and also to develop their working practices. In such circumstances Commissioners do not have delegated powers and are not acting as a decision making body. The membership, terms of reference, and arrangements for such events are decided by our Board, and progress monitored and reported for the information of the Board. Linked Commissioners Periodically the Board may invite Commissioners to be a point of contact or Linked Commissioner for staff on an issue or project. In such circumstances Commissioners do not have delegated powers and are not acting as a decision making body. The appointment, scope, and life of such a request are decided by the Board, and progress monitored and reported for the information of the Board. Part 3: Roles, responsibilities and code of conduct for Commissioners The Chair The Chair leads the Board. The Board regulates its own proceedings, and has approved Standing Orders for that purpose (see Annex A). The Chair has particular responsibilities for the following matters: strategic leadership – leading the development and implementation of the Commission's Corporate Plan Corporate governance – encouraging high standards of propriety and promoting the efficient and effective use of staff and other resources throughout the Commission. The Chair presides at Board meetings and ensures that these are held at regular intervals throughout the year and are accurately recorded. The Chair will also ensure that the Board's effectiveness is reviewed annually in accordance with this framework external communication – representing the views of the Commission to key stakeholders including government ministers, leaders of political parties and other senior politicians, Chairs of public bodies and other organisations, leaders of local government and the media agreeing the objectives and undertaking annual appraisals of the Chief Executive, following consultation with other Commissioners The Chair is also responsible for: taking a lead in identifying the skills and experience required to fill vacancies among the Commissioners, with a view to seeking a proper balance of expertise and diversity; and that this is represented to the Speaker's Committee as part of the process for recruiting new Commissioners ensuring that new Commissioners receive a full, formal and tailored induction on joining the Commission assessing the performance of individual Commissioners seeking feedback on the Chair's performance In the absence of the Chair, the other Commissioners act as necessary to ensure the continuity of Commission business in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Standing Orders in Annex A of this Framework. Commissioners with serious concerns about the Chair's conduct or ability to carry out the role, who feel unable to raise this with the Chair, may raise their concerns with the Independent Adviser to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. The Independent Adviser to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee will, on the basis of information gathered, decide whether or not to pursue the matter further. If considered necessary he/she may commission an independent investigation. Code of Conduct for Electoral Commissioners Commissioners must act in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Conduct for Electoral Commissioners, which forms part of the Corporate Governance Framework. They must sign the declaration agreeing to the principles and procedures of the Code of Conduct and return it to the Secretary to the Commission Board. When the Code is significantly amended, Commissioners will be invited to sign the updated Code. (The Code is at Annex I to this Framework). Corporate responsibilities of Commissioners Commissioners act collectively: they do not have individual authority other than may be accorded in a specific role (such as Chair of a Committee) or by the Board on a particular occasion (see 3.7 below). The Commissioners have corporate responsibility for

ensuring that the Commission fulfils its aims and objectives and for promoting the efficient and effective use of staff and other resources. The Board can decide to delegate a decision to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair, and where appropriate another Commissioner or Commissioners nominated by the Board. When, in the opinion of the Board, an issue has particular significance for Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, the relevant Commissioner(s) will be consulted. Other responsibilities of Commissioners include: ensuring that high standards of corporate governance are observed at all times ensuring that the Commission identifies and manages its risks effectively establishing and maintaining effective arrangements for the discharge of the Commission's functions, including delegating to staff within a clear framework of strategic control, consulting interested bodies on major developments and responding to their views, where appropriate establishing advisory and consultative bodies to inform the Commission's work, and facilitating good communication with external organisations and the public As individuals Commissioners are responsible for upholding the values and principles of the Commission, should act in good faith and in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Electoral Commissioners, and follow the Seven Principles of Public Life set out by the Committee on Standards in Public Life – the 'Nolan Principles' – (see Annex C). Responsibilities of individual Commissioners All Commissioners have a UK-wide remit. Parliament appoints lead Commissioners with responsibility for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales respectively. In addition the Board allocates additional responsibilities to individual Commissioners. This can encompass: chair of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (when the Chair of that Committee is a Commissioner) taking a lead in contributing to and/or reviewing work on particular projects e.g. as part of a steering group Complaints The Commission shall approve, publish and maintain a Complaints Policy and Procedure covering the services provided by us to our stakeholders which includes independent review of our complaints via the Parliamentary Ombudsman (with a separate review procedure for freedom of information matters), the details of which shall be made available on the Commission's website. Review of Board effectiveness The Board will review annually its performance and that of its committees. Commissioners will have individual meetings with the Chair at least annually at which issues may be raised, which may include how to support individual contribution, commitment to the role (including commitment of time for Board and committee meetings and any other duties), and any learning and development needs identified by the Commissioner. The Chair also seeks feedback on his own performance at these meetings. During the Board's review of its effectiveness, an independent evaluation of the Chair's performance may also be carried out. The Chair will act on the results of the performance evaluation by recognising the strengths, and addressing the weaknesses, of the Board as a whole and, where appropriate, seek the resignation of Commissioners or make recommendation to the Speaker's Committee concerning the removal of members or the qualities to be sought when considering new members to be appointed to the Commission. Review of the corporate governance framework Duty to monitor and review the Framework, including the Code of Conduct for Electoral Commissioners The Board will review the corporate governance framework on an annual basis. The General Counsel is responsible for the operation of the scheme of corporate governance to ensure that the aims and principles of the framework are given full effect. Changes to the framework Changes to the framework will only be approved by the Board, except when the General Counsel makes and publishes the following changes: such changes as may be necessary to reflect or as may be necessary to comply with or give effect to any legislative

changes or requirements such other changes of an editorial or consequential nature as may seem appropriate to make the framework of governance internally consistent, up-to-date and readily understandable The General Counsel shall ensure that Commissioners are informed of the changes in addition to any other means of publishing changes. Publication The General Counsel will ensure that the framework is made widely available to Commissioners and staff, is published on the Commission website and is updated as necessary. The Chief Executive The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that the Chair and Board have timely, accurate and clear information, as required, to carry out their responsibilities. The Board has delegated authority (see paragraph 4.2 below) for the day-to-day management of the Commission to the Chief Executive. S/he therefore has responsibility for the overall organisation, management and staffing and for its procedures in financial and other matters including conduct and discipline. This involves the promotion, by leadership and example, of the values embodied in the Nolan Principles. Commissioners should support the Chief Executive in undertaking this responsibility. The Commission's Delegated Powers are the arrangements described in Part 4 of this document. The Chief Executive is in turn authorised to delegate matters to other Commission staff, and those delegations are set out in an Executive Scheme of Delegation. The Chief Executive is the Commission's Accounting Officer as designated by the Speaker's Committee pursuant to paragraph 19 Schedule 1 of the Act. This role carries with it personal responsibility to ensure that appropriate advice is given to the Commission on all matters relating to financial propriety and regularity, for keeping proper accounts and for the efficient and effective use of resources. As Accounting Officer the Chief Executive is answerable to the UK Parliament, the Scottish Parliament, and Senedd for ensuring that all the resources available are used properly and give good value for money. Political activity For the Commission to perform effectively the functions given to it by Parliament, it must command wide confidence that it is independent of government and of political parties. Commissioners and the Chief Executive must provide to the Commission full details of any activities that might lead to claims that they are or have been an active supporter of one political party or another, or of a particular policy which is associated with the objectives of a political party, or of an outcome that is (or may be) the subject of a referendum, recognising that Commissioners appointed under the amendments to PPERA brought about by the Political Parties and Elections Act 2009 are entitled to be members of a political party. Failure to provide all relevant information regarding political activity may be grounds for removal from office or post. A Commissioner or the Chief Executive may be regarded as unfit to continue in that office or post should they engage in any activity that might call into question the Commission's political impartiality or cause risk to public confidence in the Commission, whether actual or perceived. Further details of prohibited activity are set out in the Code of Conduct for Electoral Commissioners at Annex I to this Framework. The appointments of Commission staff, including the Chief Executive, are also subject to statutory requirements set out in PPERA. The Chief Executive is subject to an additional disqualification to other staff, which effectively means that s/he is subject to the same disqualifications as Commissioners who are not nominated by political parties (the disqualifications are set out at PPERA Schedule 1, paragraph 3, which is included in Appendix 1 of the Electoral Commissioners' Code of Conduct). Part 4: Commission's business and delegated powers This section describes the roles and powers reserved to the Board in relation to the activities and statutory functions of the Commission and those delegated to committees of the Board and to the Chief

Executive. The arrangements in Part 4 are referred to as the Commission's Delegated Powers. Schedule 1, paragraph 12 of the Act provides that the Commission, or any committee or sub-committee of the Commission, or the Chief Executive, may delegate functions to the Commission's staff. The Board has delegated certain of its functions to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee, and the Chief Executive. The Board by approval of this corporate governance framework delegates to the Chief Executive all responsibility for the day-to-day management of the Commission. Where a matter is not specifically reserved to the Board, or a Committee or sub-committee, the Chief Executive has authority to act subject to the following conditions: any relevant approved Commission policy shall be complied with any expenditure shall be within the agreed budget In addition, the Board by approval of this corporate governance framework authorises the Chief Executive to appoint another officer of the Commission to act on the Chief Executive's behalf. References in these arrangements to the Chief Executive include any person(s) to whom the Chief Executive has delegated their authority. The Commission has an Executive Scheme of Delegation which sets out the authority for various levels of staff and decision-making. This is reviewed periodically, and not less than annually, by the Executive Team. The Commission delivers its work through a combination of projects and business delivery work. Our approach to project management helps to ensure that a consistent approach is applied to work across the Commission, and supports delivery through the development of detailed plans. Members of the Executive Team in their roles as Project Directors are responsible for the overall delivery and achievement of objectives for each project. Decision-making within our project management arrangements takes place variously at Executive Team, or Project Board level, but will in any event be consistent with the Board Scheme of Delegation and the Executive Scheme of Delegation. The Commission has a Schedule of Policies, which sets out in table form our key policies, whether statutory or discretionary, their purpose, the policy 'owner', and when due each policy is due for review. Electoral Commission – delegation of powers and duties The Electoral Commission Board is accountable to the: Speaker's Committee of the UK Parliament Llwydd's Committee of the Senedd (in relation to the exercise of our devolved Welsh functions) Scottish Parliament Corporate Body of the Scottish Parliament (in relation to the exercise of our devolved Scottish functions) The Electoral Commission Board can delegate to: The Accounting Officer and Chief Executive The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee The Remuneration and Human Resources Committee The Accounting Officer and Chief Executive are also accountable to the Speaker's Committee of the UK Parliament, the Llwydd's Committee of the Senedd, and the Scottish Parliament Corporate Body. The Accounting Officer and Chief Executive can delegate using the Executive Scheme of Delegation. Powers reserved to the Board Corporate Governance Decisions: Consideration and approval of the Corporate Governance Framework including delegated powers, Standing Orders and Prime Financial Policies. Consideration and approval of the Code of Conduct for Electoral Commissioners. Establishment of committees of the Board; appointment of members of committees; appointment of the Chairs of committees; appointment of the Independent Adviser to the Audit and Risk Committee and agreement of terms of reference of committees. Relevant specific provisions in PPERA: Schedule 1 paragraphs 8,9 and 10 Strategy Decisions: Setting the strategic direction. Periodic review of key Commission policy positions. Corporate plans and budget Decisions: Consideration and approval of the key principles and approach to informing the content of the Commission's budget, and Corporate Plan. Relevant specific provisions in PPERA: Schedule 1 paragraphs 14 and 15 Variations to

the approved budget where the variation would have a significant impact on the overall approved levels of income and expenditure. A financial variation shall be treated as significant if it involves incurring one-off expenditure of £1 million or more, or recurring expenditure of £250,000 or more per annum. Annual reports and accounts Decision: Approval of key messages in annual reports and adoption of accounts (includes reporting on use of investigatory powers and civil sanctions and the annual report for the performance of the Commission in relation to the local government elections (or related matters) in Scotland). Relevant specific provisions in PPERA: Schedule 1 paragraphs 17 and 20 and 20A, Schedule 19B paragraph 15 and Schedule 19C paragraph 27, and Local Administration (Scotland) Act 2011 Appointment of Assistant Commissioners Decision: Approve appointment of Assistant Commissioners when relevant. Relevant specific provisions in PPERA: Schedule 1 paragraph 7 Performance management Decision: Consideration of regular performance and finance monitoring reports. Risk management Decisions: Satisfy itself that there are appropriate risk management arrangements in place for the Commission. Determine the Commission's risk appetite. Human Resources Decisions: Approval of significant changes to overall staff terms and conditions of employment. Relevant specific provisions in PPERA: Schedule 1 paragraph 11 Appointment and termination of employment of the Chief Executive including approval of remuneration recommendations from the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee. Decisions relating to the Chief Executive's contract terms, remuneration and any bonus, if different from the framework applying to all other staff, will be taken by the Board, on the recommendation of the Remuneration and HR Committee. Relevant specific provisions in PPERA: Schedule 1 paragraph 11 Significant publications 2 Decision: Where the Chair and Chief Executive have identified a significant publication that merits consideration by the Board, agreement in advance to the key messages, the plan for the publication, and for communication and implementation. Promotion of public awareness of UK electoral and democratic systems Decision: Approval of strategies and expenditure to meet this statutory duty. Relevant specific provisions in PPERA: Section 13 Responses to Government and other consultations, or public positions, beyond existing policy Decision: Approve approach to consultation responses or other public positions which are either beyond agreed policy or of major public or political significance. Performance standards issues (Electoral Administration) for Returning Decision: Approval of the overall framework of performance standards and reviewing the development of performance standards. Relevant specific provisions in PPERA: Sections 9A and 9B Officers and Electoral Registration Officers Decision: Approval of enforcement policy. Relevant specific provisions in PPERA: Schedule 19B paragraph 14 Party finance regulation issues Decision: Receive emerging and final recommendations to Secretary of State for review of candidate spending limit review. Receive periodically for the purpose of monitoring and review a summary of PEF statutory decisions taken. Policy Development Grants and assistance to parties Decision: Approve and keep under review the scheme for the allocation of policy development grants to political parties, submitting recommendations for terms and change to the Secretary of State. Relevant specific provisions in PPERA: Section 12 Commission Administration Decision: Approve minutes of Board meetings. Approval of decisions to initiate or defend litigation in respect of matters which are of public, political, financial or reputational significance. Litigation Decision: Approval of decisions to initiate or defend litigation in respect of matters which are of public, political, financial or reputational significance. Election pilot reports Decision: Agree participation in and reporting on pilot schemes. Relevant specific provisions

in PPERA: Section 9 Secretary of State electoral administration direction power to Electoral Registration Officers – only exercisable on recommendations of the Commission Decision: Approve any recommendations of the Commission to the Secretary of State. Relevant specific provisions in PPERA: Section 8 Referendums Decision: Approve the approach to question assessment, and the assessment itself. Relevant specific provisions in PPERA: Section 104 (and if applicable Section10) Approve the approach and budget for public awareness campaigns. Relevant specific provisions in PPERA: Section 13 Agree the framework for designating lead campaign organisations for each referendum, and designate. Relevant specific provisions in PPERA: Sections 108 and 109 Approve the framework for allocation of grants to campaign organisations.

Relevant specific provisions in PPERA: Section 110 Decisions/duties delegated by the Board to committees Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Decision/duty Provision to the Board of assurance that appropriate risk, internal control and governance processes are in place across the Commission. Approval of the Risk Management Framework and regular review of the Commission's strategic, corporate and directorate risks.

Confirmation of the Annual Assessment of Information Risk Management. Review of the Annual Governance Statement and to recommend approval of the Statement by the Accounting Officer as appropriate. Review of the accounting and financial policies and the annual accounts of the Commission and to recommend to the Commission Board that it adopts the accounts and to the Accounting Officer that s/he sign the accounts as appropriate. Recommend to the Commission Board any amendments of the financial policies. Review the plans and reports of the National Audit Office and management responses to any proposals. Approval of the process of appointment of an internal audit service for the Commission. Agreement of the strategic and annual internal audit plans. Review the reports of the internal audit service and management responses to any proposals. Approval of any proposals for the purchase of non-audit services from contractors who provide audit services. Approval of the Whistleblowing Policy. Approval of the Anti-fraud Policy. Approval of the Anti-bribery Policy.

Remuneration and Human Committee Decision/duty Approve the framework for the total benefits package (remuneration and employee benefits) for all staff of the Electoral Commission (including the Executive Team) Recommend to the Board the remuneration of the Chief Executive, if different from the framework applying to all other staff, together with decisions (recommendations) relating to the Chief Executive's contract terms, remuneration and any bonus. Review the on-going appropriateness and relevance of the total benefits framework and propose amendments to the Board as appropriate.

In determining frameworks and policies for the total benefits package, take into account that: members of staff should be provided with appropriate incentives to encourage enhanced individual and collective performance in a fair and responsible manner members of staff should be rewarded for their individual contributions to the success of the Commission the Commission must observe its obligations under PPERA

Approve significant changes to organisational structure and/or overall staff terms and conditions of employment and any impact of the change such as termination of contracts Review an annual report to the Committee of any terms, or payments made on termination of employment to ensure that failure is not rewarded and that the duty to mitigate loss is fully recognised. The Chair of the Committee will be notified in advance of making such terms and payments (e.g. settlement agreements). Request any reports or surveys which the Committee deems necessary to help it fulfil its obligations, for example salary benchmarking reports or information about remuneration in other bodies. Recommend to the Board any changes to the fee for the Independent Adviser to the Audit and Risk Committee. It is anticipated that any

increase will be in line with that awarded to Commissioners. Recommend to the Board the composition and membership of the Appointment Panel for recruitment of the Independent Advisor/Chef Executive of the Audit and Risk Committee. Support to the Chair in the recruitment of the Chief Executive, including recommending to the Board the composition and membership of the Appointment Panel for recruitment of the Chief Executive. Report annually to the Board on the work of the Committee. To act as an advisory group as required on such matters as: the overall approach and scope of the HR strategy particularly relating to organisational design, significant restructuring or change programmes major trade union or industrial relations issues affecting the whole Commission organisational development relating to the beliefs, values, culture and effectiveness of the Commission Decisions/duties delegated by the Board to the Chief Executive and decisions/duties of the Chief Executive as accounting officer

Chief Executive Decision/duty All responsibility for the day-to-day management of the Commission. Where a matter is not specifically reserved to the Board, or a sub-committee, the Chief Executive has authority to act subject to the following conditions: any relevant approved Commission policy shall be complied with any expenditure shall be within the agreed budget The Board authorises the Chief Executive to appoint other members of staff of the Commission to act on the Chief Executive's behalf. Delegations should be recorded in an Executive Scheme of Delegation. Accounting officer Decision/duty Approval of the policy for payment of Commissioner fees and travel and subsistence claims (annually, as part of the review of the Corporate Governance Framework). The accounting officer has personal responsibility for: regularity and propriety selection and appraisal of programmes and projects affordability and sustainability value for money management of opportunity and risk learning from experience accounting for the organisation's financial position and transactions The accounting officer must personally sign within the annual report and accounts the statement of financial position the performance report (management commentary) the governance statement the remuneration report the annual accounting officer's certificate confirming his satisfaction with the administration of pensions And, having been satisfied that they have been properly prepared to reflect the business of the organisation, must personally approve: voted budget limits the associated Estimates Memorandum The Chief Executive as Accounting Officer or the Director of Finance and Corporate Services may authorise employee severance payments which fall outside of the Civil Service Compensation Schemes, subject to advance notice to the Chair of the Remuneration and HR Committee, and an annual report to the Committee of any such payments. When the accounting officer is absent and cannot readily be contacted, another senior member of staff should deputise. If a significant absence is planned, the accounting officer, or in their absence the Director of Finance and Corporate Services, may invite the Speaker's Committee to appoint a temporary acting accounting officer.

Annexes Annex: A Standing Orders Introduction Standing Orders, together with the Delegated Powers and Financial Policies, provide a procedural framework within which the Commission discharges its business. They deal with the business of the Commission, procedure at meetings of the Board and any committees, delegation of powers, declaration of interests and standards of conduct.

Place of business The principal place of business of the Commission is 3 Bunhill Row, London, EC1Y 8YZ. Meetings of the Board

Calling meetings The Board shall meet on such dates and at such times and places as the Board shall from time to time determine. Such meetings shall be known as ordinary meetings. An extraordinary meeting may be called at any time by the Chair or the Chief Executive, or by no fewer than five Board members lodging with the Chair or Chief

Executive a written request for such a meeting, stating the business to be transacted. No business shall be transacted at such a meeting other than that specified in the notice of the meeting. Notice of meetings At least four clear working days (a working day excludes Saturday, Sunday, Bank Holidays and other days when the Commission offices are closed) before any ordinary meeting of the Board, written notice of the time and place of such meeting and of the business to be transacted shall be sent by the Chief Executive, or a nominated officer acting on his/her behalf, to each Commissioner. The accidental omission to give notice to or the non-receipt of notice by any member shall not invalidate the proceedings of the meeting, save that failure to serve such a notice on four or more members will invalidate the meeting. Business to be transacted The Chair is responsible for drawing up the agenda of the meetings in consultation with the Chief Executive. No business other than that specified in the notice of the meeting shall be transacted at that meeting unless the business is of an urgent nature or required by statute to be transacted and not less than two-thirds of the members present decide that the business shall be transacted. A member wishing a matter to be included on an agenda shall make his/her request in writing for the Chair to consider at least ten clear days before a meeting. Requests made less than ten days before a meeting may be considered for inclusion on the agenda at the discretion of the Chair. Agendas for meetings shall include declarations of interest as a standing item. After each Board meeting there shall normally be a review between the Chair and Commissioners, to consider any issues in the management of the meeting, and provide an opportunity for Commissioners to give feedback to the Chair. Written comments If a member who is not present submits written comments on an agenda item(s) then at the discretion of the meeting Chair, these may be circulated at the meeting or read out by the meeting Chair at the appropriate point in the meeting. Quorum Board meetings are quorate if there are at least six Commissioners present and able to take part in the discussion, of whom four shall be Commissioners appointed other than under Section 3A of the Act. However, the quorum shall be five Commissioners, of whom three shall be Commissioners appointed other than under the provisions of Section 3A of the Act in the following circumstances: in the case of political finance regulatory decisions in the case of decisions to be taken in relation to referendums, or when three or more vacancies exist for Commissioners A smaller quorum for regulatory decisions and decisions relating to referendums provides the greater flexibility needed in these circumstances, enabling the Commission to meet and take decisions at relatively short notice, and avoid delay. Such decisions will be communicated by the Secretary to the Commission Board at the earliest opportunity to any Commissioners not able to be present at the meeting. Members may attend meetings of the Board by video or telephone conferencing facility. Members attending a meeting by these means shall be deemed to be present in person at the meeting. If a member has been disqualified from participating in a discussion or resolution to be taken about any matter by reason of the declaration of a conflict of interest, s/he shall no longer count towards the quorum. If a quorum is then not available for the discussion or resolution to be taken about any matter, that matter may not be subject to a decision. The responsible officer shall record this situation in the minutes of the meeting. Record of attendance The responsible officer shall record the names of all members present at the meeting of the Board in the minutes of the meeting. Chair of meetings The Chair shall preside at any meeting of the Board. In the absence of the Chair those attending a meeting will agree from among the non-nominated Commissioners a Chair to conduct the proceedings of that meeting. The Chair determines the detailed procedure

for the conduct of business at meetings of the Board and the Chair's decision on questions or order will be observed at the meeting, subject to the provisions of Standing Orders and to any decision of the Board to the contrary. Decision making Decisions of our Board will normally be made by consensus rather than by formal vote. Failing consensus, decisions will be reached by a vote when: the meeting Chair judges that there is a body of opinion amongst members at the meeting that disagrees with a proposal or has expressed reservations about it and no clear consensus has emerged or is likely to do so, or a member who is present requests that a vote be taken and this is supported by at least one other member, or any other circumstances have arisen where the meeting Chair judges that a vote is appropriate In these circumstances each member has a single vote. The meeting Chair will cast his or her vote at the same time as other members. Voting shall normally take place by a show of hands or such other means of assent or dissent as the meeting Chair deems appropriate. Only members present (including by telephone or video-conference) may vote. The decision will be carried by a simple majority. The meeting Chair's ruling as to the outcome of the vote shall be final. In the case of an equality of votes, the meeting Chair shall not have a casting vote and the decision will not have been carried. A vote once taken will not usually be re-taken within the same meeting. If a vote is taken, the number voting for, against and any abstentions shall be recorded in the minutes. Members may ask for their dissenting views on any matters to be recorded in the minutes. Decision making by electronic means Our Board Secretary will manage the process for decision making by electronic means as set out below. Papers will be produced for all items of electronic business clearly setting out the recommendations to our Board and options considered together with any supporting analysis necessary. Our Board Secretary will agree with our Chief Executive and our Chair a timeline for a decision to be taken. This will include sufficient time for our Board to read the report, seek clarification on the issues raised and to confirm their decision on the recommendations in the report. If our Chair is unavailable, then the views of the Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee will be sought on the matters above. Similarly, if our Chief Executive is unavailable then the views of at least one Director will be sought in their absence. Our Board Secretary will circulate the report to our Board electronically, e.g. by email, and set out the timeline at A29 above. Questions or points of clarification should be directed to our Board Secretary who will arrange for a response to be drafted and circulated to our Board in line with the agreed timeline. Commissioners should confirm their decision on the recommendations in the report by the deadline indicated in the timeline. Once this deadline has passed our Board Secretary will confirm to our Board, Chief Executive and the report author the decision of our Board. The normal standing orders for declarations of interest and quorum apply to decisions made using electronic means. The quorum for decision making using electronic means is defined as the number of Commissioners participating in the decision by electronic means. The principle that decisions of our Board are reached by consensus applies to decisions taken using electronic means. Where the procedure on voting is used to make a decision using electronic means, then the means of voting shall be by electronic means, e.g. email. Principles of decision-making All decisions of the Board, including delegated decisions, will be made in accordance with the following principles: proportionality (i.e. the action must be proportionate to the desired outcome) due consideration and the taking of professional advice from staff reasonableness, fairness, impartiality, equality and in accordance with natural justice and human rights a presumption in favour of transparency in what we do and how we do it, subject to acknowledging that

this may not always be appropriate e.g. legal advice and certain regulatory matters reasoned, with clarity of aims and desired outcomes, to ensure that those responsible for decision-making provide the reasons for decisions efficiency (decisions must not be unreasonably delayed) regulatory decision-making should accord with good regulatory practice consistency with the duties and responsibilities, aims and objectives of the Commission, including effective and efficient use of resources the Board will operate on the principles of collective responsibility, support and respect external pressure will not alter Board processes except for potential time-lines Board members' behaviour in response to decisions is required to be the same inside and outside the Commission Openness and responsiveness The Commission and its staff will conduct all dealings with the public in an open and responsible way, and ensure full compliance with the principles of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The Commission recognises the need for confidentiality of certain information, in accordance with statutory requirements or agreed commercial interests, subject to the rights of Parliament, the National Audit Office, HM Treasury and other public bodies to obtain information, and to the rights of individuals to obtain information in accordance with statute. Adjournment Any meeting of the Board may be adjourned from time to time and from place to place at the discretion of the Chair. Reasonable notice shall be given where practical of the date and time of the reconvening of the adjourned meeting, save that where a meeting has been adjourned for thirty days or more, notice of the reconvening of the adjourned meeting shall be given as for an ordinary meeting of the Board. Minutes Minutes of all Board meetings shall record the decisions taken, and where appropriate, the views of individuals present. The minutes shall record any declarations of interest made at the meeting. The minutes will be submitted for agreement at the following Board meeting. Once agreed, the minutes, including any amendments required by the Board, shall be signed by the Chair.

Approved minutes (or a version redacted as appropriate) will be published on the Commission's website. Delegation of Powers The Commission has approved Delegated Powers that specify those matters that are reserved to the Board for decision, and those matters that may be delegated to committees of the Board or to the Chief Executive for decision. The Chief Executive may in turn delegate any matter within their authority to another officer of the Commission. Any person to whom a matter is delegated by the Chief Executive or under arrangements approved by them shall carry the authority of the Commission in respect of the matter so delegated. The Board shall review and approve the Delegated Powers annually. Urgent or non-contentious business Urgent business may arise between scheduled ordinary Board meetings that requires a decision of our Board before the date when an ordinary or extraordinary meeting of our Board can be convened. Where decisions that would ordinarily be taken at Board meetings have to be made on an urgent basis they may be taken by our Chief Executive, in consultation with our Chair, with the exclusion of regulatory decisions on party finance matters, or determination of matters relating to referendums, where it is accepted that the nature of the business may require meetings to be called on notice. In such cases our Chief Executive should take all practicable steps to consult with our Chair, and with as many other Commissioners as our Chief Executive considers appropriate (and if at all possible no fewer than two Commissioners). Our Chief Executive should seek Commissioners' views as to: the urgency of the matter requiring decision the significance of the decision required the possibility of holding an extraordinary Board meeting to consider it the possibility of making the decision by electronic means the circumstances for Commissioners to comment on the matter the action to be taken Our Chief Executive should decide in the light of

Commissioners' views what action to take, should notify as many Commissioners as practicable (and in any event no fewer than two Commissioners) of the proposed action and should allow as much time as they consider reasonable in the circumstances for Commissioners to comment on the proposals. Our Chief Executive should then act as they consider appropriate. Our Chief Executive can request our Board Secretary to arrange for a business matter to be decided or discussed using electronic means, e.g. email, at an extraordinary Board meeting or at a meeting called on notice. The exercise of such powers shall be reported to the next meeting of our Board as an item on the agenda, to approve the minute and date of the decision taken, and note the reason for the exercise of such powers. Our Board will consider whether further action is required. The matter will be recorded in the minutes of the Board meeting to which it is reported. If our Chair is unavailable, then the views of the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee will be sought on the matters above. Similarly, if our Chief Executive is unavailable then the views of at least one Director will be sought in their absence. Committees The Board may establish standing or ad hoc committees or advisory groups, and the Chair may establish advisory groups, consisting of such numbers and for such purposes as the Board, or as the case may be, the Chair, may determine (for example Commissioner Reference Groups). The membership of Appointment Panels for the roles of Independent Adviser/Chair to the Audit and Risk Committee, and for the Chief Executive, is decided by the Board on the recommendation of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee. Only Commissioners can be a member of a Commission committee. The provision of these Standing Orders (SOs) shall apply where relevant to the operation of all committees, unless these SOs specify otherwise. They shall not apply to Commissioner Reference Groups (see paragraph 2.16 of the Corporate Governance Framework, above). Declaration of Interests Commissioners must declare any potential interests or connections they may have to the Secretary to the Commission Board. Where there is a conflict of interest, the Board will decide the proper course of action and whether the Commissioner should withdraw from the meeting for discussion and/or the decision-making process. The interest declared will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. Standards of conduct Commissioners are required to comply with the Commission's Corporate Governance Framework and the Code of Conduct for Electoral Commissioners. Staff are required to comply with the standards set out in the Code of Conduct for staff and with Human Resources policies. Use of information No Commissioner shall use information gained in the course of their duty for personal gain nor seek to use the opportunity of such public service to promote their own or other parties' private interests. Commissioners should at all times avoid behaving in a manner which might bring the Commission into disrepute. Gifts and hospitality Offers of gifts and hospitality, whether accepted or not, must be reported to the General Counsel at the earliest opportunity but within a maximum of 28 days together with details of the donor and the approximate value. A Register of Gifts and Hospitality will be maintained by the General Counsel, and published on the Commission's website. Suspension of Standing Orders At any meeting the Board may, by a majority of not less than two-thirds of those present and voting, resolve to suspend these Standing Orders for the duration of the meeting or of any item of business to be transacted at the meeting, provided that: suspension of Standing Orders does not contravene any statutory provisions or directions any decision to suspend Standing Orders is recorded in the minutes a separate record of matters discussed during the suspension shall be kept Amendment of Standing Orders These Standing Orders or any of them may be amended by alteration, addition or deletion, provided that: amendment or variation of the Standing Orders does not contravene any

statutory provisions or directions at least five days' notice shall be given of the proposed amendment the amendment shall be approved by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the members present and voting at the meeting in which it is moved

Review of Standing Orders The Board shall review Standing Orders annually. The review shall include Annex B: Summary of the statutory framework for the Commission

Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 The Commission is an independent body, established by the United Kingdom Parliament under the provisions of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (the Act). The Commission is accountable to the UK Parliament, and specifically to the Speaker's Committee of the House of Commons which is appointed in accordance with the provisions of the Act. The principal powers and duties, and membership, of the Speaker's Committee are set out below. Scottish Elections (Reform) Act 2020 and the Senedd and Elections (Wales) Act 2020 The Scottish Elections (Reform) Act 2020 and the Senedd and Elections (Wales) Act 2020 amended the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 to provide that the Commission is directly accountable to the Scottish Parliament and the Senedd in relation to the exercise of its devolved Scottish and Welsh functions. The Scottish Parliament Corporate Body (SPCB) and the Senedd's Llywydd's Committee provide scrutiny of the Commission.

Legal status

Administrative Law As a public body, the Commission is subject to normal principles of administrative law. The Commission must act reasonably (in the sense that it should not act in a manner in which no reasonable body such as the Commission would act) and should base its decisions on relevant considerations, disregarding irrelevant factors. The Commission, and the Commissioners, should be objective and impartial and bear in mind that the Commission is an independent statutory body.

A statutory body As a statutory body, the Commission is subject to the principle that it can only do the things which Parliament through statute has given it the power or the duty to do ('the ultra vires' principle). It must be possible, in relation to any act or decision of the Commission, to identify the statutory authority upon which the Commission is relying.

Ombudsman The Commission falls within the remit of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (the Ombudsman). It is required to comply with the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

Freedom of Information The Commission is listed as a public authority in Schedule 1 to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and is therefore subject to the Freedom of Information regime. The Commission has published a Publication Scheme under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Commission is required to comply with requests for information unless a defined exemption applies.

Data Protection and document security The Commission complies with Data Protection law, which requires any organisation that is processing personal data about individuals to comply with certain safeguards. It also gives individuals the right to access information held about them. This right of access is subject to certain exemptions.

The Speaker's Committee The Speaker's Committee is appointed in accordance with the provisions of section 2 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) to perform the functions conferred on it by that Act. A summary of the principal powers and duties of the Committee are: to receive the Commission's annual accounts and examine the Commission's estimates to examine the Commission's plan of aims and objectives over the next five years and its estimated requirement for resources during that period and to consult with Treasury to designate the Commission's accounting officer and to specify his or her responsibilities to report to the House, at least once a year, on the exercise of its functions putting in place and overseeing a selection procedure for Commissioners

The membership of the Speaker's

Committee is determined in accordance with the provisions of Section 2 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. It consists of the members listed at the Parliament website The Llywydd's Committee Section 28 of the Senedd and Elections (Wales) Act 2020 sets out that, in Wales, the scrutiny of the Commission is to be carried out by a committee of the Senedd. The Llywydd Committee was therefore established to scrutinise financial estimates and plans submitted by the Commission in discharging its functions relating to devolved Welsh elections and devolved Welsh referendums. Each year, the Commission is required to submit to the Llywydd Committee an estimate of income and expenditure relating to its devolved Welsh functions. The Commission is also required to periodically submit a plan that sets out its aims, objectives and estimated budget for its functions relating to devolved Welsh elections and devolved Welsh referendums in the following five-year period. The Commission's Accounts and Reports are laid before the Senedd. The Scottish Parliament Corporate Body The Scottish Parliament Corporate Body (SPCB) considers and makes decisions on a wide range of issues to do with the running of the Scottish Parliament including the financing of the Parliament and allocation of its budget. Section 15 of the Scottish Elections (Reform) Act 2020 changing the funding arrangements of the Commission so that the SPCB became financially responsible for the work of the Commission in relation to Scotland. The Commission is required to submit a five-year plan and estimated requirements for resources to the SPBC. The Commission's Accounts and Reports are also laid before the Scottish Parliament. Summary of applicable legislation The Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, as amended (and other legislation that governs the work of Commission). The Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, includes amendments that have been made to it by subsequent legislation since its enactment in 2001. It establishes the Electoral Commission; makes provision about the registration and finances of political parties; donations and expenditure for political purposes; election and referendum campaigns and the conduct of referendums election petitions and other legal proceedings in connection with elections. In addition to the 2000 Act, other legislation is relevant to the Commission in the discharge of its functions. This includes the primary legislation that under-pins the conduct of elections in the UK and related matters, such as: Local Government Acts 1972, 1985, 1986, 1992, 2000 and 2003 Greater London Authority Act 1999 Representation of the People Acts 1981, 1983, 1985 and 2000 Election Publications Act 2001 Electoral Administration Act 2006 European Parliamentary Elections Acts 1978, 1999, 2002 and 2004 House of Commons Disqualification Act 1975 House of Lords Act 1999 Greater London Authority Act 1999 Broadcasting Acts 1981 and 1990 and Communications Act 2003 Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 Scotland Act 1998 Local Electoral Administration and Registration of Services (Scotland) Act 2006 Local Government (Wales) Act 1994 Government of Wales Acts 1998 and 2006 Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006 Armed forces legislation Political Parties and Elections Act 2009 Local Electoral Administration (Scotland) Act 2011 Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 Transparency of Lobbying, Non-party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014 (Transparency Act) Senedd and Elections (Wales) Act 2020 Scottish Elections (Reform) Act 2020 There are also many key orders, regulations and rules made under the legislation that govern the operation of elections. In addition, the lawful governance and running of the Commission requires compliance with the general law, such as, equality, human rights, employment, procurement, health and safety, property, intellectual rights, and access to information legislation. Annex C: The Nolan principles The seven principles of

public life The 'Nolan Principles' code of practice has been written with regard to the seven principles of public life identified by the Nolan Committee in their First Report on Standards in Public Life in May 1995 and subsequently endorsed by the Government. Selflessness Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. Integrity Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individual or organisation that might influence them in the performance of their official duties. Objectivity In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merits. Accountability Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office. Openness Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands. Honesty Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest. Leadership Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Annex D: Prime financial and internal control policies

Introduction This document sets out the Commission's prime financial policies. The key objective of setting financial policies is to give a framework for maintaining financial control over Commission resources, which enables strategic priorities to be delivered and the Chief Executive to discharge his/her Accounting Officer responsibilities. In support of these policies, further detailed policies have been prepared and approved by the Director of Finance and Corporate Services. These detailed financial policies are included in the Finance Manual. The Prime and detailed financial policies together are referred to as the Commission's financial policies. The Commission financial policies comply, and are consistent, with the financial provisions laid down in the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.

Status and scope of the Commission's financial policies

Compliance with Commission financial policies is mandatory on all Commissioners, contractors and staff (temporary or full time) irrespective of their directorate or role. Any member of staff failing to comply with the financial policies may be subject to disciplinary action under the Commission's disciplinary policy. Any significant breaches of Commission financial policies will be notified to the Audit and Risk Committee and to Internal Audit. It is the responsibility of the relevant Director to ensure that staff are made aware of the existence and content of these and the detailed financial policies and that staff with financial responsibility are fully acquainted with them.

Amendment of Prime Financial Policies

To ensure that these policies remain up to date and relevant, the Director of Finance and Corporate Services will at least annually undertake a review and following consultation with the Accounting Officer and scrutiny by the Audit and Risk Committee recommend amendments to the Commission Board for approval.

Relation to other policies

These policies are consistent, and should be read, with other policies in force within the Commission, particularly the HR policies as set out in the Staff Handbook.

Capital investment and asset management Policy All assets will be centrally purchased or leased within budgets approved by the Commission. Purchase, control, safe custody and disposal will be undertaken in accordance with procedures approved by the Director of Finance and Corporate Services. The Director of Finance and Corporate

Services will: ensure that the Commission prepares a consolidated capital budget, and performance is monitored maintain appropriate capitalisation limits and depreciation rates ensure a central asset register of all items over the capitalisation threshold is maintained ensure a central register of attractive and vulnerable items under the capitalisation threshold is maintained maintain a delegated schedule of authority for asset disposals Treasury management and banking Policy The Commission will undertake cash management in accordance with HM Treasury banking requirements and guidance. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services will: monitor cash flow projections and performance monthly maintain and approve a schedule of personnel that sets out who can authorise instruments of payment against the Commission's banking facilities and any limitations to the monetary value of the payments and the combination of signatures required Debt and work in progress management Policy The Commission will allow normal credit terms on settlement of its invoices, but will actively chase debts in excess of this. This policy does not cover civil penalties imposed under s147 of PPERA. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services will ensure that: all services provided are invoiced in a timely manner there are appropriate systems in place to recover outstanding debts any irrecoverable debts to be written off are properly authorised in accordance with delegated authorities appropriate arrangements are in place to manage fees relating to registration of political parties and penalties imposed on political parties Policy The Commission will ensure appropriate competition within all purchasing to ensure only budgeted, authorised and appropriate expenditure is incurred. Value for money will be sought for all goods and services, by taking into account fitness for purpose, service, sustainability and whole life costs. Staff involved in dealing with suppliers should preserve the highest standards of honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity and ensure that value for money is obtained from all procurement. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services will ensure that: all procurement undertaken gives due regard to sustainability issues and ethical trading issues as permitted by the law and account is taken of the latest case law, European Commission guidance and legislation, government policy and good practice orders are properly prepared and authorised, and a schedule of delegated authority to approve orders is maintained and approved a schedule is prepared and maintained showing how orders will be placed and the extent to which will be involved appropriately experienced employees are designated as authorised signatories and will maintain a current list of criteria for those staff who are nominated as signatories in line with government policy, the Commission will endeavour to include small firms on tender lists for work, which is compatible with their capacity and capability and where they can reasonably compete on value for money terms where contracts and framework agreements are in place then all requirements will be purchased through them except as where noted in the Detailed Financial Policies appropriate arrangements are in place to manage arrangements for the use of the Government Card Creditor payments Policy The Commission will aim to pay creditors within 10 days of the date of receipt of valid invoices, or earlier within agreed terms of business. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services will ensure that: The Commission's Purchase Ordering System will be used for all types of purchases except those as listed in the Detailed Financial Policies. The Commission operates one central Purchase Ledger from which supplier payments will be made. Taxation Policy The Commission will seek to ensure that all taxes due and payable, are settled promptly with the relevant authority. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services will ensure that: internal audit will undertake an audit of our taxation arrangements at least once every three years all income tax and National Insurance contributions

due by the Commission and Commission staff and schedule contractors is properly deducted and paid to HM Revenue and Customs Corporate planning and Project management Policy The Commission's Corporate Plan is set out in a published document. The Chief Executive will ensure that a Corporate Plan is prepared, approved, published and updated as required by the Board. For internal management the Commission will prepare plans to support the delivery of the Corporate Plan. The majority of the Commission's work is delivered through project and business delivery work. Projects are clearly defined in terms of their scope and the overall objectives they are seeking to deliver. Further work is undertaken to develop a detailed plan that sets out our approach to delivery. The Executive Team, agree the projects and review our business delivery work. Business delivery work is monitored through operational plans. The Director or Finance and Corporate Services will ensure processes are in place so that: a series of projects are defined in order to deliver the four goals of the Commission projects plans are prepared to cover the year ahead, incorporating a full program of activities, resourcing plans and associated risks operational plans are in place to support the delivery of activities that do not fall within one of the Commission's projects review of the Commission's progress against plans is discussed monthly by the Executive Team consolidated reports of progress against plans including an explanation of significant variances are presented to the Commission Board quarterly risks associated with all plans are reflected appropriately in the Risk Register Document Production timescale Lead / Owner Publication Corporate Plan Produced in the first year of a new Government Chief Executive Externally published Project Plans Based on the length of the Project Responsible Project Director Internal Directorate Plans Revised accordingly (at least monthly) Responsible Director Internal Risk management Policy The Commission will have arrangements in place for evaluation, awareness and management of its risks. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services will ensure that: (a) The Commission has a robust and effective process for risk management approved by the Board. This will include: a process for identifying and quantifying risks and potential liabilities throughout the Commission management processes to ensure all significant risk and potential liabilities are mitigated as appropriate arrangements to periodically review the risk management processes (b) A report is taken to the Audit and Risk Committee on a quarterly basis on the key risks that have been identified and the process for managing them. Internal Control Policy The Commission will put in place an appropriate control environment and effective internal controls that provide reasonable assurance of effective and efficient operations, financial stewardship, probity and compliance with laws and policies. The Commission will operate an Audit and Risk Committee whose terms of reference are specified in the Corporate Governance Framework. The Chief Executive, as Accounting Officer, is responsible for the Commission's systems of internal control. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services will ensure that: the financial policies are reviewed and updated annually an appropriate internal audit function is in place and working effectively a system is in place for proper monitoring and reporting of all breaches of financial policies Audit Policy The Commission will maintain an effective and independent internal audit facility and fully comply with the requirements of external audit and other statutory reviews. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services will ensure that: the Commission maintains a professional and technically competent internal audit function the process of appointment is approved by the Audit and Risk Committee the internal audit function has unfettered access to senior Commission personnel, the chair of the Audit and Risk Committee and the Chief Executive Annual financial accounts Policy The

Commission will produce the statutory annual report and accounts in accordance with all relevant accounting standards, the HM Treasury financial reporting manual, agreed timetables and the current Accounts Direction as issued by the Treasury. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services will ensure that: a timetable for the production of the Annual Accounts is prepared and agreed with external audit and the Accounting Officer the accounts are prepared in accordance with the timetable approved by the Accounting Officer, audited and laid before Parliament due consideration is given to the external audit completion report and all issues are fully addressed within agreed timescales

Accounting systems Policy The Commission will operate one central accounting system from which management and financial accounts will be generated. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services will ensure that the Commission has appropriate financial and other software to enable it to comply with these policies.

Claims and litigation Policy The Commission will maintain arrangements to ensure that all claims and existing or potential litigation against the Commission are handled properly having regard to the Commission's statutory functions and position as a public body, the need to achieve value for money and relevant commercial principles.

General Counsel will ensure that procedures are in place to report as soon as practicable any claim having potential significant consequences to the Chief Executive. These claims will be reported to the Audit and Risk Committee as part of the arrangements for monitoring risks.

Fraud Policy The Commission requires all staff at all times to act honestly and with integrity and to safeguard the public resources for which they are responsible. The Commission will not tolerate any fraud perpetrated against it and will actively pursue any loss suffered. Within the detailed policies the Commission will maintain a Fraud Response Plan and a response to Money Laundering legislation.

General Counsel will: after consultation with the Commission's fraud specialists, ensure that the Detailed Financial Policies include a Fraud Response Plan and the Commission's response to Money Laundering legislation ensure that there are regular communications to line managers and to staff in general reminding them of their responsibilities under this policy

Fees and charging Policy The Commission will review the scales of fees and charges annually and the arrangements in place to collect fees and charges so that it can meet its statutory responsibilities to collect fees for political party registration and fines. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services will: with the Director of Regulation review the scales of fees for political party registration and fines to ensure that the costs of providing these services are known and statutory requirements are met approve the method of calculating charges and fees where agreements are reached to charge for services or where the Commission is involved in a competitive tender situation approve the methodology for calculating ad hoc fees approve the methodology for internal recharges

Payments to outside bodies Policy The Commission will administer appropriate grant schemes as is statutorily required, or permitted, to deliver its corporate objectives taking into account the costs and benefits of doing so. Work may be contracted to other bodies and administered under appropriate contracts or memorandum of understanding. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services will: with the Director of Electoral Administration and Guidance review the arrangements for the administration of fees and charges in relation to referendum with the Director of Regulation review the arrangements in place to administer and account for

Policy Development Grants approve the arrangements for administering and accounting for any grant scheme operated by the Commission ensure that proposals for any new grant scheme are supported by legislation and approved by the Board ensure that grant schemes are reviewed by internal or external audit on an annual basis

Annex E: Responsibilities of the Accounting Officer 3 Role of the accounting officer Accounting officers must be able to assure Parliament and the public of high standards of probity in the management of public funds. Formally the accounting officer in a public sector organisation is someone whom Parliament may call to account for the stewardship of the resources within its control. Appointment of the accounting officer The Commission's Accounting Officer is appointed under Schedule 1, paragraph 19 (1) of PPERA. Special responsibilities of accounting officers Each accounting officer takes personal responsibility for ensuring that the organisation they manage delivers the standards referenced in Managing Public Money. In particular, the accounting officer must personally sign: the accounts the annual report governance statement And, having been satisfied that they have been properly prepared to reflect the business of the organisation, must personally approve: voted budget limits the associated Estimates Memorandum There are several other areas where accounting officers should take personal responsibility: regularity and propriety, including seeking Treasury approval for any expenditure outside the normal delegations or outside the subheads of Estimates selection and appraisal of programmes and projects: using the Treasury's Green Book to evaluate alternatives, and good quality project and programme management techniques, such as PRINCE2, to track and where necessary adjust progress affordability and sustainability: respecting agreed budgets and avoiding unaffordable longer term commitments, taking a proportionate view about other demands for resources value for money: ensuring that the organisation's procurement, projects and processes are systematically evaluated and assessed to provide confidence about suitability, effectiveness, prudence, quality, good value and avoidance of error and other waste, judged for the public sector as a whole, not just for the accounting officer's organisation management of opportunity and risk to achieve the right balance commensurate with the institution's business and risk appetite learning from experience, both using internal feedback, and from right across the public sector accounting accurately for the organisation's financial position and transactions: to ensure that the published financial information is transparent and up to date; and that the organisation's efficiency in the use of resources is tracked and recorded When the accounting officer is not available Each public sector organisation must have an accounting officer available for advice or decision as necessary at short notice. When the accounting officer is absent and cannot readily be contacted, the Director of Finance and Corporate Services should deputise. If a significant absence is planned, the accounting officer or in their absence the Director of Finance and Corporate Services, may invite the Speaker's Committee to appoint a temporary acting accounting officer. Conflicts of interest If an accounting officer faces an actual or potential conflict of interest, it is essential to find a way of dealing with it. Possible ways of managing this issue include: for a significant but temporary conflict, inviting the Speaker's Committee to appoint an interim accounting officer for the period of the conflict of interest for a minor conflict, declaring the conflict and arranging for someone other than the accounting officer to make decisions on the issue(s) in question for serious and lasting conflicts, resignation Annex F: Interpretations Interpretation The Board of the Commission shall be the final authority on the interpretation of this document. The Secretary to the Commission Board shall advise the Board at ordinary meetings on the interpretation of this document. At committee and other meetings, the responsible officer for administrative and secretarial functions for the meeting shall advise on the interpretation of this document. Any expression to which meaning is given in the Commission's governing legislation shall have the same meaning in

this document. In addition: ‘Accounting Officer’ means the Officer responsible and accountable for funds entrusted to the Commission – for the Commission it shall be the Chief Executive ‘Board’ means the Board of Electoral Commissioners together ‘Chair’ is the person appointed by Her Majesty the Queen on recommendation of the House of Commons. ‘Commission’ means the Electoral Commission. ‘Commissioner’ or ‘Board Member’ or ‘Member’ means a person appointed by Her Majesty the Queen to be a member of the Commission. ‘Chief Executive’ means the chief executive officer of the Commission and the Commission’s Accounting Officer. ‘Significant Publications’ as referred to in the scheme of delegation means the Corporate Plan, Annual Report, Statutory reports including election reports, Strategies for major public awareness campaigns, and significant policy reports ‘Nominated Officer’ means an officer charged with responsibility for discharging specific tasks under Standing Orders and other documents that have the force of Standing Orders. ‘Officer’ means an employee of the Commission. Annex G: Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Terms of Reference Purpose The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee supports the Accounting Officer in carrying out their formal accountability responsibilities. The Committee offers objective advice and ensures that the most efficient, effective and economic risk, control, assurance and governance processes are in place. The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee also acts on behalf of the Board to provide them with assurance on these issues. Membership There shall be three members of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, including the Chair. The Chair is appointed by the Commission Board. An Independent Adviser to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee shall be appointed by the Commission Board, but not be a member of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. The Independent Adviser may be invited to attend at least one meeting of the Commission Board a year, to support the presentation of accounts and the annual report of the Audit and Risk Committee to the Commission Board. The Board will appoint three of their number to be members of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. The Chair of the Electoral Commission may not be appointed as a member of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. Members of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee will serve for three years, unless a member ceases to be an Electoral Commissioner or asks to stand down. Members may be re-appointed for a further period not exceeding three years, or until the expiry of their term as a Commissioner (if that is sooner). Members shall have an induction programme provided for them. Other attendees The Electoral Commission’s Accounting Officer, the Director of Finance and Corporate Services and Head of Strategic Planning and Performance, together with representatives of the National Audit Office and Internal Audit, will normally attend meetings of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee by invitation. The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee may ask any other member of the Commission’s staff to attend its meetings to help with its consideration of any matter. The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee may ask any or all of those who are not the Chair or members to withdraw, to facilitate open and frank discussion of particular matters. Access The Head of Internal Audit and the representative of the National Audit Office will have free and confidential access to the Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. A representative of the National Audit Office and the Head of Internal Audit will have a right to attend any meeting of the Electoral Commissioners (except those involving parties and election finance regulatory decisions) on request. The Board will appoint as an Independent Adviser to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee a person with a CCAB or equivalent accountancy qualification who has no other connection with the Commission. The independent adviser shall not be a member of the Committee nor vote. Chair In the absence of the Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, the

members of the Committee may agree that another member will take the chair for the time being. Secretary Support to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee will be provided by the Secretary to the Commission Board. Quorum Two members of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee will constitute a quorum. Meetings The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee will meet regularly and at least three times a year. The Chair of the Committee may convene additional meetings as necessary, including at the request of the Accounting Officer, the Head of Internal Audit or the National Audit Office.

Responsibilities The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee supports the Accounting Officer in discharging his or her formal accountability responsibilities, by offering objective advice and ensuring that the most efficient, effective and economic risk, control and governance processes are in place, and that the associated assurance processes are optimal. The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee also acts on behalf of the Board to provide them with assurance on these issues. The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee tests and challenges the assurances which are available to the Accounting Officer, the way in which these assurances are developed, and the management priorities and approaches on which the assurances are premised. In addition, from the work it does, the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee will develop good knowledge of areas of weakness in the organisation and of their significance. This can assist the Accounting Officer in identifying his or her priorities for action. To aid its work the Committee shall be provided with a dashboard covering key areas of its responsibilities. The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee will review in particular: The strategic processes for risk, control (including financial management and control and organisational performance management), assurance and governance (including major corporate policies) the planned activity and results within information governance and the Annual Assessment of Information Risk Management the Annual Governance Statement and recommend approval of the Statement by the accounting officer as appropriate the accounting policies and the annual accounts of the Electoral Commission, including the process for review of the accounts prior to submission for audit; levels of error identified; and management's letter of representation to the National Audit Office the plans and reports of the National Audit Office and management responses to any proposals the reports of the internal audit service and management responses to any proposals, as well as agree the strategic and annual internal audit plans assurances relating to the corporate governance requirements for the Electoral Commission including the approval of the Whistleblowing Policy, the Anti-fraud Policy, the Anti-bribery policy, and the policy for authorising claims for expenses from the Chief Executive and Chair together with review of authorised expenses prior to publication, with an opportunity to raise any queries with the Board proposals for tendering for Internal Audit services, or for the purchase of non-audit services from contractors who provide audit services The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee will make an annual report to the Commission Board on its work. Minutes Minutes of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee's meetings will be taken and, subject to the endorsement of the Chair, circulated to committee members, and included as draft on the agenda of the next meeting of the Commission Board, where they will be presented by either the Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee or one of the members of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on the Chair's behalf. They will be approved at the next meeting of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, and published. [As approved by ARAC on 21 February. Board 22 March 2023] Annex H: Remuneration and Human Resources Committee Terms of Reference Purpose The Committee shall act as an advisory group on the extent to which organisational development and strategic HR matters support the Board's strategic

direction for the Commission. The Remuneration and Human Resources Committee has been established to support the Chair, Board and the Chief Executive as Accounting Officer (as appropriate) in their responsibilities for: approve significant changes to organisational structure (including the structure of the Executive Team) and/or overall staff terms and conditions of employment and any impact of the change such as termination of contracts reviewing the policy for and recommending the remuneration of the Chief Executive (at the point of recruitment, or at another time if required) agreeing the annual negotiating remit for staff pay awards, (including the Executive Team), taking account of the Commission's obligations under PPERA 2000 recommending the fee for the independent advisor to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee recommending the membership of Appointment Panels for the roles of Independent Advisor/Chair to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, and for the Chief Executive, for approval by the Board Membership The Committee shall consist of three Electoral Commissioners. Only members of the Committee have the right to attend Committee meetings. However, other individuals such as the Chief Executive, the Director of Finance and Corporate Services, the Head of Human Resources and external advisers may be invited to attend for all or part of any meeting where appropriate. Members of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee will serve for three years, unless a member ceases to be an Electoral Commissioner or asks to stand down. They may be re-appointed for a further period not exceeding three years. Members shall have an induction programme provided for them. Chair The Chair of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee is appointed by the Commission Board. In the absence of the Chair of the Remuneration Committee and Human Resources, the members of the Committee may agree that another member will take the chair. Secretary The Board Secretary or the Human Resources Manager will provide administrative support to the Committee. Quorum The quorum necessary for the transaction of business shall be two. Meetings The Committee shall meet at least four times a year and at such other times as necessary. With regards to matters of remuneration the Committee shall: approve the framework for the total benefits package (remuneration and employee benefits) for all staff of the Electoral Commission (including the Executive Team); any significant changes to overall staff terms and conditions of employment and any related changes such as termination of contracts recommend to the Board the framework for the remuneration of the Chief Executive, if different from the framework applying to all other staff in determining such frameworks and policies, take into account that members of staff should be provided with appropriate incentives to encourage enhanced individual and collective performance and in a fair and responsible manner, be rewarded for their individual contributions to the success of the Commission; and take account of PPERA review the on-going appropriateness and relevance of the total benefits framework and propose amendments as appropriate recommend to the Board any changes to the fee for the independent Advisor to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. It is anticipated that any increase will be in line with that awarded to Commissioners to review an annual report to the Committee of any terms, or payments made on termination of employment to ensure that failure is not rewarded and that the duty to mitigate loss is fully recognised. The Chair of the Committee will be notified in advance of making such terms and payments (e.g. compromise agreements) to review workforce key performance indicators, annual staff survey results, and staff well being indicators. to request from the Commission any reports or surveys which it deems necessary to help it fulfil its obligations for example salary benchmarking reports or information about remuneration in other companies to report annually to the Board on the work of the Committee With regards to Human Resources the Committee shall act as an advisory

group as required on such matters as: the overall approach and scope of the Human Resources strategy particularly relating to organisational design, significant restructuring or change programmes major trade union or industrial relations issues affecting the whole Commission organisational development relating to the beliefs, values, culture and effectiveness of the Commission the Commission's approach, within its workforce, to equality, diversity and inclusion health and safety, including the welfare of Commission staff provision of support to the Chair in the recruitment of the Chief Executive (including recommending the composition and membership of the Appointments Panel to the Board for its approval) The Committee shall review its own terms of reference annually Minutes The Secretary shall minute the proceedings and resolutions of all committee meetings, including the names of those present and in attendance. Minutes of committee meetings shall be circulated promptly to the Chair and all members of the Committee. After approval by the Chair of the committee the minutes will be circulated to all members of the Board (unless a conflict of interest exists) at its next available meeting, for information. The minutes shall be formally agreed at the next meeting of the Committee. Remco reviewed these terms of reference in May 2022 and November 2022. Board approved 22 March 2023] Annex I: Code of Conduct for Electoral Commissioners This is the Code of Conduct that our Commissions agree to when they start their term. The Code of Conduct was reviewed and approved by the Board on 22 March 2023. 1. In this document to distinguish between 'the Commission' as the whole organisation and the 'Commission' meaning the body of Commissioners together, the term 'Electoral Commission', or 'Commission' refers to the former, and 'Board' refers to the latter. ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. Significant publications means any work of sufficient significance to merit consideration by the Chair and the Chief Executive, and, in some instances, by the Board. This includes: Corporate Plan, Annual Report, statutory reports including election reports and significant policy reports, significant published guidance and significant research reports. ■ Back to content at footnote 2 3. Adapted from Chapter 3 of 'Managing Public Money', HM Treasury, October 2007 ■ Back to content at footnote 3 Related content Our Commissioners Electoral Commission Board Find out about our Electoral Commission board, and read the minutes of past meetings Interim corporate plan 2020/21 - 2024/25 Our interim corporate plan was published following the 2019 UK Parliament general election. It has now been replaced by our 2022/23 to 2026/27 plan.

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11. Managing risk and opportunities You are in the Corporate plan 2022/23 to 2026/27 section Home Our plans and priorities Corporate plan 2022/23 to 2026/27 First published: 25 April 2022 Last updated: 25 April 2022 Overview We have designed our risk management processes to: maintain a clear framework across the organisation within which risks are identified, assessed, managed and regularly reviewed assign specific responsibility for managing risks in their areas of responsibility to individual Executive Team members (including managing risks to significant projects) ensure that the likelihood and impact of risks are assessed on a consistent basis ensure that existing risks are regularly reviewed and that new risks are identified and managed provide the Chief Executive, the Audit and Risk Committee and the Board with assurance that the risks are being managed appropriately We identify and evaluate risks by: taking key decisions following consideration of opportunities, risks and associated mitigations, which are separately identified in papers for the Board and those taking delegated decisions considering whether new risks should be added to the organisational risk register, and whether the existing risks' profiles need to be changed, both as changes are identified and as part of our quarterly review of risk completing a review of risk at the start of each year, to ensure that the organisational risk register captures risk to the delivery of objectives in our Corporate Plan presenting a risk report to each meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee and also annually to the Board identifying risk through our planning process, audit, review of operations and training activities assigning owners to risks who formally review the likelihood, potential impact and the mitigations in place for, all risks each quarter subject to review by the Audit and Risk Committee We are committed to continuously improving our risk management processes and are currently reviewing our procedures to ensure they remain in line with good practice and match our ambitions for this Corporate Plan period. Navigation 10. Measuring our performance Section 10 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan 12. Our governance arrangements Section 12 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan

Board minutes: 22 April 2020 | Electoral Commission Search
Board minutes: 22 April 2020 You are in the Electoral Commission Board section
Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Who was at the meeting Apologies and introductions Declarations of interest Minutes of the Commission Board meeting of 18 March 2020 Coronavirus (COVID-19) - impact on the Commission and progress on key work areas Updated timeline for the corporate planning process 2021/26 Annual review of risk Commission Board effectiveness review Forward plan of Board business Commission Board action tracker First published: 26 June 2020 Last updated: 21 June 2021 Meeting overview Date: Wednesday 22 April 2020 Time: 9:30am to 12:25pm Location: By video conference to Boothroyd Room, 3 Bunhill Row, London Date of next scheduled meeting: Wednesday 20 May Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Holmes, Chair Alasdair Morgan Anna Carragher Elan Closs Stephens Joan Walley Rob Vincent Sarah Chambers Stephen Gilbert Sue Bruce Bob Posner, Chief Executive Craig Westwood, Director, Communications, Policy and Research Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Amanda Kelly, Interim General Counsel David Bailey, Head of Strategic Planning and Performance Katharine Sparrow, Senior Executive Assistant Isabella Coventry, Acting Board Secretary Apologies and introductions There were no apologies. Declarations of interest There were no new declarations of interest. Minutes of the Commission Board meeting of 18 March 2020 Resolved: That the minutes of the Commission Board meeting on 18 March 2020 be agreed. Coronavirus (COVID-19) - impact on the Commission and progress on key work areas (EC 33/20) The Chief Executive noted the organisation's swift transition to remote working had gone well overall, and he hoped it had also been beneficial for our staff's health, as we did not have reports of widespread illness. The Board heard that the Speaker's Committee had approved our interim Corporate Plan and budget, and work was now underway to consider how best to deliver what was in the plan in the context of the coronavirus pandemic. The Board discussed the impact of the current situation on the ability for parties and campaigners to submit their returns by the statutory deadlines and what this would mean for our transparency publications. The Director of Regulation said we were in communication with our stakeholders to understand their specific situations and the impact this would have on compliance. She noted a late return was not automatically an offence. The Director of Electoral Administration and Guidance updated the Board on the secondary legislation relating to the postponement of the 2020 polls, and the work that the Cabinet Office were leading to plan for the elections that would now take place in 2021. The Board heard that the government was due to take a decision on the canvas shortly. The current expectation was that the reformed canvas would proceed, though possibly with a revised end date, and we continued to support Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) and their teams in preparing for this. The Board agreed that a discussion at a future meeting around the May 2021 polls and the sequencing of elections after that would be useful. The Director of Communications, Policy and Research updated the Board on the work his teams were doing to ensure our stakeholders continued to be informed, while at the same time acknowledging that some currently had different priorities. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services said work was underway to prepare the end of year accounts. Overall, this was progressing smoothly, but he noted there would likely be a couple of issues that would need discussion with the National Audit Office (NAO) before the accounts could be settled. He also updated the Board on the financial position at the end of the financial year, noting we had ended the year with a substantial underspend. This related principally to the unscheduled UK

Parliamentary General Election (UKPGE) and the volatile electoral year, along with decisions we had taken around the core budget to manage what could have been a significant overspend. He noted that while we had a good narrative to explain the situation, we would also be challenging ourselves to see if there was anything we could have done differently to manage the situation. The Board discussed the possible impact the current situation around the coronavirus pandemic and the economic crisis this had created could have on the Commission's future budgets. Action: Add an agenda item on the timeline for the 2021 polls and the sequencing of elections after that date, to the forward plan of Board business. Resolved: That the paper be noted.

Updated timeline for the corporate planning process 2021/26 (EC 34/20) The Head of Strategic Planning and Performance updated the Board on the revised timeline for the production of the new Corporate Plan. The Board discussed the opportunities this could present to take account of the current situation and our ambitions for the longer-term modernisation agenda. The Chief Executive noted the occasions on the Board forward plan for these discussions. Resolved: That the paper be noted. Annual review of risk (EC 35/20) The Head of Strategic Planning and Performance reminded the Board this report was a backward looking review of how risk had been managed through the last year. He noted that Risk 5 relating to Brexit had now been closed. The Chief Executive highlighted some of the actions taken though the year to improve the way the organisation managed risk. The Board discussed the importance of reflecting the impact of the coronavirus pandemic in our current risk registers. Resolved: That the paper be noted. Commission Board effectiveness review (EC 36/20) The Chair noted that due to the current coronavirus situation, the independent led Board effectiveness review had been delayed, but plans were in place for them to observe at a future meeting and to consult with individual Board members. This delay meant we had not completed an effectiveness review in the last financial year, so this was the Board's opportunity to raise anything in advance of the more substantial review, which would get underway shortly. The Board discussed the Report. Issues noted for further consideration included The make-up and diversity of the Board How Board members might increase their engagement with a wider range of stakeholders How Board members could be engaged in the wider organisation between meetings Resolved: That the paper be noted, in advance of the full Board effectiveness review being carried out by the independent organisation engaged for those purposes. Forward plan of Board business (EC 37/20) The Board considered whether a discussion around electoral divergence and the different approaches the devolved governments were taking to electoral modernisation might be useful. Action: Add a discussion around how we use our research to the May Board agenda, with a more substantive discussion at the September Board meeting Action: In the present context, Chief Executive's Update reports to include an update on risk Resolved: That the paper be noted. Commission Board action tracker (EC 38/20) Resolved: That the paper be noted.

Single Equalities Scheme for Northern Ireland | Electoral Commission Search Single Equalities Scheme for Northern Ireland You are in the Our plans and priorities section Home Our plans and priorities Currently reading: of 11 - Show page contents On this page Chapter 1: Introduction Chapter 2: Our arrangements for assessing our compliance with the section 75 duties Chapter 3: Our arrangements for consulting Chapter 4: Our arrangements for assessing, monitoring and publishing the impact of policies Chapter 5: Learning and development for our staff Chapter 6: Arrangements for ensuring and assessing public access to information and services we provide Chapter 7: Timetable for measures proposed Chapter 8: Our complaints procedure Chapter 9: Publication of the Single Equality Scheme Chapter 10: Review of our Equality Scheme Appendix Foreword The Electoral Commission is a public body that serves the electorate across the whole of the United Kingdom. Our aim is to provide equal access to democracy for all. That is why, in line with previous Equality Schemes, we have produced an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy which covers all parts of the UK. Like any organisation, we have a range of statutory obligations to ensure we promote equality, diversity and inclusivity. We have set out in the strategy what these are and how we comply with them in our activities. But equality, diversity and inclusion go beyond compliance. We know we have to do more to meet this challenge. Our Strategy sets out our aspirations to go further and challenge ourselves to reflect fully the diversity of the electorate in our work to support democracy. We recognise however that different legislation on equalities applies in Northern Ireland. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998) requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group. In this Equality Scheme we set out how the Electoral Commission proposes to fulfil these statutory duties and the other statutory duties which apply. We will commit the necessary resources in terms of people, time and money to make sure that we comply with the Section 75 statutory duties and that the equality scheme is implemented effectively and on time. We commit to having effective internal arrangements in place for ensuring our effective compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties and for monitoring and reviewing our progress. We will continue to deliver a programme of communication and training for staff and Board members. We will continue to raise awareness for our consultees on the Section 75 statutory duties and our commitments in our equality scheme. We realise the importance of the role of the community and voluntary sector and the general public in ensuring that these duties are effectively implemented; our Scheme is designed to ensure that there are opportunities for those affected by our work to influence how we carry out these duties and to offer the opportunity to make complaints where we do not. We will report annually to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) on our delivery of this scheme and our equalities progress in Northern Ireland including our progress against our Disability Action Plan. On behalf of the Electoral Commission we are pleased to support and endorse this Equality Scheme which has been drawn up in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and the guidelines of the Northern Ireland Equality Commission and which forms part of our wider Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. We are fully committed to effectively fulfilling our Section 75 statutory duties across all our functions (including service provision, procurement and employment) through the effective implementation of this Scheme. Chapter 1: Introduction Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 Section 75 of the Northern

Ireland Act 1998 requires the Electoral Commission to comply with two statutory duties: Section 75 (1) of the Northern Ireland Act (1998) requires us, in carrying out our functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity: between people of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation between men and women generally between people with a disability and people without, and between people with dependants and people without Section 75 (2) requires us in addition to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group. "Functions" includes our "powers and duties" including our employment and procurement functions. How we propose to fulfil the Section 75 duties in relation to our relevant functions Schedule 9.4 (1) of the 1998 Act requires us as a designated public authority to set out in an Equality Scheme how it proposes to fulfil the duties imposed by Section 75. This Scheme accordingly sets out how we propose to do so and our plan for implementation. We are committed to the discharge of our Section 75 obligations in all parts of our organisation, and we will commit the necessary available resources in terms of people, time and money to ensure that the Section 75 statutory duties are complied with and that our Equality Scheme can be implemented effectively. We have set out in Chapter 1 of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy the purpose and objectives of the Electoral Commission across the UK. Chapter 2: Our arrangements for assessing our compliance with the section 75 duties The Electoral Commission has three key objectives for equality, diversity and inclusion: Objective 1: ensure that everyone who is eligible is able to participate in the democratic process, whether as voter, campaigner or standing for office, by identifying barriers, making recommendations and working with others to remove them. This will be delivered through a range of activities seeking to promote equality in the democratic process. Objective 2: ensure that we embed equality, diversity and inclusion in all our work, treat all our customers and partners fairly and with respect, and are transparent in the decisions we make. This will be delivered by ensuring that equality is embedded in our processes and decisions. Objective 3: ensure equality of opportunity for everyone at the Commission and ensure that all our staff are treated fairly and with respect. This will be delivered through a range of policies designed to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion for all those who work and apply to work at the Commission. We set out in our Strategy the steps we have already taken to promote equality, diversity and inclusion and our priorities for action. The Action Plan sets out what we propose to do next, when we will do it, how we will measure success and who is responsible for delivery. Our arrangements for compliance with our statutory duties under Section 75 are set out at para 2.7 below. Further detail can be found in Chapter 3 (consultation), Chapter 4 (assessing, monitoring and publishing the impact of policies), Chapter 6 (ensuring and assessing public access to information and services), Chapter 8 (complaints) and Chapter 9 (publication). Responsibilities and reporting We are committed to the fulfilment of our Section 75 obligations in all parts of our work. By delegated authority, overall responsibility for the Commission's Single Equality Scheme rests with our Chief Executive. Operational responsibility for the day to day implementation of this scheme in respect of Northern Ireland rests with the Head of the Electoral Commission in Northern Ireland. The development, maintenance, implementation and review of our Single Equality Scheme in line with our statutory duties and good practice issued by the ECNI is the responsibility of the Commission's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead. They report to the Head of Strategic Planning and Performance as part of the Directorate

of Finance and Corporate Services. If you have any questions or comments please contact: Cahir Hughes Head of the Electoral Commission in Northern Ireland 4 Cromac Place The Gasworks Belfast BT7 2JB 0333 103 1928 infonorthernireland@electoralcommission.org.uk Objectives and targets relating to our statutory duties and our objectives for equality, diversity and inclusion are integrated into our strategic and operational business plans. These are also reflected in employees' job descriptions, objectives and regular performance reviews. We will prepare an annual review of the progress we have made on implementing the arrangements set out in this scheme and how we meet our Section 75 statutory duties. We will send this annual report of our progress to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland by 31 August each year and will be mindful of any guidance on annual reporting issued by the Equality Commission. We will publish progress reports on our website after each annual review, and will include an update on progress in our Annual Report. Our Annual Report is available on our website www.electoralcommission.org.uk or by contacting: Cahir Hughes Head of the Electoral Commission in Northern Ireland 4 Cromac Place The Gasworks Belfast BT7 2JB 0333 103 1928 infonorthernireland@electoralcommission.org.uk We will liaise closely with the ECNI to ensure that progress on the implementation of this equality scheme is maintained. Our EDI Strategy and this Scheme have been approved by the Electoral Commission Board. Our Action Plan and our Timetable for Action in Northern Ireland We have developed an Action Plan for the Commission which forms part of this Strategy. Appendix 4 of this Scheme sets out a Timetable for Action in Northern Ireland. Our Plan and Timetable have been developed and prioritised on the basis of an audit of inequalities set out in Chapter 1 of the Strategy. This has gathered and analysed information across Section 75 categories to identify the inequalities that exist for our service users and those affected by our policies. It sets out how we propose to deliver against our three equality objectives based on our analysis of the inequalities that may exist for our service users, those affected by our policies and those who work for the Commission. We have set out proposed actions which are specific, measurable, linked to achievable outcomes, realistic and timebound, We have identified performance indicators, timescales and responsibilities. The Action Plan and Timetable are aligned with our corporate planning and annual business planning cycles, and actions are reflected in our Operational Plans. We have consulted stakeholders on the Strategy, Action Plan and Timetable and will keep under review with them. We will monitor progress on the delivery of these action measures annually and update the Action Plan and Timetable as necessary. We will inform the ECNI of any changes or amendments to our Action Plan and Timetable and will also include this information in our Section 75 annual progress report to the Commission. Our Section 75 annual progress report will incorporate information on progress we have made in implementing our action plans/action measures. The Action Plan and Timetable can be obtained from our website www.electoralcommission.org.uk or by contacting: Cahir Hughes Head of the Electoral Commission in Northern Ireland 4 Cromac Place The Gasworks Belfast BT7 2JB 0333 103 1928 infonorthernireland@electoralcommission.org.uk The Scheme is available on request in alternative formats. Chapter 3: Our arrangements for consulting Chapter 3 summary We recognise the importance of consultation in all aspects of our work and specifically in the implementation of our statutory equality duties. We will consult on our Strategy, Scheme and Action Plan, on Equality Impact Assessments and other matters relevant to our equality duties and specifically to the Section 75 statutory duties. We will consult in accordance with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland guidance 'Section 75 of the Northern

Ireland Act 1998 – A guide for public authorities (April 2010). This may include consulting the ECNI, representative groups of Section 75 categories, voluntary and community groups, and other groups who have a legitimate interest in the matter as appropriate. All consultations will seek the views of those directly affected by the issue under discussion: the ECNI, representative groups, voluntary and community groups, staff and trade unions and other groups who have a legitimate interest in the process whether or not they have a direct economic or personal interest. This will be carried out initially by notifying all consultees we have identified in the most appropriate way (for example e-mail), followed up as appropriate by targeted consultation. We will consult as early as possible and tailor our methods of consultation to what our stakeholders tell us is appropriate. Methods of consultation could include e-mail contact, discussion with representative groups and discussion with those directly affected. This list is not exhaustive and we may use other methods. We will consider accessibility and format in providing information to ensure barriers in responding to consultation are removed as far as possible, and give consideration to how best to communicate with young people, people with disabilities such as learning disabilities, and black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. We will make information available in alternative formats on request and make sure we do so in a timely fashion allowing equal time for consultees to respond. We will where appropriate provide specific training on facilitating consultations. We will develop a programme of awareness raising through social media, campaigns and partnerships which complements the work we currently do with stakeholders. In order to ensure groups have enough time to consult amongst themselves, we will consult for a minimum of twelve weeks unless there are exceptional circumstances, for example any created by public health emergencies or unscheduled electoral events, where this is not feasible: in such circumstances we may consult for eight weeks or after implementation. We will review and monitor to ensure that any impacts of the policy are considered. We will as a matter of course allow a longer period for consultation on complex matters or where holiday periods supervene. We will take appropriate measures to meet the differing needs of those attending consultation meetings. We will make information available in appropriate formats and including detailed information on the policy proposal and relevant quantitative and qualitative data. In making a decision with respect to a policy which is adopted or proposed for adoption, we will take into account any assessment and consultation. We will provide feedback which is timely; which covers the policy, a summary of comments and a summary of our consideration and response; and which is in a format suitable to consultees. We have included a list of our consultees at the end of this appendix and it is available on our website. It can also be obtained from our website www.electoralcommission.org.uk, or by contacting Cahir Hughes Head of the Electoral Commission in Northern Ireland 4 Cromac Place The Gasworks Belfast BT7 2JB 0333 103 1928 infonorthernireland@electoralcommission.org.uk Our consultation list is not exhaustive and will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it remains relevant to our functions and policies. We welcome enquiries from people and/or organisations who would like to be added to this list, and invite them to contact the Head of the Electoral Commission in Northern Ireland. Chapter 4: Our arrangements for assessing, monitoring and publishing the impact of policies Our arrangements for assessing the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed for adoption on the promotion of equality of opportunity In terms of our equality duties ‘policy’ is broadly defined and covers all the ways in which we carry out or propose to carry out our functions as a regulator; this includes any strategy, plan, function, project, service, event

or review. The term policy is also used for any proposed, amended or existing strategy, policy initiative or practice and/or decision, whether written or unwritten and irrespective of the label given to it, e.g. 'draft', 'pilot'. When we make policy decisions, we will take into account any assessment and consultation that has been carried out in relation to the policy. We use evidence based screening and equality impact assessments to analyse the likely impact of a policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations. In carrying out these assessments we will relate them to the intended outcomes of the policy in question and will continue to engage with the ECNI to ensure best practice. We will trial and consult on a new Equality Impact Assessment approach. This comprises a new form for screening, an updated EQIA template and full guidance to help officers complete an EQIA. We have also clarified our scrutiny and sign-off process. The recruitment of a permanent EDI lead will provide resource and support for those completing EQIAs. We have also rolled out in-depth training. Screening Screening enables us to identify those policies that are likely to have an impact on equality of opportunity and/or good relations. Screening is completed at the earliest opportunity in the policy development and review process. Policies we propose to adopt will be subject to screening prior to implementation; where there are a series of stages we may screen more than once. The lead officer responsible for putting together the policy and taking the decisions will take the lead role in screening that policy. Screening will also involve other relevant team members, for example, our senior EDI lead, those who implement the policy and staff members from other relevant work areas. Where appropriate we will include key stakeholders in the screening process. The screening process for all policies includes the following: The likely impact on those in the Section 75 equality categories Opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for those within the Section 75 categories The extent to which the policy is likely to impact on good relations between people of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group; Opportunities to better promote good relations between people of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group To help us answer these questions we gather relevant information and data, both qualitative and quantitative. In taking this into account we consider the different needs, experiences and priorities of the Section 75 equality categories. The screening decision is informed by this evidence. Our screening will lead to three potential outcomes: The policy is screened in and needs a full EqIA The policy is screened out but needs mitigation or an alternative policy The policy is screened out and does not need an EqIA If our screening concludes that the likely impact is minor, we may decide to carry out a full EqIA anyway; and we will consider potential mitigations and alternative policies. Where we do so we will explain this in the screening assessment. The decision will be discussed with our EDI Senior Lead and signed off at Director level. If the effect is major we will as a rule proceed to a full EqIA. This will be discussed with our EDI Senior Lead and signed off at Director level. If the screening concludes that there is no impact, we will give reasons as to why we are screening the policy out. The assessment will be discussed with our EDI Senior Lead and signed off at Director level. As soon as possible following the completion of the screening process, the screening template, signed off and approved by the senior manager responsible for the policy, will be made available on our website www.electoralcommission.org.uk and on request from: Cahir Hughes Head of the Electoral Commission in Northern Ireland 4 Cromac Place The Gasworks Belfast BT7 2JB 0333 103 1928 infonorthernireland@electoralcommission.org.uk We will publish a quarterly list of screenings we have carried out on our website and alert our

consultees. Screenings will be made available on request. If a consultee raises a concern about the screening based on supporting evidence, including the ECNI, we will review the screening decision. Our screening reports are published quarterly (see below for details) Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) An EqIA is a thorough and systematic analysis of a policy. Its primary function is to determine the extent of any impact on the Section 75 categories and to determine if the impact is an adverse one. It is also an opportunity to demonstrate the likely positive outcomes of a policy and to seek ways to promote more effectively equality of opportunity and good relations. If screening identifies the need for an EqIA, we will carry this out in line with the principles laid down by the ECNI and set out in our own guidance. It will be carried out as part of the policy development process before the policy is adopted and implemented. EqIAs will be subject to consultation as set out in chapter 3 above. We will allow sufficient time for effective consultation and observe the timescales set out in the ECNI's Guide to the Statutory Duties. Our arrangements for publishing the results of screening and EqIAs As set out above, we make publicly available on our website the likely impact of our policies on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations. What we publish Screening reports are published quarterly. Screening reports detail: All policies screened by the Electoral Commission over the three month period A statement of the aim(s) of the policy/policies to which the assessment relates Consideration given to measures which might mitigate any adverse impact Consideration given to alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity; Screening decisions, i.e: whether the policy has been 'screened in' for equality impact assessment. whether the policy has been 'screened out' with mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted. whether the policy has been 'screened out' without mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted. Where applicable, a timetable for conducting equality impact assessments A link to the completed screening template(s) on our website We will publish a quarterly list of all screenings carried out and alert consultees. Where exceptionally a policy applies only in Northern Ireland we will do this only in Northern Ireland. Conversely where a policy exceptionally does not apply in Northern Ireland we will not follow this procedure. All screening reports will follow our template. For details on the availability of our screening templates please check our screening process . We will publish our EqIAs on our website following our EqIA template and setting out the results of the assessment. Equality impact assessments include: A statement of the aim of the policy assessed Information and data collected Details of the assessment of impact(s) Consideration given to measures which might mitigate any adverse impact Consideration given to alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity Consultation responses The decision taken Future monitoring plans How we publish the information All information we publish meets WCAG guidelines and can be made available in alternative formats. Where we publish the information The results of our assessments (screening reports and completed templates, the results of equality impact assessments) are available on our website <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/about-us/equality-anddiversity> and by contacting: Cindy Williams The Electoral Commission 3, Bunhill Row London EC1Y 8YZ edi@electoralcommission.org.uk In addition to the above, screening reports (electronic link or hard copy on request if more suitable for recipients) which include all policies screened over a 3 month period are also sent directly to all NI consultees on a quarterly basis. As set out above we will not do this if, exceptionally, the measures do not apply in NI. We will inform the general public

through communications such as press releases where this is necessary and/or appropriate. Our arrangements for monitoring any adverse impact of policies we have adopted on equality of opportunity Monitoring can help us to deliver better public services and continuous improvements. Monitoring equality information involves the processing of sensitive personal data (data relating to the racial or ethnic origin of individuals, sexual orientation, political opinion, religious belief, etc). To ensure that we monitor information confidentially and effectively we will follow guidance from the Office of the Information Commissioner and the ECNI. We will monitor any adverse impact on the promotion of equality of opportunity of policies we have adopted. We are also committed to monitoring more broadly to identify opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations in line with ECNI guidance. The systems we have established to monitor the impact of policies and identify opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations are: collection, collation and analysis of existing relevant primary and secondary quantitative and qualitative data across all nine equality categories on an on-going basis a review of information and data collected within one year of approval of this equality scheme, to identify the extent of current monitoring and take action to address any gaps in order to have the necessary information on which to base decisions collection of new data if necessary We will revise a policy if over a two year period of monitoring, evaluation shows a greater adverse impact than predicted, or if opportunities arise which would allow for greater equality of opportunity to be promoted and ensure better outcomes for relevant equality groups. We review our equality impact assessment monitoring information on an annual basis. Other monitoring information is reviewed in line with the performance cycle set out in our published Corporate Plan. Our arrangements for publishing the results of our monitoring We will publish the results of our monitoring of adverse impacts of policies we have adopted in a timely manner and welcome feedback to further inform our policy development. However, we are committed to monitoring more broadly and the results of our policy monitoring are published as set out below. EqIA monitoring information is published as part of our Section 75 annual progress report. We will be proactive in announcing the outcomes of our monitoring (which will be in six monthly updates on our website) by contacting consultees in Northern Ireland when these are published. All information published is accessible and can be made available in alternative formats on request. Chapter 5: Learning and development for our staff Commitment to staff training The Commission recognises the value of learning and development in enabling us to be fully aware of and to effectively implement our equality duties. Our Chief Executive has been and remains clear about the importance of equality, diversity and inclusion in line with our statutory duties and as an essential part of the Commission's ethos. To this end we have developed an equality and diversity communications and training programme for all staff at the Commission including our responsibilities under Section 75. Training objectives Our training arrangements including objectives and monitoring and evaluation arrangements are set out in our EDI Strategy. They are designed to ensure that: All staff are aware of the provisions of Section 75 of the 1998 Act, our Equality Scheme commitments and the particular issues likely to affect people across the range of Section 75 categories, to ensure that our staff fully understand their role in implementing the scheme Staff engaged in policy assessment through screening and EqIAs are provided with the necessary skills and knowledge Staff engaged in dealing with complaints on compliance, consultation and monitoring implementation of the Equality Scheme are provided with the necessary skills and knowledge Awareness raising and training

arrangements We have put in place the following arrangements to ensure staff and Board members are aware of and understand our obligations on equality, diversity and inclusion: A summary and access to all key material are easily available on a link from our homepage The full equality scheme is available to all staff through this link Staff were briefed in a session led by the Chief Executive on the draft strategy, and there will be further briefing sessions post approval Material on our statutory obligations and our EDI commitments is included in our induction training Focused training is provided where needed for those working on the implementation of commitments in the Strategy and Scheme Training is provided as appropriate on the issues experienced by those with protected characteristics and identified in Section 75 Our Senior EDI lead ensures that awareness is updated as appropriate on issues relating to equality, diversity and inclusion The Board is to be supported by an independent adviser on equalities This programme has been developed in consultation with staff groups such as our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion group, our Race at Work Charter Task Force, our Staff Engagement Group and our Dignity, Respect and Empowerment Group. It reflects our learnings from external stakeholders in the course of business. Monitoring and evaluation We evaluate as we would for any learning and development the extent to which participants have built their skills and knowledge; and we monitor numbers trained. The extent to which training arrangements have been met will be reported on as part of the Section 75 annual progress report, which will be sent to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. Chapter 6: Arrangements for ensuring and assessing public access to information and services we provide The Commission is committed to ensuring that the information and services we provide are fully accessible to all of our stakeholders across the UK. We keep our arrangements under review to ensure that they remain accessible. We are aware that there are a range of needs for accessible information. People with sensory, learning, communication and mobility disabilities may require printed information in other formats, and we work closely with relevant organisations. Members of ethnic minority groups whose first language is not English may have difficulties with information provided in English. Access to information To ensure equality of opportunity in accessing information, we provide information in alternative formats such as Braille, EasyRead and audio format (such as CD, MP3 or DAISY) and in minority languages to meet the needs of those for whom English is not their first language on request where reasonably practicable, and will ensure a reasonable alternative is provided if we cannot meet a request. We will respond to such requests within a month where possible in line with our response to all requests. We will liaise with representatives of young people, disability and minority ethnic organisations and take account of existing/developing good practice and work in partnership with them to develop the best ways of reaching such groups. We will advertise in a range of media as appropriate. Our website is WCAG compliant. Access to services Democracy is for us all, and we are committed to ensuring that all our services are fully accessible to everyone with protected characteristics or within Section 75. We adhere to the relevant provisions of current anti-discrimination legislation. We have set out in our EDI Strategy our arrangements for ensuring that all of our services are fully accessible to customers and stakeholders. We make access recommendations and work with others to remove barriers as part of our work to ensure that everyone who is eligible is able to participate in the democratic process. We identify groups who are less likely to have access to democracy and undertake a range of initiatives to target them such as campaigns and partnership working. Assessing public access to information and services We monitor access to our information and services annually in all our work to ensure we promote

equality of opportunity and good relations. We ensure that these aspects are covered in our regular programme of research and monitoring such as: access audits, website audits, monitoring requests for information in alternative formats, monitoring complaints, seeking feedback, including relevant questions about access to information and services in service user surveys, engagement with stakeholders etc.

Chapter 7: Timetable for measures proposed A Timetable for measures proposed is at Appendix 4 of this Scheme. These have been reflected in our operational and business planning. We have set out in our Action Plan for the Strategy and in the Timetable attached to this Scheme the actions we propose to take and when. Chapter 8: Our complaints procedure We are here to serve the public We are here to serve the public, and will endeavour to resolve all complaints made to us. If anyone believes that they have been directly affected by a failure of the Electoral Commission to comply with our approved equality scheme in relation to our equality duties in Northern Ireland, they are invited to complain to the Head of Office, Northern Ireland. Cahir Hughes Head of the Electoral Commission in Northern Ireland 4 Cromac Place The Gasworks Belfast BT7 2JB 0333 103 1928 infonorthernireland@electoralcommission.org.uk We will in the first instance acknowledge receipt of each complaint on the same working day it is received. We aim to respond to complaints within 20 working days, and will contact you if we cannot meet this deadline. We will carry out an internal investigation of the complaint and respond within twenty working days. If the complaint is complex enough to need more time, this period will be extended to two months and the complainant advised within one month of the original complaint. The complainant will be kept informed of progress. If the complaint has not been resolved within a reasonable timescale, we will advise the complainant that the complaint can be brought to the ECNI. The Electoral Commission will co-operate fully with any subsequent investigation by the ECNI on any breach of relevant statute, and will provide access in a timely manner to any relevant documentation that the Commission may require. We will make all efforts to implement promptly and in full any recommendations arising out of any ECNI investigation. Chapter 9: Publication of the Single Equality Scheme Our Equality Scheme is available on our website www.electoralcommission.org.uk, and free of charge including in alternative formats from Cahir Hughes Head of the Electoral Commission in Northern Ireland 4 Cromac Place The Gasworks Belfast BT7 2JB 0333 103 1928 infonorthernireland@electoralcommission.org.uk We will make the following arrangements for publication: We will make the following arrangements for publication: We will make every effort to communicate our scheme widely, for example through social media and partnership working We will e-mail a link to the scheme to the consultees set out at Annex E; and we will respond to requests for the scheme in an alternative format in a timely manner. Other consultees without email will be notified by letter that the scheme is available on request. Our Scheme is available on request in alternative formats such as Braille, EasyRead, large print, audio formats; and in minority languages Stakeholders A list of our stakeholders and consultees can be found annexed to the EDI Strategy, on our website and by contacting us using the details given above. This scheme will be made available in a range of accessible formats. We will directly consult and inform our equality consultees and stakeholders through a range of channels. Chapter 10: Review of our Equality Scheme As required under Schedule 9 paragraph 8 (3) of the 1998 Act, we will conduct a review of this Equality Scheme. This review will take place within five years of submission to the ECNI but could be carried out within a shorter timescale. We will review our Action Plan yearly. The review will evaluate the effectiveness of our

Scheme in relation to the implementation of the section 75 duties relevant to our functions in Northern Ireland. In undertaking this review we will follow any guidance issued by the ECNI. A report of this review will be made public in the same way as the Scheme and sent to the ECNI. Appendix Appendix Appendix 1: organisation chart Learn about our Executive Team and Senior Leadership team . Appendix 2: groups relevant to Section 75 categories This list is illustrative, not exhaustive.

Religious belief: Buddhist; Catholic; Hindu; Jewish; Muslims; people of no religious belief; Protestants; Sikh; other faiths. For the purposes of Section 75 the term "religious belief" is the same definition as that used in the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order, 1998. Therefore "religious belief" also includes any perceived religious belief or lack of belief and, in employment situations only, also covers any "similar philosophical belief" Political opinion: Nationalist generally; Unionists generally; members/supporters of other political parties. For the purposes of Section 75 the term "political opinion" is the same definition as that used in the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998. Therefore "political opinion" also includes any perceived political opinion or lack of opinion Racial group: Black people; Chinese people; Indians; Pakistanis;; people of mixed ethnic background; Polish; Roma; Travellers; White people; people of other racial groups Men and women generally: Men (including boys); Trans-gendered people; Transsexual people; women (including girls) Marital status: Civil partners with people in civil partnerships; divorced people; married people; separated people; single people; widowed people Age: Children and young people; older people Persons with a disability: Persons with disabilities as defined by the Disability

Discrimination Act 1995 Persons with dependants: Persons with personal responsibility for the care of a child; for the care of a person with a disability; for the care of a dependent older person Sexual orientation: Bisexual people; heterosexual people; gay or lesbian people Appendix 3: List of consultees in Northern Ireland A list of consultees in Northern Ireland can be found as part of the wider list of consultees annexed to the EDI Strategy. Appendix 4: Timetable for measures proposed Measure Lead responsibility Timetable Section 75 Annual Progress Report Senior EDI lead and Head of Electoral Commission in NI 31 August (annually) Action Plan: Produce Consult Publish Monitor progress and update plan Senior EDI lead and Head of Electoral Commission in NI Production: Nov 2021 Consultation: Nov 2021 to February 2022 Spring 2022 Annually Consultation: Review and update consultation lists Senior EDI Lead working with colleagues across the four nations of the UK Annually Screening:

Timetable Reports Relevant policy leads and directors Relevant policy leads and directors As required by business As produced and quarterly EqIAs: Timetable Publication Relevant policy leads and directors As required by business As required by business and annually Monitoring: Review of monitoring information Publication of monitoring information Senior EDI lead Annually Included in annual S.75 progress report Training: Summary Training programme Focused training Update training Evaluate training Senior EDI lead working with colleagues in Internal Comms and L&D leadership Once scheme published 2022 As required Annually On completion of training Assessing access to information and services: Monitoring of access Senior EDI lead working with colleagues in Research Annually as part of S75 progress report Communication of equality scheme Notification of consultees (9.3) Senior EDI lead working with

Electoral Commission in Northern Ireland Within three months of approval Review of equality scheme Senior EDI Lead working with Head of Electoral Commission in Northern Ireland Within five years of submission Appendix 5: Glossary AA Web Content Guidelines 1.0 These guidelines set out how to make our website accessible to people

with disabilities Adverse Impact Where a group of people protected by equality law has been affected differently by a policy and the effect is less favourable, it is known as adverse impact CEO Chief Electoral Officer Commission The Electoral Commission Consultation Our equality consultation involves asking our stakeholders (i.e., service users, staff, the general public) for their views on how best to design policies that promote equality Due regard To properly consider the need to promote equality, taking into account our purpose and the need to spend public money effectively EAA Equality impact assessment An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is a tool to ensure we don't exclude anybody from accessing our services or those that we play a part in delivering. It's also a chance to explore ways to promote equality ERO Electoral Registration Officer Great Britain England, Scotland and Wales HR Human resources IER Individual electoral registration Policy The term policy covers the definition and process of how an organisation carries out its functions, for example in reaching decisions Protected Groups Refers to the characteristics of people legally protected from discrimination PPE Act Political Parties and Elections Act 2009 PPERA Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 RCO Referendum Counting Officer RO Returning Officer Schedule 9 Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 sets out detailed provisions for the enforcement of the Section 75 statutory duties, including an outline of what should be included in an equality scheme Screening The procedure for identifying which policies will be subject to equality impact assessment, and how these equality impact assessments will be prioritised Definition of the characteristics of people protected from discrimination in the UK Age: Under Chapter 1 of the Equalities Act 2010 this refers to persons defined by age group, whether a particular age or a range of ages. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act guidance 1 proposes that for most purposes, the main categories are: those under 18; people aged between 18 and 65; and people over 65. However, the definition of age groups will relate to the policy under consideration. Disability: Under Chapter 1 of the Equalities Act 2010 a person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Gender reassignment: Under Chapter 1 of the Equalities Act this refers to people who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process for the purpose of reassigning their sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex. A reference to a transsexual person is a person who has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment. Marriage and Civil Partnership: Under the Equality Act 2010 civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters. 'Status' can refer to whether a person is single, divorced or separated, married or in a civil partnership. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act guidance refers to married people; unmarried people; divorced or separate people; and widowed people. Pregnancy and maternity: Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after birth, and includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding. Race: Race is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins. Religion: Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Sex is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as referring to men and women. Sexual Orientation is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as referring to whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes. People with dependants: Section 75

of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 guidance defines this group as: people with a primary responsibility for: a child; a person with a disability; a dependent elderly person. Political opinion: Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 guidance defines political opinion as: Unionists generally; Nationalists generally; members/supporters of any political party; other. Language: In compliance with the Welsh Language Act 1993 and the Welsh Language Measure 2011, this consideration refers to a group of people defined by the language they speak. In Wales we have a duty to provide services in Welsh and as set out in the Welsh Language Standards. Appendix 6: Action Plan This forms Chapter 8 of the EDI Strategy. 1. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1988. A Guide for Public Authorities April 2005 and April 2010 ■ Back to content at footnote 1 Page history First published: 22 September 2022 Last updated: 13 September 2023 Related content Report: Voting in 2017 Read our report about voting at the general election in 2017 Testing the EU referendum question Find out about our testing of the EU referendum question Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run Results and turnout at the 2017 UK general election View the results and turnout at the 2017 general election

Scottish Parliament Political Parties Panel Meeting Minutes: 15 September 2021 |
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Parliament elections Preparations for Scottish Council elections 2022 UK Elections
Bill Updates (not related to Scottish local government election 2022) Dates of Future
Meetings First published: 5 November 2021 Last updated: 26 November 2021 Attendees
Attendees Paul Moat, Scottish Liberal Democrats (Chair) James Kelly, Scottish Labour
Party Matt Edmonds, Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party John Hardy, Scottish
Green Party Scott Martin, Scottish National Party Colin Wilson, Boundaries Scotland
Maria McCann, Scottish Government Iain Hockenhull, Scottish Government James Newman,
Scottish Government Hannah Rutherford, Scottish Government Gillian Cruickshank,
Scottish Government Chris Highcock, Electoral Management Board for Scotland Pete
Wildman, Scottish Assessors Association (Chair of Electoral Registration Committee
and EMB Member) Helena Brice, Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland Rachel
Winham, Royal Mail Scott Forsyth, Royal Mail The Electoral Commission: Dame Susan
Bruce, Electoral Commissioner Alasdair Morgan, Electoral Commissioner Alex Attwood,
Electoral Commissioner Andy O'Neill, head of Electoral Commission, Scotland Sarah
Mackie, Manager, Electoral Commission, Scotland Martin McKeown, Senior Adviser,
Elections and s, Scotland Catherine Heggie, Partnerships and Information Officer,
Scotland Lindsey Hamilton, Business Support Officer, Scotland (Minutes) Apologies
Malcolm Burr, Electoral Management Board for Scotland Isabel Drummond-Murray,
Boundaries Scotland Hannah Standring, Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland
Kate Crawford, Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board Welcome and introductions Paul Moat
welcomed those present. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising It was noted
Rachel Palma Randle was not present at the previous meeting and the Chair asked for a
correction to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 May 2021. Matters
arising (a) Item 3.4 candidate acceptance forms were currently designed for paper
not electronic usage. (b) Item 3.8 The EMB would look at the idea of hosting
results for Scottish Parliament and Council elections on their website. Report on
2021 Scottish Parliament elections Sarah Mackie (SM) highlighted the main findings
and recommendations in the Commission's report on the Scottish Parliament election
2021. The Electoral Commission should have powers to compel social media companies to
provide information from campaigners, voters were satisfied the election had been
well-run despite Returning Officers (ROs) facing significant staffing challenges due
to the impact of COVID. There was an over reliance on a small pool of companies
supplying services to people who run elections. The small numbers of newly
enfranchised voters in Scotland made it difficult to get good quality data but there
would be census data coming down the line. Parties and candidates had been able to
campaign although some of their usual practices (e.g. face to face campaigning) were
curtailed by the impact of the pandemic. The household notification write-out
undertaken by Electoral Registration Officers (ERO) in February improved the
completeness and accuracy of the register ahead of the election and helped to manage
the predicted surge in postal vote applications. This was really good work and would
be good to see this happen again but EROs would need to be resourced if they were to
do this at future elections. Maria McCann (MMcC) agreed the HNL had been helpful but
was a costly exercise and Pete Wildman (PW) said it may come down to the availability
of local funding which would make it harder to achieve a national write-out. The
matter would be considered further. Preparations for Scottish Council elections 2022
Legislation (MMcC) said it was expected the SSIs required for the local government

elections would all have been laid by the end of the week. She thanked all for their feedback as they had been developed. Scott Martin (SM) asked if the candidate expenses limits could be the subject of a wider review to make them more appropriate to the Scottish system. MMCC said Scottish Government would consider this after the May polls. Guidance Martin McKeown (MMcK) indicated that the Electoral Commission's core guidance was being drafted and will reflect the forthcoming legislative changes. The revised guidance will be published before the end of the year. Co-ordination by EMB Chris Highcock (CHi) informed the PPP of work associated with the e-Count project was on-going. The co-ordination of the election would be effected through directions from the Convener of the EMB. The directions were currently being developed and were building on those issued for the 2021 election. General support for Returning Officers (ROs) and Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) would likely be through a joint seminar with the Electoral Commission in January to support general planning, consistency in adjudication classification of rejected ballots (particularly where multiple first preferences were given) and consistency in printing documents so there would be a standard postal vote pack across Scotland. EMB would provide general support and promote best practice across ROs and EROs. There would also be training in e-counting provided. E-Counting James Newman (JN) indicated there was currently an intensive period of in-person testing of the software and hardware at Silvan House, Edinburgh. The next phase would engage more intensively with councils on issues around the delivery; demonstration training, equipment set-up and so on. PPP members would be invited to a demonstration of the e-counting project and indicated that bulletins were now being produced and published on the EMB website. PPP members could be included on the circulation list or obtain them direct from the EMB website. (SM) asked for copies of the sample reports that were going to come out of the system post results. (MMcC) said the style of reports had been amended based on comments from users of the reports. (SM) said reports were primarily for the electorate and candidates and the views of recipients should be sought. The reports were still under development and therefore an opportunity for revision remained. She would speak to the e-count team. Registration and Absent Voting Pete Wildman (PW) indicated that following the election in May, absent voting remained high as most people had applied for a permanent postal vote. Common dates for PV issue, recommended second interim update dates to establish consistency would likely form part of the direction from the EMB. The postal voting deadline for the 2022 election would return to the normal schedule of D-11. Public Awareness and Partnership Activity Catherine Heggie (CHe) said the Electoral Commission will be running their 'Got 5' registration campaign ahead of the council elections, which would target young people, recent movers, and those living in rented accommodation. The Electoral Commission will also be running a specific voter information campaign on how to vote using STV, and will be building on partnership work carried out ahead of the Scottish Parliament election to target a number of under-registered groups. The Electoral Commission is currently scheduling meetings with organisations to plan activity, including engagement with schools. Equality Data Project Gillian Cruickshank (GC) and Hannah Rutherford (HR) Indicated to the PPP that due to the absence of complete and accurate data on protected characteristics made it impossible to understand diversity fully. It was proposed that a survey be undertaken of candidates issued at the point of nominations. Completing the survey was voluntary and the plan was to trial the survey at the local government elections and if found to be useful to repeat at future elections. (GC) assured the panel that data protection laws would be fully adhered to. (SM) said that parties may have a monitoring form of their own and it may be useful to have early

sight of theirs as it could help with consistency. The paper was to be published in October but they could share an early draft of the form. UK Elections Bill Cabinet Office & the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland written update indicated that the UK Parliament Elections Bill was introduced on 5 July 2021. Parliamentary scrutiny of the Elections Bill had begun with Second Reading in the House of Commons on 7 September. The Bill introduced a number of measures which apply to UK Parliamentary elections, local elections in England and PCC elections. These were: A requirement for voters to show photographic identification to vote in a polling station Changes to integrity of the absent ballot process by increasing protection on postal and proxy voting Removing the 15 year limit on voting rights of British citizens overseas Changes to access to voting for electors with disabilities; and Revising the franchise to reflect the new relationship with the European Union. The Bill also introduced a number of changes intended to apply to all polls, across the UK. These were in relation to: laws on intimidation and undue influence laws surrounding political finance 'Imprint' requirement to digital political campaigning; and Parliamentary accountability of the Electoral Commission The Cabinet Office had involved devolved governments in the development of the Bill and shared draft clauses. Chloe Smith, Minister for the Constitution and Devolution had regularly met with her counterpart in Scotland both bilaterally and through the Inter Ministerial Group for Elections and Registration to discuss matters relating to elections and specifically the Bill. Ian Hockenhull (IH) indicated that Scottish Government had issued a request for comments on the proposed Legislative Consent Motion (LCM) to Scottish stakeholders in July and were grateful for the comments received. It was likely that Scottish Ministers would recommend that the Scottish Parliament reject the proposed LCM and it would seek to consider the proposed changes and legislate for Scottish elections as appropriate in the future. Updates (not related to Scottish local government election 2022) Scottish Government (MMcC) said Boundaries Scotland had submitted proposals for six islands reviews, subsequently Scottish Ministers had laid SIs in the Scottish Parliament which were subject to an affirmative instrument. She welcomed the Electoral Commission's report on the May 2021 elections and noted the recommendations. Scotland Office/Cabinet Office Helena Brice (HB) said the Elections Bill was due to go to committee on 16 September and the Dissolution and Calling of Parliament Bill finished its stages in the Commons and had its first reading in the House of Lords today. Boundaries Scotland Colin Wilson (CW) On 14 May 2021, the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland was re-named Boundaries Scotland. This was to reflect its added responsibilities for reviews of Scottish Parliament boundaries. In late May, early June the Commission submitted its final proposals for the electoral reviews of the six council areas with inhabited islands (Na h-Eileanan an Iar), Orkney Islands, Shetland Islands, Argyll and Bute, Highland and North Ayrshire Council areas). Boundary Commission for Scotland For the 2023 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies, the Commission was looking to consult on its initial proposals in mid-October 2021 for an 8 week period. They hoped to confirm this in the next few weeks. The 2023 Review will recommend 57 constituencies in Scotland, two less than at present. Boundary Commission for England have concluded their initial consultation stage. Wales began their consultation on the 8th September and Northern Ireland will consult probably late October. Royal Mail Rachel Winham (RW) said the weekly calls with Pete Wildman and Chris Highcock (CH) had worked well during the May 2021 elections and asked if there was anything the parties/panel wished them to be aware of or to do. She confirmed Royal Mail would be working in Scotland on Good Friday in 2022. Electoral Management Board for Scotland (CHi) said

there had been good co-operation with Royal Mail which they hoped to repeat next year. The last by election (currently scheduled) would take place in Falkirk on 14 October as once within 6 months of the ordinary election of councillors, any vacancies occurring would likely not be filled unless a 1/3rd of the council was vacant. An issue of comment at the Scottish Parliament election in May was the level of scrutiny possible, given the context of the pandemic and the intention in May 2022 was to provide a good sight of the electronic counting process, particularly the Box opening process. The EMB intended to discuss with Public Health Scotland the public health context going forward to facilitate election planning to ensure the delivery of the elections with a trusted result but also maintain safety. Pete Wildman (PW) was keen to repeat this year's effective engagement with Royal Mail. The canvass was on-going and similar response rates to last year were being experienced. It was hoped door-to-door visits would be possible. (SM) asked (PW) about monthly updates, whether they would receive a complete set for each month and when they would know all were in. The Electoral Commission Alex Attwood, Electoral Commissioner representing smaller parties said he was available and keen to speak with smaller parties if they felt it added value. He sought to ensure the views of the smaller parties were known by the Chair of the Electoral Commission and the wider Board. Sue Bruce (SB) said the Scottish Parliament election report brought forward by the Electoral Commission reflected our roles and the co-operation between us all. She welcomed the positive response of the panel to the report. She informed the panel that a new Commissioner, Katy Radford had been appointed as the Commissioner with responsibilities in Northern Ireland. She also informed the PPP that the Chief Executive of the Electoral Commission had indicated his intention to retire in the first half of 2022. The Presiding Officer had been notified and appropriate plans for recruitment would be put in place. Martin McKeown (MMcK) said the online party stakeholder survey aimed at people we regulate would be launched over the next few days. The aim was to assist us in better understanding our strengths and weaknesses in how we engage with those we regulate. Feedback was welcomed and he asked that the parties circulate the link to anyone they thought should have it. As discussed at various PPP meetings, PF online was being redesigned with the launch expected in January 2022. A number of demonstrations of the new system would be arranged prior to launch. Dates of Future Meetings Andy O'Neill (AON) confirmed the next meeting would be virtual on 10 November but would write seeking the views of the Panel as to whether they would prefer to maintain virtual meetings, move back to all in-person meetings or establish a hybrid approach. 2021 10 November 2022 20 January *8 March 16 May Pre-meeting 10:30 and meeting proper at 11:00 am except for *8 March which will be 2:30 pre-meeting and 3:00pm meeting

Investigation: UK Independence Party (UKIP) | Electoral Commission Search
Investigation: UK Independence Party (UKIP) You are in the Investigations section Home Investigations On this page Summary Our investigation Our findings First published: 18 September 2018 Last updated: 18 September 2018 Overview We have looked at whether, during 2015 and 2016, the UK Independence Party (UKIP) took donations from impermissible sources. We have concluded that they did not. Summary We have finished our investigation into whether the UKIP took impermissible donations from a European political party and foundation, namely the Alliance for Direct Democracy in Europe (ADDE) and the Initiative for Direct Democracy in Europe (IDDE). We looked at this because of a decision by the European Parliament Bureau in December 2016 that ADDE and IDDE had broken its rules by spending its grant money on polling of interest to UKIP. We found that: the polling did look at geographical areas and Eurosceptic issues of potential strategic significance to UKIP at the time two ADDE contractors who worked on some of the polling also worked as UKIP campaign managers during the 2015 general election whilst the polling could have been of benefit to UKIP had it been provided, the evidence was insufficient to support a conclusion that the purpose of the polling was to be for the benefit of UKIP or that they received the polling results We concluded that the polling did not meet the definition of a donation to UKIP under UK political finance rules. Should new evidence come to light that makes it appropriate for us to look again at this matter, we would do so. We recognise that the European Parliament Bureau came to a different conclusion in respect of the purpose and ultimate usage of the polling. Our conclusion is based on the evidence we got as part of our investigation into specific offences under UK political finance law. And it reflects the fact that by law, we are required to be satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that an offence has been committed. UKIP is a registered political party in Great Britain. It is a member of a European political party called the Alliance for Direct Democracy in Europe (ADDE). ADDE has an affiliated foundation, the Institute for Direct Democracy in Europe (IDDE). UKIP must comply with the UK's political finance rules; ADDE and IDDE are not subject to those rules. Further information Who are UKIP, ADDE, and IDDE? UKIP is a registered political party in Great Britain (there is a separate registered party called UKIP in Northern Ireland). UKIP fought a number of seats across the UK in the 2015 general election, and reported spending around £2.8m on its campaign. As a UK registered political party, UKIP: cannot accept donations from organisations outside the UK must report all its donations of £7,500 or more to us on a quarterly basis must report all its campaign spending after each general election ADDE and IDDE are not registered political parties in the UK, so these rules do not apply to them. As with other European political parties and foundations, ADDE and IDDE received grant funding from the European Union. The funding can cover up to 85% of the parties' and foundations' eligible spending, and can be used for a range of activity from administrative functions through to the campaign costs for European elections. It cannot be used for certain purposes, including for the direct or indirect funding of national parties, election candidates and political foundations at either the national or European level. The donation rules in detail The donation rules for UK political parties are set out in the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA). They say that: a donation means any gift to a party of money or other property, sponsorship, payment of subscriptions or fees, money spent on paying any expenses of a party or the provision of property, services or facilities not on commercial terms only amounts above £500 are viewed as donations under PPERA a registered party cannot accept a donation if it is made by a person who, at that time, is not a permissible

donor permissible donors are, broadly, an individual on the electoral register or a company or other entity from within the UK If a party receives a donation from an impermissible source, it must return the donation within 30 days. If the party does not do this, its treasurer commits an offence. However, the treasurer has a defence to this if he or she took all reasonable steps to verify if the donor was permissible, and as a result he or she believed that the donor was permissible. We enforce these rules using a range of investigatory and sanctioning powers. Further information You can find PPERA on the government's legislation website . The donation rules are in Part IV. Our investigation In December 2016 the European Parliament Bureau (EPB) concluded that €500,616 spent by ADDE, and €33,864 spent by IDDE, in 2015 broke the rules for grants to European parties and foundations. This included spending on polling done within the UK which it concluded was done in the interest of UKIP. We investigated, getting information by issuing legal notices and interviewing key people. This gave us enough evidence to complete our investigation. Investigation evidence What we looked at In December 2016 the European Parliament Bureau (EPB) decided that €500,616 spent by ADDE, and €33,864 spent by IDDE, in 2015 broke the rules for grants to European parties and foundations. The EPB had concluded that some of the grant money had been indirectly used to finance UKIP, which was against its rules. The EPB considered that polling undertaken by the ADDE and IDDE during 2015, showed strong indications that it was undertaken for the interest of UKIP and noted the Eurosceptic nature of its questions and the locations of the polling. The legal framework for the funding of European political parties and foundations lays the burden of proof for eligibility of funding on the beneficiary. Polling was undertaken: in North Thanet, Rochester & Strood, Sittingbourne & Sheppey, and South Thanet in February 2015 in Great Grimsby and Thurrock in April 2015 in Cardiff South & Penarth in April 2015 in Merthyr Tydfil & Rhymney in April 2015 across the UK in June/July 2015 across Wales in September 2015 in Scotland and London in November 2015 across the UK in December 2015 across seven EU countries in December 2015 again across the UK in December 2015 The total cost of the polling to the ADDE and IDDE was approximately €321,000. The EFB told us about this in October 2016. It gave us significant evidence to explain its concerns, and after looking at this we opened an investigation. The issues under investigation were: whether any polling or other work paid for by ADDE or IDDE was given to UKIP for its benefit if so, whether this constituted a donation under PPERA if so, whether the UKIP treasurer and UKIP had committed an offence of failing to return an impermissible donation as required by PPERA During the investigation the EFB also said it was concerned that UKIP MEP assistants may have been working for UKIP, and their MEP salaries may therefore have been a donation to UKIP. We looked at the evidence but decided that it did not meet the threshold for adding the issue to our investigation. How we investigated Between December 2016 and May 2017 we issued a series of legal notices requiring documents and information from UKIP and the polling company that did the polling work for ADDE and IDDE. We also sent legal notices to a then director of UKIP and a private individual contracted by the ADDE to lead work on many of the polls whom had previously worked as a UKIP campaign manager. We received a considerable amount of documents and information in response to all these notices, which we examined. We then arranged interviews of key individuals, which ran up to February 2018. This included the lead ADDE contractor who worked on many of the polls, an additional individual contracted by the ADDE to write reports on the polls, the ADDE President, and a founder and former director of ADDE and IDDE. These were all voluntary interviews. The Executive Director of ADDE declined to meet with us but provided a

written response. Our findings While the ADDE and IDDE polling paid for by EFB grant money was on topics relevant to UKIP, we did not conclude that it was done to help UKIP, or that UKIP received any of the outputs from the work. Therefore, the polling work was not a donation to UKIP under UK political finance rules. Our analysis and evidence What our analysis showed We saw that the polling work paid for by EFB grant funding was relevant to UKIP's political position in 2015/6. It was carried out in geographical areas of potential strategic significance to UKIP The questions were about attitudes towards the EU The reports drawn up from the polling partly considered the data from a UKIP point of view But we found insufficient evidence that the polls were commissioned to be for the benefit of UKIP and no evidence that UKIP received or benefitted from any of this work. We saw invoices and emails provided by the polling company which showed that the ADDE commissioned and were invoiced for the polls. Those we interviewed gave the same account. We found no other information from any of the entities we approached to suggest the polls were UKIP's polls. The EFB gave us a letter of 2 November 2016 to the European Parliament by the ADDE, sent to object to the EFB's conclusions. It appeared to acknowledge that two of the polls had been 'UKIP polls' for which the ADDE had received the invoice to pay 'in error'. But this was not consistent with the evidence we saw. The ADDE contractors and the founder of the ADDE told us that ADDE and IDDE commissioned the polls in order to spend EFB grant money as efficiently as possible in order to justify more funding. They said that the polls were not designed to cover issues of importance to UKIP. The contractors running the polls said they were largely unguided by the ADDE and were left to pick the issues that interested them. We found no documentary evidence to suggest that any of the data from the ADDE polls was given to UKIP. We asked the contractors who worked on ADDE polling about this. They were both campaign managers for UKIP candidates during the 2015 general election. This was before their involvement in the ADDE polls which began in June 2015. During the general election they worked in constituencies where the polling during February and April 2015 took place, but said that they did not see the polling data while they worked there. Given their campaign manager roles, they said that it was likely they would have known if UKIP had the data because it would have been of potential interest to them. The evidence we looked at The EFB gave us polling data and reports, contracts, and their analysis, as well as internal ADDE and IDDE documents obtained by them and correspondence with the polling company. By using our legal powers we got information from ADDE contractors and from the polling company. This included invoices and further correspondence between ADDE, the contractors and the polling company. UKIP were not able to provide us with significant information in response to the Notice, because they held no documents relevant to the polling. We also got important evidence from the people we interviewed about the polls. We noted the areas where they gave us a consistent explanation, about the reason for the polls, who was involved in agreeing and organising them, and what happened to the polling reports. Related content about our enforcement work Electoral law is out of date. Find out where we want to see improvements Political parties, campaigners and other groups have to report their finances to us. Find out about campaign spending, donations and loans and annual accounts.

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Board minutes: 24 February 2021 You are in the Electoral Commission Board section Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Who was at the meeting Apologies and introductions Declarations of interest Minutes of the previous Board Meeting (EC 11/21) Update on elections (Oral) Business Plan and Main Estimate 2021/22 (EC 12/21) Regulatory support strategy (EC 13/21) Performance report quarter three 2020/21 (EC 14/21) UK Government Electoral Integrity Bill (EC 15/21) Update from the Chair of Audit and Risk Committee (Oral) Chief Executive's update (EC 16/21) Commission Board action tracker (EC 17/21) Forward plan of Board business (EC 18/21) First published: 14 October 2021 Last updated: 14 October 2021 Meeting summary Date: Wednesday 24 February 2021 Time: 9.30am to 1pm Location: By video conference Date of next scheduled meeting: Wednesday 31 March 2021 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Board Members: Rob Vincent, Meeting Chair Sue Bruce - As a participating observer pending receipt of Royal Warrant confirming term of office being extended Alex Attwood - As a participating observer pending receipt of Royal Warrant confirming term of office Sarah Chambers Elan Closs Stephens Stephen Gilbert Alasdair Morgan Joan Walley In attendance: Bob Posner, Chief Executive Craig Westwood, Director, Communications, Policy and Research Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services Binnie Goh, General Counsel Carol Sweetenham, Head of Projects (item 5) Niki Nixon, Head of External Communications (item 8) Laura Mcleod, Public Affairs Manager (item 8) Chantelle Shokar, Legal Assistant (all items) Zena Khan, Senior Advisor, Governance Apologies and introductions There were no apologies received. The Meeting Chair welcomed all to the meeting in particular Alex Attwood, appointed as the new Commissioner for Smaller Parties. The Board noted an update on the Speaker's Committee's 'preferred candidate' for Commission Chair with the process underway. The preferred candidate has now been invited to a session with the Speaker's Committee on Monday 1 March, which will be public. Declarations of interest There were no new declarations of interest. Minutes of the previous Board Meeting (EC 11/21) Resolved: That the minutes of the Commission Board meeting on 20 January 2021 be approved. Update on elections (Oral) The Board received an oral update from the Chief Executive, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance, Director, Regulation and Director, Communications, Policy and Research. The Board noted that we continue to use the objectives for well-run elections in the current public health context to ensure that they can still be delivered, and are continuing to work with everyone across the electoral community to make sure this can be delivered in practice. The Board noted the UK Minister's statement confirming their intention for elections in England and PCC elections in Wales to proceed, and alongside this, the publication of a delivery plan setting out the arrangements for the polls. The Board noted that following statutory consultation with the Commission, secondary legislation has been brought forward to reduce the numbers of subscribers required on nomination papers for those elections taking place across England and for the PCC elections in Wales; this is a sensible change in the circumstances and supports one of our objectives that those who wish to stand for election should have access to reasonable options for completing and submitting the necessary nomination papers that minimise the risk of transmission of the virus to or by them, and appears to have broad support. The Board noted that the main points of concern from the electoral community continue to be around staffing and venues. The progress being made to address these was discussed. It was noted that we've been considering our approach to observing at the polls, ensuring we have sufficient people out on polling

day to inform our election reporting while also managing the safety of our staff and recognising the challenges of local authorities in accommodating additional attendees at key election processes. Board members who want to observe on polling day or at a count were invited to indicate their interest so that risk assessments can be completed and practical arrangements made. It was noted that this year we saw 65 new applications to register parties or amend party details, the highest we have ever recorded prior to an event. We will take decisions on all of these before close of nominations. The Board noted that as of 23 February we had considered 15 instances where our intervention was needed to manage the risk of non-compliance. The predominant issue was missing or incomplete imprints on campaign material, with the additional area of digital material in Scotland. In all cases our aim is to support campaigners into compliance, with enforcement action only when appropriate and proportionate. It was noted that voter-facing plans are proceeding to schedule across a range of strands to drive voter registration and support safe participation in the polls. Particular activity is focussed on known under-registered and hard-to-reach audiences, those new to the franchise in Scotland and Wales, and those more at risk from contracting Covid-19. The Board continued to seek assurances around the delivery service of Royal Mail in the context of the pandemic and the extra demand on postal votes expected in the current climate. It was noted that we have a close working relationship with Royal Mail, and will continue regular dialogue throughout the election period and bring any specific issues to their attention.

Resolved: That the oral updates be noted. Business Plan and Main Estimate 2021/22 (EC 12/21) The Board received the report following agreeing an outline approach closely based on previous business plans at the February Board meeting. The Board thanked the report authors for their contribution especially Carol Sweetenham (Head of Projects) for a delivery focussed, diligent paper.

Resolved: That the approach is endorsed of meeting pressures within the original overall funding envelope.

Resolved: That the Board agreed the current and capital budgets as set out in Tables 2 and 3 of the report.

Resolved: That the Board agreed the Business Plan 2021/22 and that this should be submitted to the Speaker's Committee, the Scottish Parliament Corporate Body and the Llywydd's Committee of the Senedd for their approval.

Resolved: That the Board agreed the Main Estimate 2021/22 (with Parliamentary Control Totals set out in Table 4), in line with budgets, and that this should be submitted to the Speaker's Committee for their approval.

Resolved: That the Board delegated authority for the Chief Executive as Accounting Officer, with anything other than minor changes to be in consultation with the acting lead Commissioner (in the absence of a Commission Chair) and the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, to amend the Business Plan and Main Estimate in non-major ways to reflect unforeseen developments between approval by the Board and submission.

Regulatory support strategy (EC 13/21) The Board received the report on progress made by the new Regulatory Support team on embedding itself in our proactive compliance work. The Board considered plans to develop a strategy to offer a range of proactive tools and methods to support parties and campaigners comply with campaign finance law. The Board firmly supported the approach and requested to be kept regularly informed of progress.

Resolved: That the Board is content with the proposed approach to and timings for developing the strategy.

Performance report quarter three 2020/21 (EC 14/21) Resolved: That the report be noted.

UK Government Electoral Integrity Bill (EC 15/21) The Board received a report providing an overview of the expected Bill, and of our approach to engaging with the parliamentary process of its consideration. It was noted that the Board would return to this discussion once the Bill had been published. There were several elements of the Bill around

content, including likely provisions directly related to the Commission and more broadly how the Commission engages in the process. The Bill and work arising from it from enactment through to the practical implementation of changes in electoral law will be a significant workstream for the Commission over a number of years. Resolved: That the report be noted. Update from the Chair of Audit and Risk Committee (Oral) The Audit and Risk Committee Chair gave a brief update of the last Committee meeting on 23 February 2021, highlighting the following topics: National Audit Office update Risk management Risk Maturity Review Annual review of Risk Framework Risk improvement plan It was noted that a discussion on the Board's understanding of identifying risks is being scheduled in the Board Forward Plan Internal audit – Budget Management and Monitoring Internal audit strategy 2021-2024 Risk deep dive – presentation on Covid-19 risk measures and impact It was noted that the presentation could be shared with the wider Board as it responded to Covid-19 and the impact, thoughtfulness and pastoral care of colleagues with practical implications on the organisation, taking positive lessons learnt from working in a pandemic. Schedule of audit recommendations Government Cards Registers of interests, donations, gifts and hospitality It was noted that the Audit and Risk Committee should not be asked to agree these registers but to note, as the onus is on the individual Commissioner to self- declare. A recommendation was to change the report template to not the report. Resolved: That the work of the Audit and Risk Committee be noted. Chief Executive's update (EC 16/21) The Chief Executive introduced the report, drawing attention to the approved motion recommending the appointment of Alex Attwood as the new nominated Commissioner for the 'smaller parties', the Speaker's Committee process for appointments of a new Commission Chair and that a new Commissioner with lead responsibilities for Northern Ireland, is progressing. The Board noted the annex to this update, on the work which is underway in partnership with other organisations to reach under-registered groups, those new to the franchise and those more at risk from Covid-19. The Board was provided with an update from the General Counsel on discriminatory incidents from members of the public against some staff and the likelihood of similar as we move towards the May polls, with possible heightened emotions. Resolved: That the report be noted. Commission Board action tracker (EC 17/21) Resolved: That the Commission Board action tracker be noted. Forward plan of Board business (EC 18/21) Commissioners asked that we think about more strategic discussions coming to Board with individual Commissioners supporting members of the Executive Team on specific topics. The General Counsel provided an update on the scheduling of the next Board Effectiveness Review. It was decided to defer the review from spring 2021 to autumn 2021 which will give us an advantage of having the new Commissioner Chair in post to provide input into the review and the arranging items of business onto the Forward plan. Resolved: That the forward plan of Board business be noted.

Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure | Electoral Commission Search

Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure You are in the How we make decisions section

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Introduction We are committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment, is a recognition that an important aspect of accountability and transparency is providing a mechanism to enable people who believe they have concerns, to voice them without fear of reprisal.

Audience This policy applies to employees, contractors and agency workers and Commissioners. This procedure does not form part of an employee's contract of employment. Consequently, the Electoral Commission – following consultation where appropriate – will make amendments to the policy and procedure when considered necessary. This could be due to an economic, technical (usually statutory) or organisational reason.

Purpose The purpose of the policy and procedure is to:

- provide staff with a mechanism to raise concerns at an early stage in the correct manner
- ensure concerns can be raised confidently without fear of victimisation, recrimination, discrimination or disadvantage
- encourage confidence to raise concerns about practices or procedures
- provide a procedure to raise concerns and receive feedback on any action taken

What is whistleblowing? Whistleblowing is the raising of a concern, either within the workplace or externally, about a danger, risk, malpractice or wrongdoing which affects others. In line with the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 a whistleblower must reasonably believe that any disclosure of information is in the public interest and tends to show one or more of the following:

- a criminal offence has been, is being or is likely to be committed
- a person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with any of their legal obligations, including a legal obligation that arises from a contract of employment (Parkins v Sodexho Ltd (EAT/1239/00))
- a miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur
- the health or safety of any individual has been, is being or is likely to be endangered
- the environment has been, is being or is likely to be damaged
- information tending to show any of the above matters has been, is being or is likely to be deliberately concealed

General principles Those who in the public interest raise genuine beliefs under this policy will not under any circumstances be subjected to any form of detriment or disadvantage as a result of having raised their concerns. This policy will only apply to whistleblowers where they reasonably believe that the information disclosed and any allegation contained in it are substantially true. If any disclosure is made in bad faith, or concerns information which employees do not substantially believe is true, or indeed if the disclosure is made for personal gain, then such a disclosure will be dealt with under the Commission's disciplinary policy and procedure. The whistleblowing policy is primarily for concerns where the interests of others or the organisation are at risk. Staff who are aggrieved about their personal position must consider the most appropriate policy for raising their concern; a list of other relevant policies is shown in section 15 of this document. If you feel the whistleblowing policy is the most appropriate, it is possible that the initial investigation will recommend your concern be managed using another policy. Reasonable adjustments will be made to support those with a disability to participate fully in any part of this policy and procedure.

Who you should contact In the first instance raise your concern with your manager. If you feel unable to raise the matter with your manager please raise your

concern with:

- your Director or
- the Head of HR

If you have decided to raise a concern with one of the above people, please say if you want to raise the matter in confidence. If none of the above are appropriate you can raise your concern with the Chief Executive or Chair. If they are involved in the issue then you can contact the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, our Internal Auditors or the Comptroller and Auditor General of the National Audit Office. Contact details can be found at the end of this policy. If you do not feel comfortable raising your concerns with any of the persons listed above, you may wish to contact one of the organisations that the Government has designated as a body to which whistleblowing concerns can be raised (a "prescribed body"). See a full list of prescribed bodies, and the matter which they are able to consider. All reasonable attempts should be made to raise the issue through the routes outlined in this policy. Making a public statement or approaching the media on the basis of concerns which have not been researched or investigated, and without exhausting other channels for resolution, has the potential to create general anxiety and may prejudice the outcome of any investigation. It may also mean you lose your right to protection under this policy, so if you have a concern we encourage you to raise it with one of the individuals or bodies listed above. If you would like independent advice, the charity Public Concern at Work will give you free confidential advice at any stage about how to raise a concern. Contact details can be found at the end of this policy.

How to raise a concern

You are encouraged to raise your concern openly as it is important that you feel able to question matters in the workplace and have them addressed. It would be helpful if you could set out some factual basis for the issues being raised. There is no need for you to prove that the breach or failure that you are alleging has occurred or is likely to occur; a reasonable suspicion will suffice - where you reasonably believe that the information disclosed is substantially true.

The procedure

If you have raised your concern openly the matter will be dealt with by your manager. Your manager or the person you contact will conduct an initial interview to discuss the nature of your concern. You may be accompanied by a trade union representative or colleague at any meeting about the disclosure, if you wish to do so. After the interview, you will be asked to sign and date the notes of the meeting to confirm that this is an accurate record of the concerns that you have raised. The person you contact will either keep you updated, or advise you as to who will update you regarding the progress of your concern. However, there may be occasions where this is not possible due to the ongoing investigation or sensitivity of the issue. The interviewer will usually report the matter within five working days to the Chief Executive, depending on the nature of the issue. If the concern is about the Chief Executive the interviewing officer will report the concern to the Chair of the Commission and to the Head of Internal Audit.

RSM Risk Assurance Services LLP are the Commission's Internal Auditors. The Chief Executive (or Chair of the Commission or the Head of Internal Audit, depending on who you raised your concern with initially) will decide on an appropriate course for further action, dependant on the nature of the matter. This further action may be that the matter is: considered internally; referred to the Internal Auditor; the subject of an independent inquiry; referred to external audit. The Chief Executive (or Chair of the Commission or the Head of Internal Audit) will determine a course of action within 10 working days of receipt of the written notification. Some matters may need to be referred to the relevant outside body, such as the Police, again the Chief Executive (or Chair of the Commission or the Head of Internal Audit) will decide. Based on the outcome of an initial review the Chief Executive (or Chair of the Commission or the Head of Internal Audit) will decide if it is appropriate to

instigate internal procedures. If the matter does relate more appropriately to grievance, discipline or other procedures the matter will be referred back to the person who raised the concern to determine if they wish for action to be taken using the internal procedures. The Audit and Risk Committee will consider matters raised under this policy and procedure on an annual basis. The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee should be informed of whistleblowing concerns relating to fraud. A flow chart is available which outlines the key stages in the process. What else may happen If the investigation finds there is a case to be answered then normal disciplinary procedures may apply. The investigation will be objective and evidence based; a report will be produced that focuses on learning lessons to prevent problems recurring. If the investigation recommends any changes to existing working practices, policy or procedure these will be acted upon and the changes communicated to employees. If there is no case to answer but there was a genuine concern without malice or in good faith those involved in your complaint will take all appropriate and necessary action so that there are no reprisals. If an allegation is proven to be false and malicious or in bad faith the matter will be managed in accordance with the disciplinary procedure. Record keeping A written record will be kept of any disclosure. This will include the nature of the disclosure, the notes from the initial investigation meeting, what was decided and what actions were taken as a result. Details of all concerns raised internally and the subsequent investigation will normally be retained for seven years. The purpose of this is to ensure that a central record is kept which can be cross referenced with other complaints to monitor any patterns of concern and assist the Commission in assessing the effectiveness of this policy. Anonymity and confidentiality The Commission understands that disclosures made under this policy may involve highly confidential and sensitive matters and that you may prefer to make an anonymous disclosure. When this is the case we will endeavour to investigate your concerns fully, although a full investigation may be impeded if we cannot obtain further information from you. If you ask to have your identity protected and kept confidential, it will not be disclosed without your consent. If the situation arises where we are unable to resolve the concern without revealing your identity (for example, evidence is needed at court) we will discuss with you how we will proceed. Reporting in good faith Those making a protected disclosure are protected from detrimental treatment by the Commission, by a co-worker or by an agent of the Commission. The Commission is vicariously liable for detrimental treatment. If this occurs, it must be raised immediately with your line manager so that the matter can be investigated thoroughly without undue delay. Detrimental treatment includes, for example, harassment and bullying or not complying with a person's rights and entitlements under his or her contract of employment. Who else you can contact Public Concern at Work (an independent national body providing free advice), Public Concern at Work, 3rd Floor, Bank Chambers, 6 - 10 Borough High Street, London SE1 9QQ. Tel: 020 7404 6609 Email: helpline@pcaw.co.uk The Electoral Commission's Internal Auditors: RSM Risk Assurance Services LLP, 25 Farringdon Street, London EC4A 4AB. Tel: +44 20 3201 8000 The National Audit Office: Whistleblowing telephone line: 020 7798 7999 Related Policies We have a range of policies and procedures that deal with behaviour at work including: Code of Conduct Grievance procedure Disciplinary procedure Anti-fraud and anti-bribery policy You should use these and other procedures when it is appropriate. If you are unsure which procedure may be appropriate, please speak to a member of the HR team who will be able to advise you. Version and change summary table Version Issue date Policy Owner Policy type: statutory/ discretionary Date of next review Comments/ brief description

of main changes in this revision 1 Helen Reeves Statutory Dec 2013 Updated internal auditor details Companion to meetings Reasonable adjustment to way in which concern is raised 2 Statutory Dec 2014 Updated in line with Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 Managers' guide added 3 April 2016 Lindy Petts Statutory April 2018 Further amendments to make fit for purpose 4 July 2017 Sharon Jager Statutory April 2018 Contact details updated 5 May 2018 Gemma Towsey Statutory April 2020 Additions on record keeping and communicating changes implemented as a result of whistleblowing. 6 May 2021 Binnie Goh Statutory May 2022 Internal Auditor details updated. Reference documents updated.

Feedback on voter identification pilots | Electoral Commission Search
Feedback on voter identification pilots You are in the May 2018 voter identification pilot schemes section Home Our research Voter identification pilots May 2018 voter identification pilot schemes First published: 24 July 2019 Last updated: 24 July 2019 Feedback on voter identification pilots RNIB "RNIB completely understand and respect the need to make sure that voting processes are secure, but fear that introducing voter ID in its current form is potentially a further way of disenfranchising blind and partially sighted people. RNIB undertook research before the pilot schemes to look at attitudes amongst blind and partially sighted people to providing ID at a polling station and people raised concerns about access to photo ID and the security around taking such documents to the polling station. The biggest concern raised was the lack of driving licenses amongst blind and partially sighted people, meaning that they had fewer options of what they could provide at the polling station. In respect of the pilots that ran during the local elections in May, RNIB expressed concern on several occasions that not enough was being done to communicate to people with sight loss what was required of them when it came to ID and voting – leaflets and printed materials were too heavily relied upon by local authorities, and it was unclear whether adequate equality impact assessments were done as no reasonable adjustments seemed to have been put in place. "One of the biggest concerns that we raised was the use of polling cards as the ID requirement. Residents across the country have been told over a number of years that they don't need their polling card to vote and now that has changed. RNIB has consistently highlighted that polling cards are still inaccessible and often get mistaken for junk mail and put in the bin, so until there are moves to make polling cards more accessible we would not recommend relying on them as a valid voter ID. The feedback that we received on polling day this year was primarily focussed on the continued inaccessibility of voting, and problems that people had found in their polling station, but the comments that we received in relation to was solidly focussed on not knowing that it was happening, and also questions about why in some areas a Freedom Pass/Disabled Persons' Pass couldn't be used as ID. Many people suggested that as some local authorities issue blind and partially sighted people with a registration card that this should be accepted as appropriate ID by polling station staff. We recommend that a wide-range of ID is accepted at polling stations and that when deciding what ID to accept that thought is given to those who are less likely to have a formal ID. "Whilst we know that some people were disenfranchised due to not having the right ID at the polling station and then not coming back a second time, it is difficult to know how many people simply did not even try to vote because they viewed it as too difficult a process. Similarly, we don't know the numbers of people who didn't understand that there was a back-stop provided by local authorities if they didn't have any other ID. For blind and partially sighted people, completing a separate form in order to get permission to vote could just be one more inaccessible barrier to voting in the same way as their sighted peers. Given that there is a government commitment to introducing for elections across the country, we believe more must be done to really tackle the accessibility problems that came up through the pilots undertaken in 2018 so that blind and partially sighted people aren't further disenfranchised from voting. Real effort must be made by local authorities to look at equalities issues when designing their pilot plans, and the government should make accessibility a key part of the way that they evaluate future pilots. "We acknowledge that communications around will be much easier when there is a national standard and one set of ID requirements the same for every local authority, but the government should think now

about how to engage with those who are less likely to have formal ID and how their national and local communications around the requirements can reach those who have sight loss." Mencap About Royal Mencap Society and learning disability "We support the 1.5 million people with a learning disability in the UK and their families. We fight to change laws and improve health and care services as well as and access to education and employment. A learning disability is caused by the way the brain develops before, during or shortly after birth. It is always lifelong and affects intellectual and social development. Numbers of people with a learning disability voting Only 31% of people with a learning disability reported that they voted in the 2001 in comparison to 59.4% of the general population had actually voted A study featuring 1600 people with a learning disability across Cambridgeshire found that over 80% had not voted in the 2005 General Election in comparison to 39% of the general population A survey conducted by Mencap in 2014 found that 70% of people with a learning disability say they intended to vote in the 2015 general election However, 60% said they found the process of registering to vote too difficult and 17% said they had been turned away from a polling station Soon to be published research of over 1000 people with a learning disability in Bradford - found that while 86% were registered to vote only 26% cast their vote in the 2015 General Election There are no figures on numbers for the 2017 General Election although research would be helpful to ascertain whether a 'snap election' impacts on participation rates Barriers to voting "People with learning disability have has much right to vote as anyone else. However, multiple barriers prevent people with learning disability from being able to engage in politics, register to vote and vote itself. "Unfortunately, many people working with people with a learning disability, support workers, families and professionals do not understand the law or empower the person they support to vote. In some cases, people with a learning disability are actively dissuaded from voting. Research shows that if families and professionals have the tools and knowledge to support people with a learning disability to make an informed decision and vote, they will in turn do so. "Inaccessible communication remains one of the largest hurdles faced by people with a learning disability with media communications, manifesto and election materials often jargon filled. All of this means that people with a learning disability feel excluded and are therefore less likely to see the value in voting.

"The 2017 Conservative Party manifesto outlined that a future Conservative Government would "legislate to ensure that a form of identification must be presented before voting" . Subsequently, the Cabinet Office was directed to begin work on piloting voter ID in the 2018 local elections. Bromley, Gosport, Swindon, Watford and Woking volunteered to take part in these pilots under the supervision of the Cabinet Office. Each area tested a different set of acceptable ID from simply presenting a polling card to producing a piece of photo ID. Ahead of the pilots each volunteer area put out varying communications regarding the pilot and what ID would be accepted. This included holding shop stalls, producing posters and speaking with local Mencap groups. However, the majority of these communications seemed to take place only a few weeks ahead of the 2018 local elections. We fear this will have left many people with a learning disability unaware of the pilots and their requirements. "On the day of the local elections there were numerous reports of people being turned away from polling stations for failing to show acceptable ID. Subsequently, the BBC revealed that 340 people were turned away from casting their vote. These are only early figures and we await the evaluation being undertaken by the Electoral Commission. Mencap's Concerns "Mencap is extremely concerned that introducing ID at polling stations could inadvertently disenfranchise people with a learning disability. People

with learning disability often do not have ID such as a passport as they are unable to travel abroad or cannot afford it. Almost none will have a driving licence and in some cases will not even have access to utility bills or other forms of ID. Danny Brice, a Mencap employee shared his concerns about access to ID in a blog for the Huffington Post ; "I understand the Government want to prevent voter fraud, but it also needs to remember that not everyone has all types of ID. For me, for example, being able to produce my bus pass would be perfect – this is something I always have to hand and a type of ID that many people with a learning disability will already have." Throughout the lead-up to the elections, Mencap raised concerns about the lack of accessible communications about the pilot. Local Mencap groups were only approached by pilot areas at a late stage leaving little room for engagement. Mencap is also concerned about how the results of the pilot's evaluation will be interpreted. To provide a complete picture the evaluation must look at those who voted but also those who didn't to ascertain whether presented an additional barrier to the practical and attitudinal barriers we have detailed above. What we want to see The Government must urgently conduct research to ascertain the types of ID that the 1 million people with a learning disability of voting age in the UK are in possession of and look at the impact that the introduction of compulsory ID at the polling station would have. Rolling out compulsory ID at the polling stations must be accompanied by an accessible communications strategy targeted at people with a learning disability, their families, carers and professionals. There is also an opportunity with any communications strategy to challenge negative attitudes out there which are preventing people from participating. Additionally, we hope the Cabinet Office continues to engage with national and local organisations to better understand the effects of voter ID on people with learning disability. Stonewall "Along with many others, Stonewall raised concerns when the Government announced their plans to pilot a new vote ID scheme for the local government elections on the 3 May 2018. Not only are cases of electoral fraud very rare, we were concerned that a requirement to provide a form of approved ID would create a further barrier to minority groups who may want to vote. For many minority groups, including LGBT, black, Asian and minority ethnic, disabled and homeless people, the complicated and costly process to obtain ID, such as a passport or driving licence, means many simply do not have these documents. Furthermore, trans and non-binary people may have been particularly vulnerable to these ID requirements as the photo on their ID may not reflect their gender expression or identity. Stonewall was deeply concerned that this may lead to confusion or challenges from staff at the pilot polling stations. "Stonewall now urges the Government to reconsider rolling these pilots out as standard and instead work closely with minority communities to understand what can be done to reduce the barriers they face when voting." Labour Party "At local government elections the Government piloted voter ID in five local authorities: Woking, Gosport, Bromley, Watford and Swindon. Those without the required ID on polling day were turned away at the polling station and denied their right to vote. The Labour Party believes in a democracy for the many not the few. We want everyone's voice to be heard, no matter someone's background. Although we welcome the opportunity to submit evidence regarding our experience of the pilots, we fundamentally disagree with the Government's plans to introduce voter ID at polling stations. This submission is made by Cat Smith MP, the Shadow Minister for Voter Engagement and Youth Affairs on behalf of the Labour Party. To inform our response, we invited Labour Councillors, unsuccessful candidates, and election agents to submit evidence of their experience of voter ID in the pilot areas. A solution in search of a problem "The Government

intention to introduce voter ID is presented as a solution to tackle the specific issue of voter impersonation. Electoral fraud is a serious crime and every allegation needs to be investigated fully. Indeed, isolated incidents of electoral fraud have taken place and it is vital that the police have the resources they need to bring about prosecution. However, the proposals outlined by the Government are clearly disproportionate. In 2017 there were 28 allegations of impersonation out of nearly 45 million votes cast. This reflects just 1 case for every 1.6 million votes cast. Of these 28 allegations, one case resulted in a conviction. In addition, none of the five boroughs that took part in the voter ID pilots have experienced a single instance of polling station impersonation in the past decade. Trust in our democratic system is vital, which is why strategies to tackle fraud should be based on facts.

Discriminatory measures "The Windrush scandal has demonstrated that it can be difficult for some communities to provide official documentation, which could prevent legitimate voters from taking part in our democratic process. The Electoral Commission itself has reported that 3.5 million electors – 7.5% of the electorate – do not have photo ID. Moreover, in the 2011 Census, 9.5 million people stated they did not hold a passport and in 2013/14 1.7 million people lacked even a bank account. That makes mandatory voter ID – with no free provision – a barrier to many people exercising their right to vote. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) warned the Government that voter ID will have a disproportionate impact on voters with protected characteristics, particularly ethnic minority communities, older people, trans people, and people with disabilities. The EHRC also warned that if voters were disenfranchised as a result of restrictive identification requirements, this could violate Article 1 Protocol 1 of the European Convention on Human Rights, as incorporated into domestic law by the Human Rights Act 1998. This significant intervention from the EHRC echoes similar concerns raised by a coalition of over 40 leading charities and academics earlier this year who urged the Government to abandon the pilots. In a letter dated 1st March addressed to the Cabinet Office, the coalition stated that the voter ID pilots presented "a significant barrier to democratic engagement and risk compromising a basic human right for some of the most marginalised groups in society". Anecdotal evidence on polling day suggests that voters who were impacted by the ID requirements were often older people, disabled people, and/or from ethnic minority communities. "We had numerous (10-15) people inform us they would not be able to go and vote due to these reasons when we were canvassing in the run up to the election. These people were often from an ethnic minority background. Particularly in the Canalside ward, where there is a significant population of people of ethnic minority background the turnout dropped from 38.07% to 36.07%." Election Agent, Woking Labour Party "At a Hoe Valley polling station, a blue disability badge was presented as ID - this was not on the list of accepted ID and so was down to the presiding officer's discretion. I was told that this ID was not accepted." Election Agent, Woking Labour Party "One elderly lady in her late eighties using walking aid had one id and poll card but even though staff assisted her as best they could she did not have another valid id and did not return. This lady has probably voted the same way all her adult life and it is some in her generation that could be put off or confused." Councillor June Cully, Leader of Gosport Labour Group "I heard a conversation about a deaf person in the polling station having difficulty with the request to read out the address. I heard comments from people who objected to being asked to read out their address as they did not want others to hear."

Councillor Vanessa Allen, London Borough of Bromley Restrictive measures for replacement ID "The Government claims that voters without required ID in the pilot

areas could obtain replacement documentation from their local authority. For example, voters in Bromley, Gosport and Woking could apply for a certificate of identity or a local elector card. However, charities and academics warned that the measures did not go far enough to alleviate the potential risk of disenfranchisement and deterrent to voting. Proof of identity "Voters had to supply proof of identity and proof of residence to process the application for an elector card. In Woking, this required either two pieces of photo ID and one piece of non-photo ID, or four pieces of non-photo ID. This present a somewhat impossible task for voters who do not have the required ID to vote but then are required to supply the same form of identification to apply for an elector card. Attestation "The application required an attestation in writing from a person of good standing in the community. This person must be a registered elector, not a family member, and has not already signed an attestation for or two or more applicants. Anecdotal evidence on polling day suggests this presented a barrier to participation and prevented some voters from taking part in the election. "We know of several people who struggled to obtain a local elector card and some who were unable to and therefore could not vote last Thursday. The reasons for this were due to the difficulty to get a photo attested by someone 'of good standing', a lost birth certificate, etc." Election Agent, Woking Labour Party In person "Voters were required to hand in the application in person at the local council. The typical visit hours would be 8:30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. This could present significant challenges for working people, as well as people with disabilities or mobility issues who may have difficulty getting to their local town.

Timing "The application process had to be completed by 5pm on Wednesday 2 May 2018. This meant that voters could not obtain replacement documentation on polling day, which presents a significant barrier for voters. Even in the U.S. states of Texas, where they have adopted some of the most restrictive voter ID laws in the US, electors without ID can still cast a "provisional ballot" at the polling station on polling day. Voters are then required to confirm the validity of the vote at a later date. Negligence on behalf of the Government local authorities "S.149 of the Equality Act 2010 (Public Sector Equality Duty) requires a public authority in the carrying out of all its functions to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations across the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. The Government claim that each local authority completed an equality impact assessment, which was subject to expert and detailed scrutiny from Cabinet Office, the Electoral Commission and the Association of s. However, there is clear evidence that this has not taken place and most of the local authorities participating in the pilot schemes failed to carry out adequate equality impact assessments (EIAs) on protected individuals in their areas. The Equality and Human Rights Commission have said that they "observed a failure to fully identify all potential impacts on each of the protected groups and/or to provide sufficient mitigation for any adverse impact identified". They also stated that "analysis of the potential impact of the scheme on persons with protected characteristics in a national context was not conducted by the Cabinet Office prior to the introduction of the pilot scheme". This echoes the concern raised by charities and academies who said that the pilot authorities "have failed to carry out adequate equality impact assessments of the pilots on protected individuals in their areas". Bromley London Borough Council "Bromley's EIA considers some superficial negative impacts as a result of the requirement for ID and equally superficial mitigation is suggested to address these. However, the council did not consider in any detail how

the needs of those with protected characteristics would be met by the mitigation. It concludes that there will be no adverse impact on those with the protected characteristics of: disability, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation. No consideration of possible negative impacts were made on those with a disability, protected characteristic of race (including travellers), and those who are homeless. Gosport Borough Council "Gosport's EIA failed to give due regard to the impact the new requirements would have particularly on those with the protected characteristics of Age and Race. There appears to have been no consideration of any potential negative impacts of the changes on these protected groups. No consideration of possible negative impacts on those of different racial backgrounds, different religions and beliefs, and on the homeless. Swindon Borough Council "Swindon's EIA considers a number of negative impacts but states for each that training of Poll Station staff in combination with the Communications Plan will be sufficient to mitigate these negative impacts. The EIA does not explore in much detail the possible negative impacts. Watford Borough Council "Watford's EIA mentioned a number of negative impacts superficially and proposes no mitigation proposed (aside from communications plan) or analysis of likely impacts on those with protected characteristics. Woking Borough Council "Woking's EIA was undertaken in much more detail and negative impacts have been considered for each and mitigation proposed and explained. A flawed pilot scheme "A significant issue with the pilot scheme is that the areas chosen were self-selection. As a result, all the pilots took place in urban areas and most in the South East. This meant that the pilot areas did not adequately represent the groups most likely to be affected by the introduction of voter ID. In addition, none of the trial areas had a significantly older, poorer or ethnically diverse population than the national average who we know are the people most likely to be excluded by voter ID. Because of this, it will be impossible to determine the true impact of voter ID on the wider population. Limitations to the evaluation process "We welcome the opportunity to feed into the Electoral Commission's statutory evaluation process. However, there are a number of limitations to the evaluation: There will be no detailed analysis of the impact of voter ID on different demographics. The evaluation does not include an analysis of the marked registers to understand the effect of the pilots on levels of turnout. Figures collected in polling stations will not be able to capture the number of voters who were put off from entering a polling station altogether because of the new ID requirements. Figures collected in polling stations will not be able to capture voters in neighbouring local authorities who have been put off from voting because of the new ID requirements. Experience on polling day "Despite a number of serious warning signs, the Government decided to pilot discriminatory measures with the full knowledge that voters could be disenfranchised. "One of our councillors informed me that two people were unable to vote in Canalside because they brought incorrect ID (a taxi ID and post office ID, respectively). Another turned up with the correct ID and was refused a ballot paper (rail photocard) - it was not until the elector insisted that the council was called that they eventually were allowed to vote." Election Agent, Woking Labour Party "In Goldsworth Park someone had lost their ID and provided a utility bill instead, which was refused. Several others turned up completely unaware that ID was required. Another provided a blue disability badge that was refused. Some returned later with correct ID to vote." Election Agent, Woking Labour Party "Advised by polling clerk that a family had come to vote but did not have correct whilst mother was being ID advised father tore up poll card and left their son stayed provided correct id and voted."

Councillor June Cully, Leader of Gosport Labour Group “I spoke to one person on the doorstep who had been turned away, he went home and got his ID and returned to vote. I spoke to people on the doorstep who said they would not be voting and included the requirement for ID in their reasons.” Councillor Vanessa Allen, London Borough of Bromley Independent observers found that voters were refused a ballot paper in 21% of polling stations because they did not have the required ID to vote. 1.67% of all voters across the five pilot areas were unable to vote because they did not have the required ID to vote. Based on these figures, the Electoral Reform Society estimated that nearly 4,000 would-be voters were turned away over lack of ID. Conclusion The Labour Party believes in a democracy for the many not the few. We want everyone's voice to be heard, no matter someone's background. Although we welcome the opportunity to submit evidence regarding our experience of the pilots, we fundamentally disagree with introduction of voter ID at polling stations. Cat Smith MP Shadow Minister for Voter Engagement and Youth Affairs Related content Register to vote All you need to register to vote is 5 minutes and your National Insurance number. Our Commissioners Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run

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Objective: Resilient local electoral services You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23 On this page What we are working to achieve Work done to achieve this aim Performance indicators Ongoing and future work First published: 4 July 2023 Last updated: 27 September 2023 What we are working to achieve Local electoral services face significant economic, social, and environmental challenges which risk impacting on their ability to deliver well-run elections and referendums. We are working to help local authorities and electoral administrators to respond to these pressures. We are also working to support the consistent delivery of high-quality services for voters, and the development of resilient local electoral services by: setting challenging performance standards for local electoral services providing accessible guidance and support for electoral administrators supporting increased resilience of local electoral services ensuring the electoral system works effectively. Work done to achieve this aim The capacity and resilience of electoral administrators remains a significant challenge. Our May 2022 election reports found that administrators struggled to recruit staff and find suitable venues for polling stations and the count. The Commission called for sufficient clarity on funding to effectively prepare for changes from the Elections Act. The implementation of the Elections Act is having a significant impact on electoral administrators, and we have continued to support their understanding and preparation for these changes. This has included the development of guidance and resources to support implementation of the new provisions, as well as the continued provision of an advice service for local authorities, delivered through our devolved and regional teams. As always, we produced comprehensive guidance on preparing for and delivering the May 2023 elections, designed to support Returning Officers and electoral administrators. Resources were also developed to help local authorities to communicate the new voter ID requirements to their residents. This is an important part of our objective to support local authorities and electoral administrators to deliver effective, sustainable and resilient services. We consulted on new Returning Officer performance standards, which have been designed to provide a robust framework for the delivery of well-run elections, support the effective and consistent implementation of legislative changes, and enable transparent reporting on the delivery of elections. The standards also address the changes arising from the Elections Act. They were finalised and laid in parliaments in December 2022, and are now in place. We have also updated the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) framework, last reviewed in 2021, to reflect the new responsibilities on EROs arising from the Elections Act. An electoral administrator following May 2022 elections We had significant numbers of staff not taking up their positions again and this seems to be an increasing problem. We were lucky in that our neighbouring authority did not have elections and loaned us a number of staff. If they had also had elections we'd have been struggling to fill vacancies. An electoral administrator following May 2022 elections Performance indicators Indicator Target 2022-23 Accurate advice to Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers, and candidates & agents within three days (Great Britain) 100% 93.35% Publication of accurate and timely guidance products for electoral administrators 100% 100% Ongoing and future work As part of our post-election reporting, we will be gathering data from local authorities and surveying those responsible for delivering elections to understand the impact of the new measures, including how they found implementing voter ID. We will seek feedback to enable us to evaluate our new guidance for Returning Officers and to identify and take on board

any learnings that emerge. We will update our guidance to reflect further changes to elections and electoral registration, including reforms to postal, proxy and overseas voting rules, arising from the Elections Act. We will continue to use the performance standards to support the consistent delivery of high-quality, electoral services for voters and to support the ongoing resilience of local electoral services. We will continue to work with the Electoral Coordination and Advisory Board to address challenges around resilience and capacity, including in relation to polling station staffing and suppliers. Association of s, October 2022 We believe the Electoral Commission's statutory work on how to run elections is very effective. It provides excellent guidance, supporting resources and good practice for Returning Officers and electoral administrators. Association of s, October 2022 Navigation Previous Next Objective: transparent political campaigning and compliant political finance
Objective: Fair and effective electoral law

Results and turnout at the 2016 Greater London Authority elections | Electoral Commission Search Results and turnout at the 2016 Greater London Authority elections You are in the Greater London Authority (GLA) elections section Home Greater London Authority (GLA) elections First published: 11 July 2019 Last updated: 9 August 2019 Download You can download the: full dataset as a XLS full dataset as a CSV (zip file) You can also download our full report , written by Colin Rallings and Michael Thrasher (Elections Centre, Plymouth University, Drake Circus, Plymouth, PL4 8AA). Summary The names of some 4.3% of those on the 'final' register in London were added between December 2015 and 13 March 2016, and a further 2.4% between 13 March and the deadline of 16 April. More than 3,500 postal electors were granted a waiver (0.42% of all such electors); proxies were appointed by over 9,000 London electors (0.17% of the total electorate) with about 550 emergency proxy votes recorded as being issued. Over 860,000 postal votes were issued – 15.0% of the eligible electorate. Some 71.2% of those with a postal ballot returned it. In contrast turnout among those required to vote 'in person' was 42.1%. The proportion of postal votes rejected or otherwise not included in the count was 3.7% compared with 4.6% at the last GLA elections in 2012. Rejection for a mismatch of signature and/or date of birth was three times as common as rejection for incomplete information. Related content Results and turnout at the 2016 Greater London Authority elections View the results and turnout at the 2016 Greater London Authority elections Past elections and referendums Read our reports and view data about past elections and referendums Types of elections about the types of elections in the UK. Results and turnout at the EU referendum View the results and turnout at the EU referendum

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Commissioner Day notes: 17 July 2019 You are in the Electoral Commission Board section Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Apologies Managing regulatory risk First published: 27 November 2019 Last updated: 22 January 2020 Meeting overview Date: Wednesday 17 July 2019 Location: Boothroyd Room, 3 Bunhill Row, London Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Holmes, Chair Sarah Chambers Elan Closs Stephens Alasdair Morgan Rob Vincent Stephen Gilbert Alastair Ross Joan Walley Bob Posner, Chief Executive Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Craig Westwood, Director, Communications and Research Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation Dan Adamson, Head of Monitoring and Enforcement Majella La Praik, Head of Registration and Reporting David Meek, Senior Advisor, Governance Apologies Anna Carragher and Sue Bruce gave their apologies. The Chair congratulated Rob Vincent on the recommendation from the Speaker's Committee that his term as Commissioner be renewed. Managing regulatory risk The Director of Regulation introduced the item and gave an overview of the investigative and regulatory work we undertake. We had refreshed our approach in recent years to ensure that our quality assurance framework kept pace with changes to our investigative and regulatory processes. The Regulatory team separated decisions in any process to avoid risk of pre-judgement. It also ensured separation between officers that considered evidence, and provided evidenced recommendations and more senior managers to take decisions. The Board heard about how staff were recruited and trained in the Enforcement team. The Enforcement team sought people with investigative experience and a familiarity with objective decision-making. Like all staff, enforcement staff were required to declare their political interests. Staff were also required to sign a conflict of interest declaration for each individual investigation case, in addition to codes of conduct and information management systems and processes that governed how we manage cases and conflicts of interest. The Board received an overview of the structure of the directorate, and the way the teams were managed so that no individual member of staff made a decision on their own. There were always checks and balances and review by other people during the process. The Chief Executive noted that we reflected best practice across other regulatory and investigative bodies. Consistency and quality were ensured through the use of the Quality Management System, as well as written processes that everyone in the team was familiar with and followed. The Board received a brief summary of recent legal challenges to our findings. This included a small number of challenges to registrations we had processed, and three enforcement cases. The courts had generally concluded, on the basis of our robust recording of decisions and the reasoning that supported these decisions, which left no room for ambiguity, that our findings were legally sound. The Chief Executive explained that the Enforcement team worked closely with the in-house Legal team, and where appropriate with other teams across the organisation. As a result of changes to the sanctions regime in 2010 we had implemented three layers of decision-making (Enforcement Manager – determination of offence; Sanctions Adviser – initial sanction notice; Director of Regulation – final sanction notice). There could be a risk of the perception of partiality, as there was some cross-over in line management and the decision-making, but this was carefully controlled to keep any risks to a minimum. The recent successes that we had achieved in court indicated that suitable checks and balances were in place. The Board discussed the merits of decision-making processes used by other organisations, such as independent panels. We had considered introducing such panels, but it was not deemed necessary at this time. This might be

reconsidered if appropriate. The Board commented that the reputational consequences of our regulatory findings could have a greater impact than our fines. There could be issues in determining what cases needed to go to an independent review. There was a discussion on how we could ensure any independent process would be seen as unbiased. The Chief Executive told the Board that the Commission was not subject to institutional bias in favour of finding people guilty of committing an offence. The Board heard that the mind-set of a good investigator was attaining satisfaction from getting to the bottom of a case, rather than a bias towards what that outcome was. The Director of Regulation explained that the team culture and training, and the written procedures, emphasised searching for evidence - including evidence that suggested no offence had been committed. This influenced how we collected evidence and built a case. The Board sought assurance on how staff were insulated from outside pressure applied on the Commission. One way this was managed was by limiting the number of names in the public domain. There was also a concerted effort to match the intensity of case-loads across the team. The Board considered whether some of our public comments might imply that we were pleased to issue fines, and noted that we did try to temper this by emphasising our desire for compliance. We also published investigations where no fines were levelled, but these did not get as much media attention. We did not routinely publicly report on the occasions where we identified compliance needs and where the issue was resolved before an investigation was required. The Board was taken through a case study of how a new party was registered, how that party was monitored, and how monitoring and enforcement of that party's regulated activities would be conducted. The Board heard about an internal quality assurance process for registration which we followed when registering parties, including considering the case for and against registration. The registration officer recommended whether to register the party. This decision was then peer-reviewed, before the written assessment was considered by the Director of Regulation who provided an initial view. An approval board, made up of seven heads from across different teams at the Commission, then provided their considered views as to the decision, which were communicated to the Director of Regulation to make a final decision. The Board heard of the methods we used when monitoring campaigners, and how this monitoring was used to build intelligence reports. These reports could then be used to compare against the returns that we received from parties, to assist with our compliance work. The Board heard about how potential compliance issues were assessed, where a written record was created that can be referred to at a later date. The Enforcement Team manager would usually decide whether the matter should proceed to an investigation. Routinely an investigation would include writing to the party to obtain evidence. We always considered any mitigating circumstances. We considered a sanction once an initial determination of an offence had been made by the Enforcement Team manager. There was a legal process to follow when imposing sanctions. The Sanctions Adviser proposed a sanction and the recipient could make representations before a final decision was taken. The Director of Regulation would not be involved in a case until it was due for his/her review, and would recuse himself or herself from a decision when appropriate. The Board explored how we protected ourselves from accusations of inconsistency in the application of sanctions. We had been challenged by some parties that felt that fines appeared inconsistent, but this was usually explained by differences of fact in the case. We kept records of every case which could be used to help understand previous decisions. Work had begun to ensure that institutional knowledge of past sanctions was not concentrated in individual members of staff. The Board asked about the compliance checks of financial returns from

parties, and whether we had a process that ensured that all parties were checked within a given timeframe. The Head of Registration and Reporting noted that we knew which parties we expected to submit a financial return and always checked that those parties had indeed submitted. As part of developing our strategic regulatory approach, we planned to move to more strategic systematic reviews of the compliance of parties. The Chair questioned how we responded to cases which arose from the public or media. The Board heard that over the past 12 years we had gone from the majority of cases being responses to external allegations, to the majority of cases being responses to information we had identified. There would always be allegations that come to light through other means, such as investigative journalism, for example if they had information that we could not reasonably have known. The Board heard that we had a separate process for sharing evidence with the police. The decision to refer a matter to the police was taken by the Chief Executive, on the recommendation of the Director of Regulation and the Legal Counsel. We set out our reasonable grounds for the referral and asked what the police needed from us to take the case forward. The Board heard of our relationships with other regulators to ensure that we kept pace with best-practice. The Board suggested considering using other regulators as peer-reviewers. The Board discussed the requirements for taking on prosecutions. We were building the infrastructure to become a prosecutor. We were also consulting on a prosecutions policy. We had discussed the resource implications of this additional work with the Speaker's Committee. After the end of the discussion on managing regulatory risk, the Board received a brief update from the Chief Executive and the directors on areas of Commission business, including appearances before select committees and devolved legislatures, and publications of reports. There was an update on litigation in which the Commission was involved. The Chair then provided an update on the Four Countries electoral commission conference. Issues discussed included foreign interference, cyber security, digital campaigning and use of social media, voter ID, automation of electoral processes, avoiding undue influence of money, and advance voting. The meeting finished at 4.25pm

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Delivering the elections Supporting Evidence Summary This report looks at how the May
2022 elections in Wales were run, how voters and campaigners found taking part, and
what lessons can be learned for the future. We have reported separately on elections
held in England , Northern Ireland and Scotland . On 5 May elections took place
across the 22 local authority areas in Wales. Overall, people were confident that
these elections were well-run and were highly satisfied with the process of
registering to vote and voting. Turnout at these elections was lower than at previous
comparable elections, and was lowest for voters under 35 years of age. Further
education and engagement is recommended to support newly enfranchised voters to
understand and participate in Welsh elections. Almost everyone who voted was able to
use their preferred method and found it easy to fill in their ballot paper. s engaged
with voters in a range of ways ahead of the elections and felt able to get their
views across effectively. Voters generally found it easy to access information about
the elections, but this did not necessarily translate to them feeling well-informed
about the elections and who they could vote for. A notable proportion of candidates
told us that they experienced some form of abuse or intimidation. While robust
political debate is part of a healthy democracy, sometimes things go too far and
cross the line into threats, abuse and intimidation. When this happens, it is vital
that action is taken against those found guilty of these criminal offences. We will
work with Welsh Government, the police and the wider electoral community to make sure
we understand what is driving candidate abuse and intimidation, and to ensure this
issue is addressed as a matter of urgency. Finally, the late introduction of
legislation making changes to the rules for running the elections brought significant
additional challenges for Returning Officers and electoral administrators. All
relevant Governments need to consider the impact of legislative changes on the
administration of elections and commit to legislation being clear at least six months
before it is required to be implemented or complied with. Voting at the elections The
experience of voters at the May 2022 elections Most people were confident that the
elections were well-run and the vast majority were satisfied with the process of
registering to vote and voting. Almost all found voting in person at a polling
station easy to do. Most voters were able to vote using their preferred method and
found the ballot paper easy to fill in. Turnout at these elections was lower than at
previous comparable elections, and was lowest amongst voters under 35 years old.
Overview On 5 May 2022, there were local government elections across all 22
authorities in Wales. This was the first time that 16 and 17 year olds and foreign
nationals resident in Wales were able to vote in local elections. Four local
authorities trialled advanced voting at these elections. We evaluated the pilots, and
our report - which was published in August - identified several specific areas to be
addressed if a further roll out of advanced voting is considered for future
elections. Voters continue to have positive views about how elections are run
Satisfaction with the registration and voting process remains high People had high
levels of satisfaction with the process of registering to vote and voting. Our
research shows that: 81% of people across Wales were satisfied with the process of
registering to vote. 95% of people who voted were satisfied with the process of
voting. 71% of people said they were confident that the elections were well-run;
however, 10% were not confident. These figures are broadly consistent with findings

following the most recent comparable elections in 2017 and the 2021 Senedd election. Most voters were able to obtain enough information on the candidates Our research shows that the majority of people could obtain information on the candidates standing for election. We found that: 41% of people said it was fairly easy and 18% said it was very easy to obtain the information they required; 19% said it was fairly difficult and 9% said it was very difficult. 45% of people said that they had enough information about the candidates to make an informed decision when voting, but just over a third (34%) tended to disagree. Turnout at these elections was lower than at previous comparable elections In 2022 there was a decrease of 4% in turnout for the local government elections (38%) compared to 2017 (42%). People were most likely to tell us that they didn't vote because of: lack of time/too busy (18%) not interested/fed up with politics (12%) vote wouldn't have made a difference to the outcome/ doesn't count (11%) medical/health reasons not related to COVID-19 (9%) didn't like the candidates/parties/they didn't represent my views (8%) 94% of people who voted said they were able to use their preferred method of voting (in person, by post or by proxy). This figure was lower amongst in-person voters with a disability or health condition (82%). Most people were confident they knew how to cast their vote Nearly all voters (97%) found the ballot paper easy to fill in, and three in four (74%) found it very easy. However, this figure was lower amongst voters with a disability or health issue (67%). Almost everyone who voted by post said that they knew how to complete and return their postal vote and found the postal voting instructions useful: 97% said it was easy to complete and return their postal vote, compared to 3% saying it was difficult Data from electoral administrators shows that: 3.3% of returned postal votes were rejected. The most common reason for postal votes being rejected was that the personal identifiers (signature and/or date of birth) that voters provided on the postal voting statement did not match those that they had provided previously 0.6% of votes cast were rejected at the count. The most common reason for ballot papers to be rejected at the count was because they were unmarked, with this accounting for almost three-quarters (73%) of all rejected ballot papers Changes to postal voting statements did not reduce the postal vote rejection rate In March 2022, Welsh Government, through the Wales Electoral Coordination Board, requested that a trial group of Returning Officers make a change to the postal voting statement to include an additional "today's date" box. The aim was to reduce the postal vote rejection rate due to errors by an elector in providing their personal identifiers (specifically their date of birth). 13 local authorities (out of 22) made this change to the statement. Rejection rate for postal votes 2017 2022 In the trial areas 2.5% 3.3% Not in the trial areas 3.3% 3.1% In the trial areas where the postal voting statement was modified, there was a 0.8% percentage point increase in the rejection rate compared with the most recent comparable elections in 2017. In non-trial areas, there was a 0.2% percentage point reduction in the rejection rate compared with 2017. There is no pattern evident in the data to indicate why this increase may have occurred. We know from our other research that the majority of people who vote by post do so for most elections, so may have become used to using the unmodified version of the form. Welsh Government should consider the available data carefully in making any decision to legislate for permanent changes to the statement. We will also continue to explore ways of improving the electoral system to meet voters' needs. As part of this, we (working alongside the Wales Electoral Coordination Board) will consider evidence about whether changes to postal voting documents or processes could help to reduce the number of postal ballot packs that are rejected at future elections. Further education and engagement is recommended to

support new voters to understand and participate in Welsh elections. The Local Government and Elections Wales Act 2021 extended the voting franchise for Welsh local government elections to 16 and 17 year olds and qualifying foreign citizens. To ensure new voters understood this change and knew how to register, we worked with the Welsh Government and partners across Wales to encourage registration and educate new voters about their vote. The Welcome to Your Vote campaign ran for a second time. Ahead of the elections we re-ran our 'Welcome to Your Vote' paid voter registration campaign, targeted at newly enfranchised 16-17 year olds, alongside our 'Got 5?' campaign targeting the whole electorate. Alongside the campaigns, we held awareness raising events including 'Welcome to Your Vote Week' and 'Welcome to Your Vote Day' targeted at each of the newly enfranchised groups. During the campaign period, a total of 38,438 people in Wales applied to register to vote, including 3,596 16-17 year olds and 663 qualifying foreign citizens. 1 The most applications were from citizens of Hong Kong, USA, Turkey and the Philippines. 2 We worked with partners to reach under-registered groups. Alongside our work to encourage newly enfranchised groups to register, we worked with partner organisations to explain the democratic process to other groups who are typically under-registered or disengaged. Our partners included the British Deaf Association Wales, Mencap Cymru, Welsh Women's Aid, Llamau and Gypsies and Travellers Wales. Ahead of the elections, the Welsh Government provided funding to local authorities to recruit Electoral Registration Support Officers, to help improve registration rates among newly enfranchised and under-registered groups. We worked closely with these officers via the Wales Electoral Coordination Board communications sub-group and the Welsh Government registration partnership. This additional resource was welcomed by local authorities and was crucial in delivering key areas of work to local target groups, especially young people. The strongly held opinion of those local authorities that we talked to was that this resource should continue to be made available to ensure that the foundations already laid are built upon and this important work can continue.

Participation by young people is less than in other age groups. Our research shows a clear difference in turnout amongst those under the age of 35 compared to all other older age groups. Approximately 1 in 5 (12,338) newly enfranchised 16-17 year olds registered to vote ahead of this election. 3 More focus on political education is needed. Ahead of the elections, we developed our democratic education work to help young people understand how to get involved in the democratic process. We published updates to our resources for educators, all linked to the current Welsh curriculum. We partnered with The Democracy Box and have been working with the project's young co-creators and focus group participants aged 16-26 to gain feedback on our resources for young people. Feedback from young people and partners involved in our education work has consistently shown: a lack of understanding as to how to participate in our democratic process; a lack of motivation to engage in elections due to insufficient knowledge about candidates, parties and the process in general. Our Public Opinion Tracker 2022 research (carried out in February 2022) also found that: 77% of parents think it's important that children learn the basics about politics, voting and democracy at school; more parents think the information their children get around politics, voting and democracy at school is insufficient (31%) than sufficient (22%). The Democracy Box's Youth Voice evaluation report recommended that: "Democratic education should start young and be embedded into the curriculum, but continue as young people go on to do different things in different places in both formal and informal education settings and beyond." The New Curriculum for Wales aims to support learners to become 'ethical, informed citizens who understand and exercise their

human and democratic responsibilities and rights.' There is therefore an opportunity for democratic awareness to be woven consistently through education, rather than being a standalone topic during an election. We will continue to build on the work already delivered by engaging further with young people and educators across Wales, and with the Welsh Government, to identify more themes and topics our resources can address and to provide teacher training. We will work closely with the Welsh Government to ensure our resources can effectively support the delivery of democratic education in schools through the new curriculum. Recommendation 1 Recommendation 1 Welsh Government should consider continuing to provide an additional resource to local authorities to increase registration rates and support participation amongst newly enfranchised and under-registered groups, building upon the work carried out by the Electoral Registration Support Officers. Campaigning at the elections The experience of campaigning at the May 2022 elections s communicated with voters using a number of methods, including printed material, face-to-face and digital campaigning. The majority of candidates felt they were able to get their views across to voters. Traditional campaigning methods (leafletting and canvassing) were the most popular. Transparency around who is responsible for producing online and digital campaign material remains important to voters. Late legislation relating to the nomination forms caused some confusion for candidates, particularly around the declaration of party affiliation. A notable proportion of candidates responding to our survey said that they experienced some form of abuse or intimidation. In most cases this involved verbal or online abuse, and the majority of instances came from members of the public. We also received reports of poor candidate behaviour from the police. We will work with Welsh Government and the wider electoral community to make sure we understand what is driving candidate abuse and intimidation, and to ensure this issue is addressed as a matter of urgency. Overview Over 3000 candidates stood at the local elections in Wales, representing 24 political parties as well as 711 independent candidates. Of the 1,233 seats available, 74 candidates were elected without a contest. s were able to engage with voters but some raised concerns about the continued impact of Covid s engaged with voters in a range of ways ahead of the elections and the majority felt able to get their views across effectively. s used a variety of methods to communicate with voters At the 2022 elections, voters reported receiving information from candidates in a variety of different ways including: leaflet from a candidate (56%) leaflet from another source (individual or organisation supporting a candidate) (27%) door-to-door canvassing (15%), which was higher in rural areas (23%) word of mouth (15%) untargeted social media posts (14%) advert on social media (12%) Candidates responding to our survey told us that more traditional campaigning methods were used at these elections: 83% put leafletting in their top three campaigning methods, with 45% of respondents saying it was their most used method. Door-to-door canvassing was also popular, with 30% saying it was their most common approach a substantial number of respondents used social media in their campaigns, though it was primarily to supplement traditional methods, rather than being the main tool. 55% put social media in their top three methods of campaigning, with 8% saying it was their most used method, compared to 40% saying it was their third most used when asked about digital campaigning, free methods were far more popular than any paid-for digital methods. 56% of respondents put posts on social media, and 25% asked supporters to share their posts. The most popular paid-for digital campaigning was adverts on social media, although this was utilised by just 7% of respondents around a third (30%) of respondents said they did not use any digital campaigning Covid continued to have an impact on campaigning Our research

showed that Covid continued to have some impact on campaigning. According to candidates who responded to our survey, 65% felt that they were able to effectively get their views across to voters, while 9% disagreed. However, the majority of candidates reported that Covid affected their campaigns in some way, specifically: 60% said that Covid impacted their ability to enlist volunteers 'a lot' or 'a little', and over half (55%) said that fewer opportunities for face-to-face campaigning impacted their campaign to some degree 45% said that concerns about their own health impacted their campaign in some way People want to know who is responsible for producing campaign material Our research confirmed that people continue to value transparency about who is responsible for political campaign activity online at elections. Transparency about who is producing election campaign material is important to build trust We found that: three in five adults in Wales say it is important for them to know who has produced the political information they see online almost half of respondents (49%) said they would trust digital campaign material more if they knew who produced it 40% feel that they cannot currently trust the political information that is available online, whereas only 14% said the information online was trustworthy The UK Government has introduced legislation that will require most campaigners to include information to identify themselves as part of their online campaign material. This new digital imprint requirement will help voters understand who is paying to target them online at future elections and referendums. We will monitor any impact of these new requirements on people's levels of confidence in political information online. Recommendation 2 Recommendation 2 We continue to recommend that Welsh Government ensures that a digital imprint regime is in place in advance of the next set of scheduled elections in Wales. Late legislation caused confusion for some candidates standing for election Two issues have been identified where late legislative changes made ahead of these elections affected candidates. Changes to the nomination process caused confusion The first change was a declaration of party affiliation, where candidates must now declare whether they have been a member of another political party within the 12 months leading up to the day on which the notice of election is published. This caused confusion for some candidates, who either failed to complete this section or completed it incorrectly. This issue is covered in further detail in the Delivering the elections section of this report. The second change related to the use of joint descriptions on the ballot paper. The new legislation permitted two parties to use a joint description on the ballot paper which must include the full registered names of both parties involved. The law for Senedd elections and other UK-wide elections is different, and allows for the use of joint descriptions that are registered with the Electoral Commission and which identify the parties involved but don't necessarily include the full registered party names. At the local government elections, these registered joint descriptions were not permitted under the new legislation. Recommendation 3 Recommendation 3 Welsh Government should review the legislation around joint descriptions ahead of the next scheduled local elections, to allow for registered joint descriptions to be used on the ballot paper, in line with the position for Senedd elections and other elections across the UK. We provided support to candidates throughout the election process We attended candidate sessions at party conferences and stand-alone virtual events, to provide candidates and agents with information on the rules for the elections from the nomination process through to the reporting of campaign spending. We also arranged a bespoke virtual session for independent candidates, and attended local authority briefing sessions to ensure that we were able to provide as much support as possible prior to the nomination period and through to polling day. Increasing

opportunities for supporting candidates and parties. We also introduced virtual post-poll advice surgeries for candidates and agents who wanted to ask specific questions. These sessions were popular and the feedback has been positive. Feedback included: almost three quarters of candidates (73%) agreed that the law on election spending and reporting was clear. A fifth (20%) either said they didn't know or neither agreed nor disagreed, and 7% disagreed just under two thirds (64%) agreed that the law on donations and how to check permissibility was clear, compared to 6% who disagreed. 69% found the law about personal expenses clear, while 6% disagreed. Threats, abuse and intimidation continue to be an issue during elections. 3 in 5 candidates who responded to our survey (60%) said that they did not have a problem with threats, abuse or intimidation; however, 40% experienced some kind of problem and 8% experienced a serious problem. Our research found that: of those that said they experienced some kind of abuse, the most common sources were verbal (69%) and online (46%) over two thirds (69%) said the abuse they experienced came from members of the public. Almost 2 in 5 (39%) said they received abuse from other candidates, while 15% received threats or abuse from campaigners or volunteers. 16% witnessed threats or intimidation towards those campaigning on their behalf of those who experienced or witnessed abuse, 15% said they reported it to the police, and almost a fifth who experienced threats or abuse said that their experience would discourage them from standing in the future. We have received information from the four police Single Points of Contact (SPOCs) in Wales regarding issues experienced during the election period. In general, it was reported that some candidate behaviour was poor, particularly on social media. The police have said that: "The behaviour shown by some candidates at the local elections in May was completely unacceptable." The SPOCs have proposed that they, on behalf of the police forces in Wales, create some guidance for candidates and campaigners on expectations around behaviour during an election period, and that this should be provided to all candidates as part of the nomination process. This new guidance would sit alongside the resources already available on the College of Policing website relating to candidates, and the Code of Conduct for campaigners. We will work with the relevant police forces and SPOCs in the development and support of this material. We will work with Welsh Government and the wider electoral community to make sure we understand what is driving candidate abuse and intimidation and to develop effective responses to protect candidates and campaigners at future elections.

Delivering the elections

The experience of electoral administration at the May 2022 elections

The elections were well run across Wales, but issues with the capacity and resilience of elections teams, coupled with the high recent turnover of Returning Officers created challenges. The late introduction of legislation making changes to the rules for running the elections, brought additional challenges for Returning Officers and administrators. This could be avoided if all legislation relating to electoral events is clear at least six months before it is required to be implemented or complied with.

Overview

Local authority elections teams were responsible for managing electoral registration, candidate nominations, absent voting, polling stations and the counting of votes. Our evidence shows that the May 2022 polls were well-run, and voters and campaigners reported high levels of satisfaction and confidence. For Returning Officers and electoral administrators, however, these elections presented significant challenges, with one notable issue being the lack of time available to plan as a result of the late introduction of new legislation. There also remain underlying issues relating to the capacity and resilience of election teams. These challenges were felt most strongly in local authorities where capacity was more limited, or in some cases where there had been a

recent change of Returning Officer or Electoral Services Manager. However, with considerable diligence and effort, together with support from the Wales Electoral Coordination Board, local authorities were able to deliver the polls successfully, albeit under pressurised circumstances. The timing of legislative changes meant Returning Officers lacked the certainty they needed to plan. The Welsh Government undertook a review during the summer of 2021, which resulted in the introduction of legislation providing a new set of rules for the local government elections in May 2022. The Local Elections (Principal Areas) (Wales) Rules 2021 and The Local Elections (Communities) (Wales) Rules 2022 came into force on 14 December 2021. The changes in the rules meant, that for the first time, candidates: did not require the signatures of supporters (apart from one witness) could choose not to have their home address shown on the ballot paper had to disclose previous party membership (within the last 12 months) could submit their nomination electronically Changes were also made to the disqualification criteria which meant that you could stand as a candidate at a local authority election if you were a paid officer or employee of that local authority, but had to resign your post if elected. In March 2022 the new rules were amended by The Local Elections (Miscellaneous and Consequential Amendments) (Wales) Regulations 2022. These amendments were made partially in response to comments received during the short period of consultation on the substantive rules, but also to add provisions that were necessary to support the advance voting pilots in four local authority areas. 4 The late introduction of the new rules created challenges for administrators in preparing for the elections, as well as for us in producing guidance and resources to support them. The key impact was on the nomination forms, which we could not make available until 18 February when the amending legislation had been laid. Electoral administrators who responded to our survey said they found that the introduction of legislation so close to the elections made it difficult for them to plan effectively. Specifically, they reported that the lateness of nomination forms impacted on the availability of guidance and the briefings they could offer for candidates. "Legislation was too late for the local elections. Our candidate briefings started in January and legislation came through late December. How are we supposed to encourage candidates to come forward and stand for election when we don't know the rules and processes well enough in advance particularly given the potential scale of changes that were being proposed?" - Returning Officers need early clarity to be able to deliver significant changes introduced by new legislation Returning Officers need early clarity to be able to deliver significant changes introduced by new legislation Significant reform is expected in Wales over the coming years, which will present new challenges for electoral practitioners in Wales. This includes new policies expected to be introduced by Welsh Government as well as changes arising from the UK Government's Elections Act 2022. Governments need to ensure there is effective planning, management and communication with the electoral community around new legislation and avoid significant delays and short notice changes. Recommendation 4 Recommendation 4 We once again urge Welsh Government to ensure that all legislation relating to electoral events is clear (either by Royal Assent to primary legislation, or by laying secondary legislation for approval by the Senedd) at least six months before it is required to be implemented or complied with. We also call on the UK Government to ensure the legislation is clear at least six months before any changes in the Elections Act 2022 are going to be implemented so that Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and electoral administrators have enough time to prepare. Failure to do this creates significant risks to the delivery of well-run polls and public confidence in elections. It means that electoral administrators are

put under intense pressure, with the successful delivery of elections then relying on their goodwill to work additional hours during the pre-election period, which is not sustainable. It also impacts directly on candidates and agents, who have less time to familiarise themselves with the process. Resilience and capacity in election teams remains a significant challenge In previous reports we have highlighted our concerns about the resilience and capacity of electoral administration structures in Wales. The high turnover of Returning Officers continues and increases the risks to the delivery of well-run polls. The support provided by the Wales Electoral Coordination Board through its events and mentorship scheme was appreciated by new Returning Officers. "The personal support I received from my mentor and other experienced Returning Officers in my region was extremely useful. I also found the support from the Wales Electoral Coordination Board very useful, particularly for making me aware of the critical issues across Wales, and offering solutions." Returning Officers and electoral administrators who responded to our survey said the resilience of electoral services was still an issue, but that these elections were more straightforward to manage compared with the challenge of delivering the Senedd election in 2021. There was an issue in Denbighshire where a printing error was made in the instructions on how to vote, which were sent out to 16,000 postal voters. When the problem was identified, action was taken to contact those voters affected to provide them with the correct instructions. While the number of voters who received incorrect instructions was significant, the number of postal ballot papers re-issued because of the error was small (15). We recognise the pressures faced by Returning Officers and their teams, particularly where officers are new and inexperienced. It is important, however, that voters, candidates and political parties can have confidence in the election process and that the election material they receive is accurate. Following the polls, the Returning Officer in Denbighshire and his team have reviewed how the error had occurred and their processes for dealing with it, and have made a commitment to improving processes in the future. We have also provided advice to the Returning Officer and his staff to support them in improving their proofing processes for future elections. Returning Officers struggled to recruit enough staff to work in the polling station Recruiting staff to work at the elections in some areas was a problem. Two thirds of administrators who responded to our survey said that recruiting enough suitable staff for polling stations was an issue. In certain cases, administrators reported having to recruit Presiding Officers with limited or no experience of the role in order to ensure polling stations could be staffed appropriately. Also, administrators highlighted that a number of people who had previously undertaken the Presiding Officer role had said they were no longer interested in doing so. Administrators also said they believe this will continue to be an issue, limiting the number of experienced people who will be available to work at each set of polls. The Electoral Commission will continue to work with the Wales Electoral Coordination Board and the wider electoral community across the UK to discuss and identify solutions to the staffing, resilience and capacity challenges experienced by Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and their teams as well as in recruiting sufficient polling station staff. Effective planning and support helped Returning Officers to deliver the elections The Wales Electoral Coordination Board played an important role supporting Returning Officers and electoral administrators and promoting consistency As at previous recent elections, the Wales Electoral Coordination Board played an important coordination role for these elections, supporting local authorities by holding all-Wales briefing events for Returning Officers and Electoral Services Managers in the autumn of 2021 and

spring of 2022. The Board, which was established in 2017, operates on a voluntary basis to co-ordinate the planning for all-Wales electoral events and activity related to electoral modernisation and reform. As well as this, the Board supports collaboration between Regional and Local Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and key partners in Wales. Those who responded to our survey said they felt that the Board's role was sometimes confusing and that communication could be improved. If the Board was made statutory, as recommended in our reports on elections in Wales in 2017 and 2021, we believe this would begin to address these concerns.

National agreement was reached on holding the count the day after the poll rather than overnight. The Wales Electoral Coordination Board had early discussions about the timing of the count, and sought consensus from across Wales. In January 2022, with the support of the main political parties, the Board recommended to all Returning Officers in Wales that the count should take place on the day after polling day and not overnight. This recommendation was implemented across Wales. Similar to feedback received at the Senedd election in 2021, we heard from administrators that daytime counting was a success, and was appreciated by candidates and election staff. It made staffing the count easier and was reported to have improved the overall atmosphere.

Recommendation 5

Welsh Government should strengthen the Wales Electoral Coordination Board and place it on a statutory footing, which will enable it to play an enhanced role in the delivery of future elections and electoral reforms in Wales. New nomination forms and electronic submission processes made the process easier for candidates but created administrative challenges. New legislation changed the nomination forms for the local elections, and candidates were also able to submit them to Returning Officers electronically for the first time. Legislative changes to the nomination forms caused confusion and created extra work for administrators. While the nominations process generally ran smoothly and provided candidates with different ways to submit their nomination papers, feedback from electoral administrators highlighted issues with the nomination forms and the electronic process for submission. For example: the processing of electronic nominations forms added to the workload at a point when time is limited many candidates submitted nomination forms electronically very close to the deadline making it difficult for any issues to be addressed. The forms were felt to be repetitive and not straightforward to complete. “Online applications were a double-edge sword. It made it relatively easy for candidates to submit papers at a time of their choosing and removed the need for them to come into the office to hand them in. At a time when we are extremely busy with nominations, minor errors on the form that could be corrected in seconds in the office, could take a couple of days to resolve via emails.” Through the Wales Electoral Coordination Board, work is currently underway to identify improvements to the nominations process that could be introduced for future elections.

Statement of party affiliation

The new rules also made changes to the nomination forms requiring candidates to provide a statement confirming whether they had been a member of any registered political party during the period of 12 months ending with the day when the notice of election was published (defined as ‘the relevant period’) and, if so, to provide details of this membership. At the end of March 2022, administrators expressed to us that there was confusion around the information they needed to transfer from the nomination forms to the statement of persons nominated, which they would then make publicly available. If the legislation had been in place earlier, and more time given to consultation with those affected by the changes, this issue may have been avoided. To address the confusion, we issued supplementary guidance to Returning Officers and Electoral Services Managers advising them to only extract and

include information from the statement of party membership relating to the relevant period. We also advised Returning Officers and Electoral Services Managers to remind candidates and agents, during the informal check stage, of the specific circumstances under which they needed to include details on their statement of party membership. We are working with Welsh Government to minimise the potential for misunderstanding in future and will consider further additions to our guidance to provide additional clarity. Supporting Evidence Welsh local government elections May 2022 Public opinion research tables 2022 Wales Local election electoral data 1. Data provided by UK Government Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. The data on applications by newly-qualified foreign nationals includes applications by those with dual or multiple nationalities, even where one or more of these nationalities would have historically granted the applicant the right to vote in UK elections prior to the extension of the franchise in Wales. It is not possible to discern from the data what proportion of applicants with dual or multiple nationalities are truly ‘newly-qualified’ foreign nationals as the specific nationalities of these applicants are not given. The data also covers applicants from Zimbabwe, the Maldives and Fiji, who are eligible to vote as Commonwealth citizens and therefore are not technically ‘newly-qualified’ foreign nationals. Similarly, the data includes applicants from Hong Kong, irrespective of franchise eligibility. Finally, the data covers online applications only and applicants whose nationality is unrecorded. ■ Back to content at footnote 2 3. Total number of registrations between 1 May 2021 and 14 April 2022. ■ Back to content at footnote 3 4. These were initiated by Welsh Government under its framework for electoral modernisation (<https://gov.wales/written-statement-framework-electoral-reform>). ■ Back to content at footnote 4 Page history First published: 21 September 2022 Last updated: 21 September 2022 Related content Report on the May 2022 local elections in England Read our report on the May 2022 local elections in England Report on the May 2022 Scottish council elections Read our report on the May 2022 Scottish council elections. Report on the May 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election Read our report on the May 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election Looking back at the May 2022 elections Read our latest blog post on looking back at the May 2022 elections.

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partial repayments, conversions to donations, changes to the terms of loans or full
repayments. Data in this section Loans outstanding borrowing by political parties
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outstanding value of loans reported by political parties. Table: Loans
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the public Other... Enter other... Leave this field blank

of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 29 August Britain First Description Britain First - Stop The Boats All of Great Britain Approve 29 August Britain First Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 29 August The British Unionist Front Name The British Unionist Front England Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party 29 August The British Unionist Front Description The Party trying to keep the United Kingdom united not just with itself but the European Union and to have equal liberty for all group no matter race gender or sexuality and get us through this cost of living crisis

England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description; Contains more than 6 words 22 August Progressive Change North Lanarkshire Name Progressive Change North Lanarkshire Scotland Rejected Application incomplete 10 August Homeland Party Name Homeland Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 08 August Independent Candidate — More Officers — Safer Communities Name Independent Candidate — More Officers — Safer Communities England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 08 August Propel Description Propel: for a Free Wales / Propel: dros Gymru Rydd Wales Approve 08 August Propel Description Propel: Stand Up for Cardiff / Propel: Dros Gaerdydd Wales Approve 08 August Propel Description Propel: Stand Up for Fairwater / Propel: Dros Y Tyllgoed Wales Approve 08 August Propel Description Propel: Stand Up for Ely / Propel: Dros Drelai Wales Approve 08 August System Change / Newid System Name System Change All of Great Britain Approve 08 August System Change / Newid System Name Newid System All of Great Britain Approve 08 August System Change / Newid System Description System Change GB All of Great Britain Approve 08 August System Change / Newid System Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 08 August System Change / Newid System Emblem All of Great Britain Approve July 2023 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 25 July Carter Party Name Carter Party England Reject Application incomplete 25 July Independents for Tunbridge Wells Name Independents for Tunbridge Wells England Reject Application incomplete 25 July The Progressive Unity Party Name The Progressive Unity Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 21 July United Kashmir People's National Party Name United Kashmir People's National Party England Reject Application incomplete 19 July The Great Britain Peoples Party Name The Great Britain Peoples Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 18 July Tandridge Residents' Group Name Tandridge Residents' Group England Approve 18 July Tandridge Residents' Group Description Godstone Residents England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 18 July Tandridge Residents' Group Description Burstow, Horne & Outwood Residents England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 18 July Tandridge Residents' Group Emblem England Approve 18 July Tetbury and District Residents Association Name Tetbury and District Residents Association England Reject Application incomplete 12 July Communist League Election Campaign Name Communist League Election Campaign All of Great Britain Approve 12 July Communist League Election Campaign Description Communist League All of Great Britain Approve 12 July National Conservatism Party Name National Conservatism Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 12 July National Housing Party United Kingdom Name National Housing Party United Kingdom Northern Ireland Reject Application incomplete 11 July Anew UK Name Anew UK All of Great Britain Approve 11 July Anew UK Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 11 July Anew UK Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 11 July Anew UK Emblem All of Great Britain Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 07 July PoliNet Name PoliNet All of

Great Britain Reject Application incomplete June 2023 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 28 June Glastonbury Independent Alliance Name Glastonbury Independent Alliance England Approve 28 June Glastonbury Independent Alliance Emblem England Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 28 June Glastonbury Independent Alliance Description Independence, Integrity, Inclusivity. England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 28 June National Distributist Party Description Distributism Localism Agrarianism Patriotic England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 28 June Police Party of Great Britain Name Police Party of Great Britain England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 19 June New Open Non-Political Organised Leadership Name New Open Non-Political Organised Leadership All of Great Britain Approve 19 June New Open Non-Political Organised Leadership Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 19 June New Open Non-Political Organised Leadership Emblem All of Great Britain Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 19 June Workers Party of Britain Description Workers Party of Britain - Scotland All of Great Britain Approve 19 June Workers Party of Britain Description Workers Party Britain - Leader George Galloway All of Great Britain Reject Likely to hinder an elector's understanding of directions for voting given on ballot papers 19 June Workers Party of Britain Description Workers Party of Britain – Wales All of Great Britain Approve 19 June Workers Party of Britain Description Workers Party of Britain – Cymru All of Great Britain Approve 14 June Social Democratic Party Name Y Blaid Ddemocraidd Gymdeithasol All of Great Britain Approve 14 June The Pensioner's Party Name The Peoples Party All of Great Britain Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party 14 June The Pensioner's Party Emblem All of Great Britain Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 14 June Unify Party / Plaid Uno Name Unify Party / Plaid Uno All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 08 June Consensus Name Consensus All of Great Britain Approve 08 June Consensus Description Consensus - Green, Moderate and Financially Prudent All of Great Britain Approve 08 June Consensus Description Consensus Party Candidate All of Great Britain Approve 08 June Consensus Description Your Consensus Party Candidate All of Great Britain Approve 08 June Consensus Description Your Local Consensus Party Candidate All of Great Britain Approve 08 June National Workers Party Name National Workers Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 08 June The Sutton Bridge Deserves Better Party Emblem England Approve 06 June Irish Freedom Party Name Irish Freedom Party Northern Ireland Reject Application incomplete 05 June The Peoples Party Name The Peoples Party England Reject Application incomplete 01 June LOVE (Liberation Opportunity Vitality Empowerment) Name LOVE (Liberation Opportunity Vitality Empowerment) All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete May 2023 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 26 May The Sustainable Party Name The Sustainable Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 25 May Britain Reborn Name Britain Reborn All of Great Britain Approve 25 May Britain Reborn Description Changing For Good All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 25 May Britain Reborn Description Fair For All All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 25 May Britain Reborn Emblem All of Great Britain Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered emblem

25 May Britain Reborn Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 25 May Britain Reborn
Emblem All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the minimum requirements for emblems

23 May Indy Alliance Name Indy Alliance All of Great Britain Reject Application
incomplete 23 May System Change / Newid System Name System Change / Newid System All
of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 23 May The Mitre TW9 Name The Mitre
TW9 England Approve 23 May The Mitre TW9 Emblem England Approve 16 May National Lion
Democratic Party Name National Lion Democratic Party England Reject Application
incomplete 16 May One Leicester Name One Leicester England Approve 16 May One
Leicester Emblem England Approve 16 May South Devon Alliance Emblem England Reject
Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read

16 May The Hedge Party Name The Hedge Party England Reject Application incomplete 09
May Friends of Brighton and Hove Party Name Friends of Brighton and Hove Party
England Reject Application incomplete 04 May Congleton Independents Name Congleton
Independents England Reject Application incomplete 04 May Ossett Borough Independents
Name Ossett Borough Independents England Reject Application incomplete 04 May
Together 4 Rutland Name Together 4 Rutland England Reject Application incomplete 04
May united kashmir peoples national party Name united kashmir peoples national party
England Reject Application incomplete 04 May Winsford Salt of the Earth Name Winsford
Salt of the Earth England Reject Application incomplete April 2023 Date of decision
Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part
of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/
Reason for rejection 18 April Consensus Name Consensus All of Great Britain Reject
Application incomplete 11 April Anew UK Name Anew UK All of Great Britain Reject
Application incomplete 04 April Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Description
Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Leicestershire All of Great Britain Approve 04
April Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Description Alliance for Democracy and
Freedom Nottinghamshire All of Great Britain Approve 04 April Alliance for Democracy and
Freedom Description Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Midlands All of Great
Britain Approve 04 April Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Description 4Alliance for
Democracy and Freedom Northwest All of Great Britain Approve 04 April Alliance for
Democracy and Freedom Description Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Anglia All of
Great Britain Approve 04 April Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Description
Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Southeast All of Great Britain Approve 04 April
Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Description Alliance for Democracy and Freedom
FyldeCoast All of Great Britain Reject Contains more than 6 words 04 April Alliance
for Democracy and Freedom Description Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Wyre All of
Great Britain Approve 04 April Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Description ADF
Great Britain All of Great Britain Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect
of their vote March 2023 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark
applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to
Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 29 March Lydiate and
Maghull Community Independents Emblem England Reject Confusingly similar to another
already registered emblem 29 March Lydiate and Maghull Community Independents Emblem
England Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered emblem 29 March
Lydiate and Maghull Community Independents Emblem England Reject Confusingly similar
to another already registered emblem 29 March Lydiate and Maghull Community
Independents Description Lydiate and Maghull Community Independents England Reject
Duplicate of party name 29 March The Great Britain Peoples Party Name The Great
Britain Peoples Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 28 March
Belper Independents Name Belper Independents England Approve 28 March Belper

Independents Description Belper Independents - Putting Belper First England Approve 28 March Belper Independents Emblem England Approve 28 March Boston Independent Name Boston Independent England Approve 28 March Boston Independent Description Cleaner Stronger Prouder England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 28 March Boston Independent Description Cleaner Brighter Stronger England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 28 March Edgeley Community Association Emblem England Reject Does not meet the minimum requirements for emblems 28 March Folkestone Peoples Partnership Name Folkestone Peoples Partnership England Reject Application incomplete 28 March Godalming & Villages Residents Name Godalming & Villages Residents England Reject Application incomplete 28 March Gwlad Name Gwlad-Gall Cymru Fod Yn Well / Gwlad-Wales Can Be Better Wales Approve 28 March Nottingham Independents Description Nottingham Independents for Sherwood and Carrington England Approve 28 March Nottingham Independents Description Nottingham Independents putting Basford First England Approve 28 March Peterborough First Emblem England Approve 28 March The Coldhurst Independent Party Name The Coldhurst Independent Party England Reject Application incomplete 28 March The Sutton Bridge Deserves Better Party Name The Sutton Bridge Deserves Better Party England Approve 28 March The Sutton Bridge Deserves Better Party Description Sutton Bridge Deserves Better Party England Approve 28 March The Sutton Bridge Deserves Better Party Description It's time for a change England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 28 March The Sutton Bridge Deserves Better Party Description Let's put the residents first England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 28 March The Sutton Bridge Deserves Better Party Description We need a new Parish Council England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 28 March The Sutton Bridge Deserves Better Party Description Isn't it time to move forward England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 28 March The Sutton Bridge Deserves Better Party Description The Bridge matters more than Councillors England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 28 March The Sutton Bridge Deserves Better Party Description We need a better Council England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 28 March The Sutton Bridge Deserves Better Party Description Old Council out, new Council in England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 28 March The Sutton Bridge Deserves Better Party Description Let's improve the Parish Council England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 28 March The Sutton Bridge Deserves Better Party Emblem England Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 28 March Tytherington Ward Independents Name Tytherington Ward Independents England Approve 28 March Tytherington Ward Independents Description Tytherington Independents England Approve 28 March Tytherington Ward Independents Description Tytherington Ward Independents Together England Approve 28 March Tytherington Ward Independents Description Tytherington Together England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 28 March Tytherington Ward Independents Emblem 27 March Local First Name Local First England Approve 27 March Local First Description Local First, heart of the town England Approve 20 March Active for Plymouth Description Plymouth Active For Change England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 20 March Active for Plymouth Description Plymouth Independent Alliance England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 20 March Active for Plymouth Description Active For Plymouth England Reject Duplicate of party name 20 March Active for Plymouth Description England Reject Does not meet the minimum requirements for emblems 20 March East Devon Alliance Description Democratic East Devon Alliance England Approve 20 March East Devon Alliance Description East Devon

Democratic Alliance England Approve 20 March East Devon Alliance Description Democratic Alliance East Devon England Approve 20 March Mansfield Independents Emblem England Approve 20 March Mansfield Independents Emblem England Reject Does not meet the minimum requirements for emblems 20 March Patriotic Alternative Name Patriotic Alternative All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 20 March Reform Derby Description Reform Derby: No To The Incinerator England Approve 20 March Reform Derby Description Reform Derby: For Chellaston Shelton Lock England Approve 20 March The Mitre TW9 Name The Mitre TW9 England Reject Application incomplete 20 March The Royton Independents Name The Royton Independents England Reject Application incomplete 20 March UK Independence Party (UKIP) Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 20 March UK Independence Party (UKIP) Emblem Northern Ireland Approve 20 March Willingdon Residents Association Name Willingdon Residents Association England Reject Application incomplete 20 March Windsor First Name Windsor First England Reject Application incomplete 07 March Anti-Protocol Official Unionist Name Anti-Protocol Official Unionist Northern Ireland Reject Application incomplete 07 March BINGHAM INDEPENDENT ALLIANCE Name BINGHAM INDEPENDENT ALLIANCE England Reject Application incomplete 07 March Hyndburn for Change Name Hyndburn for Change England Reject Application incomplete 07 March Independent Future Name Independent Future All of Great Britain Reject Application Incomplete 07 March LOVE (Liberation Opportunity Vitality Empowerment) Name LOVE (Liberation Opportunity Vitality Empowerment) All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 07 March Northern Independence Party Description Northern Independence Party - Doctors. Nurses. Paramedics. England Approve 07 March Northern Independence Party Description Northern Independence Party - Save the NHS England Approve 07 March Northern Independence Party Description Northern Independence - Fight for the NHS England Approve 07 March Northern Independence Party Description Northern Independence Party - Get Yorkshire Moving England Approve 07 March Northern Independence Party Description Northern Independence Party - Get Merseyside Moving England Approve 07 March Northern Independence Party Description Northern Independence Party - Get Tyneside Moving England Approve 07 March Northern Independence Party Description Northern Independence Party - Get Humberside Moving England Approve 07 March Northern Independence Party Description Northern Independence Party - Get Manchester Moving England Approve 07 March Northern Independence Party Description Northern Independence Party - Support the Strikes England Approve 07 March Northern Independence Party Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 07 March Resurrection Emblem England Approve 07 March Resurrection Emblem England Approve 07 March Resurrection Emblem England Approve 07 March Scottish Eco-Federalist Party (SEFP) Description SEFP - Centre-left, soft-unionist environmentalist party Scotland Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 07 March Scottish Eco-Federalist Party (SEFP) Description SEFP - Soft-unionist environmentalist party Scotland Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 07 March Scottish Eco-Federalist Party (SEFP) Description SEFP - Centre-left, soft-unionist environmentalists Scotland Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 07 March Scottish Eco-Federalist Party (SEFP) Description SEFP - Soft-unionist environmentalists Scotland Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 07

March Scottish Eco-Federalist Party (SEFP) Description SEFP - For a Federal Model Scotland Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 07 March Scottish Eco-Federalist Party (SEFP) Description SEFP - For a Sustainable Federal Model Scotland Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 07 March Scottish Eco-Federalist Party (SEFP) Description SEFP - For a Palatable Compromise Scotland Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 07 March Scottish Eco-Federalist Party (SEFP) Description SEFP - For a Sustainable Alternative Scotland Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 07 March Scottish Eco-Federalist Party (SEFP) Description SEFP - RejectIndependence, RejectAnglocentrism Scotland Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 07 March Scottish Eco-Federalist Party (SEFP) Description SEFP - For a Third Option Scotland Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 07 March Scottish Eco-Federalist Party (SEFP) Description SEFP - Reject Independence, Reject Current System Scotland Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 07 March Stafford Borough Independents Name Stafford Borough Independents England Approve 07 March Stafford Borough Independents Description Stafford Borough Independents England Reject Duplicate of party name 07 March Stafford Borough Independents Description Stafford Borough Independents working for you England Approve 07 March Stafford Borough Independents Description Stafford Borough Independents. People before politics England Approve 07 March Stafford Borough Independents Description Stafford Borough Independents providing local solutions England Approve 07 March Stafford Borough Independents Description Stafford Borough Independents working for localities England Approve 07 March Stafford Borough Independents Emblem England Approve 07 March Stafford Borough Independents Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the Emblem are unable to be read 07 March Stafford Borough Independents Emblem England Approve 07 March The Saddleworth Independent Party Name The Saddleworth Independent Party England Reject Application incomplete " February 2023 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 23 February Friends of Brighton and Hove Party Name Friends of Brighton and Hove Party England Reject Application incomplete 23 February Godalming & Villages Residents Name Godalming & Villages Residents England Reject Application incomplete 23 February National Lion Democratic Party Name National Lion Democratic Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 23 February Wakefield & District Independents Name Wakefield & District Independents England Approve 23 February Wakefield & District Independents Emblem England Approve 23 February Wakefield & District Independents Description Wakefield District Independents Ackworth, Elmsall, Upton England Approve 23 February Wakefield & District Independents Description Wakefield District Independents Altofts and Whitwood England Approve 23 February Wakefield & District Independents Description Wakefield District Independents Airedale, Ferry Fryston England Approve 23 February Wakefield & District Independents Description Wakefield District Independents Castleford England Approve 23 February Wakefield & District Independents Description Wakefield District Independents Crofton, Ryhill, Walton England Approve 23 February Wakefield & District Independents Description Wakefield District Independents

Featherstone England Approve 23 February Wakefield & District Independents Description Wakefield District Independents Hemsworth England Approve 23 February Wakefield & District Independents Description Wakefield District Independents Ossett and Horbury England Approve 23 February Wakefield & District Independents Description Wakefield District Independents Knottingley and Ferrybridge England Approve 23 February Wakefield & District Independents Description Wakefield District Independents Normanton England Approve 23 February Wakefield & District Independents Description Wakefield District Independents Pontefract England Approve 23 February Wakefield & District Independents Description Wakefield District Independents Elmsall, South Kirkby England Approve 23 February We Are The People Name We Are The People All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 23 February We Are The People Name We Are The People Northern Ireland Reject Application incomplete 22 February Boston Independent Name Boston Independent England Reject Application incomplete 22 February Redcar & Cleveland Independent Name Redcar & Cleveland Independent England Reject Application incomplete 22 February Residents for Guildford and Villages Description R4GV England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote; Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 22 February Residents for Guildford and Villages Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote; Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 22 February Residents for Guildford and Villages / Guildford Greenbelt Group Joint Description The R4GV and GGG Alliance England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote; Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 22 February Team Heanor Loscoe Name Team Heanor Loscoe England Approve 22 February The Hedge Party Name The Hedge Party England Reject Application incomplete 22 February The Sustainable Party Name The Sustainable Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 22 February United Future Party Name United Future Party England Reject Application incomplete 13 February Belper Independents Name Belper Independents England Reject Application incomplete 13 February British National Worker's Party Name British National Worker's Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 13 February Consensus Name Consensus All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 13 February Ossett Borough Independents Name Ossett Borough Independents England Reject Application incomplete 13 February Telford Independents Name Telford Independents England Reject Application incomplete 13 February The Coldhurst Independent Party Name The Coldhurst Independent Party England Reject Application incomplete 09 February Congleton Independents Name Congleton Independents England reject Application incomplete 09 February Liverpool Community Independents Name Liverpool Community Independents England Approve 09 February Liverpool Community Independents Description Liverpool Community Independents -Belle Vale England Approve 09 February Liverpool Community Independents Description Liverpool Community Independents – Canning England Approve 09 February Liverpool Community Independents Description Liverpool Community Independents – Cressington England Approve 09 February Liverpool Community Independents Description Liverpool Community Independents – Fazakerley England Approve 09 February Liverpool Community Independents Description Liverpool Community Independents - Old Swan England Approve 09 February Liverpool Community Independents Description Liverpool Community Independents - Springwood England Approve 09 February Liverpool Community Independents Description Liverpool Community Independents - Orrell Park England Approve 09 February Liverpool Community Independents Description Liverpool Community Independents - Sandfield Park England Approve 09 February Liverpool Community

Independents Description Liverpool Community Independents - Garston England Approve 09 February Liverpool Community Independents Emblem England Approve 09 February Lydiate and Maghull Community Independents Name Lydiate and Maghull Community Independents England Approve 09 February Lydiate and Maghull Community Independents Description Lydiate Community Independents England Approve 09 February Lydiate and Maghull Community Independents Description Maghull Community Independents England Approve 09 February Lydiate and Maghull Community Independents Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelling out the abbreviation are unable to be read 08 February Alderley Edge First Name Alderley Edge First England Approve 08 February Alderley Edge First Description People before Party England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 February Alderley Edge First Description Politics without Party England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 February Alderley Edge First Description Independents for Change England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 February Alderley Edge First Description Vote Independent England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 February Alderley Edge First Emblem England Approve 08 February Alderley Edge First Emblem England Approve 08 February Britain Reborn Name Britain Reborn All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 07 February Unify Party / Plaid Uno Name Unify Party / Plaid Uno All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 06 February Edgeley Community Association Name Edgeley Community Association England Approve 06 February Edgeley Community Association Description Putting Edgeley First England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 06 February Edgeley Community Association Description For the Common Good in Edgeley England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 06 February Edgeley Community Association Description Edgeley Independent England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 06 February Edgeley Community Association Description People Before Politics England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 06 February Edgeley Community Association Description Your Edgeley Community Candidates England Approve 06 February Edgeley Community Association Description Putting Local Community Before National Politics England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 06 February Edgeley Community Association Description Supporting Local People. Addressing Local Issues. England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 06 February Edgeley Community Association Description A New Local Focus for Edgeley England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 06 February Edgeley Community Association Emblem England Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 06 February Edgeley Community Association Emblem England Reject Does not meet the minimum requirements for emblems 06 February Folkestone Peoples Partnership Name Folkestone Peoples Partnership England Reject Application incomplete 06 February Science Party Emblem England Approve 06 February The Maldon District Independent Group Name The Maldon District Independent Group England Approve 06 February The Maldon District Independent Group Description Putting Residents First England Reject Does not meet the minimum requirements for emblems 06 February The Maldon District Independent Group Description Maldon Independents – local people for local people England Reject Contains more than 6 words 06 February The Maldon District Independent Group Emblem England Approve 06 February Werrington First Name Peterborough first England Approve Change of party name application 06 February West Windsor Residents Association Name West Windsor Residents Association England Approve 06 February West Windsor Residents Association Description West Windsor Residents Association (WWRA) England Approve 06 February West Windsor Residents Association

Description WWRA England Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 06 February West Windsor Residents Association Emblem England Approve 02 February The Local Party Name The Local Group England Approve 02 February Tytherington Ward Independents Name Tytherington Ward Independents England Reject Application incomplete January 2023 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 30 January Choice Party UK Name Choice Party UK All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 30 January Rother Association of Independent Councillors Name Rother Association of Independent Councillors England Approve 30 January Rother Association of Independent Councillors Emblem England Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 30 January Rushcliffe Independents Name Rushcliffe Independents England Approve 30 January Rushcliffe Independents Description Rushcliffe Independents Putting Keyworth First England Approve 30 January Rushcliffe Independents Description Rushcliffe Independents Putting Radcliffe First England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 30 January Rushcliffe Independents Description Rushcliffe Independents Putting Ruddington First England Approve 30 January Rushcliffe Independents Description Rushcliffe Independents Putting Let's Fix Rushcliffe's Roads England Approve 30 January Rushcliffe Independents Description Rushcliffe Independents Working For West Bridgford England Approve 30 January Rushcliffe Independents Description Rushcliffe Independents Putting Cotgrave First England Approve 30 January Rushcliffe Independents Description Rushcliffe Independents Putting Bingham First England Approve 30 January Rushcliffe Independents Description Rushcliffe Independents Putting Bunny First England Approve 30 January Rushcliffe Independents Description Rushcliffe Independents Putting Gamston First England Approve 30 January Rushcliffe Independents Description Rushcliffe Independents Putting Edwalton First England Approve 30 January Rushcliffe Independents Description Rushcliffe Independents Putting Cranmer First England Approve 30 January Rushcliffe Independents Description Rushcliffe Independents Putting East Bridgford First England Approve 30 January Rushcliffe Independents Emblem England Approve 30 January The Local Party Name The Local Group All of Great Britain Approve 30 January Windsor First Name Windsor First England Reject Application incomplete 19 January The Hedge Party Name The Hedge Party England Reject Application incomplete 19 January The Royton Independents Name The Royton Independents England Reject Application incomplete 19 January UK Independence Party (UKIP) Emblem All of Great Britain Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 19 January UK Independence Party (UKIP) Emblem Northern Ireland Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 16 January Redcar & Cleveland Independent Name Redcar & Cleveland Independent England Reject Application incomplete 13 January Scottish Libertarian Party Name Scottish Libertarian Party Scotland Approve 13 January Scottish Libertarian Party Emblem Scotland Approve 13 January Scottish Libertarian Party Description Free people, Free Speech & Free Markets Scotland Reject Does not meet requirements of a description 12 January Freedom Alliance – Integrity, Society, Economy Name For Future's Sake – Freedom Alliance All of Great Britain Approve 12 January Freedom Alliance – Integrity, Society, Economy Description FFS. For Future's Sake All of Great Britain Reject Offensive 12 January Freedom Alliance – Integrity, Society, Economy Description For Future's Sake All of Great Britain Approve 12 January Freedom Alliance – Integrity, Society, Economy Description Freedom Alliance England All of Great Britain Approve 12

January Freedom Alliance – Integrity, Society, Economy Description FFS. For Future's Sake. Freedom Alliance All of Great Britain Reject Offensive 12 January Freedom Alliance – Integrity, Society, Economy Description For Future's Sake. Stop Digital Slavery All of Great Britain Approve 12 January Freedom Alliance – Integrity, Society, Economy Description FFS. For Future's Sake. Stop WEF. All of Great Britain Reject Offensive 12 January Leigh & Atherton Independents Description Atherton North Independent England Approve 12 January Leigh & Atherton Independents Description Leigh Central Independent England Approve 12 January Leigh & Atherton Independents Description Atherton South & Lilford Independent England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 12 January Leigh & Atherton Independents Description Leigh Central and Higher Fold Independent England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 12 January Leigh & Atherton Independents Description Leigh and Atherton Independent England Approve 12 January Leigh & Atherton Independents Description Westleigh Independent England Approve 12 January Leigh & Atherton Independents Description Leigh Independent England Approve 12 January Local First Name Local First England Reject Application incomplete 12 January Reform Derby Description Reform Derby Putting Chellaston SheltonLock First England Reject More than six words 12 January Reform Derby Description Reform Derby Putting Sinfín Osmaston First England Approve 12 January Reform Derby Description Reform Derby Putting Alvaston Allenton First England Approve 12 January Reform Derby Description Reform Derby Putting Mackworth First England Approve 12 January Reform Derby Description Reform Derby Putting Spondon First England Approve 12 January Reform Derby Description Reform Derby For A Better Derby England Approve 12 January Reform Derby Description Independent Reform Derby England Approve 2022 party registration decisions December 2022 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 23 December Brighton & Hove Independents Emblem England Approve 23 December Children & Family Party Name Justice for Men and Boys All of Great Britain Approve 23 December Compassionate Party Name Compassionate Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 23 December Independent Future Name Independent Future All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 23 December Rushcliffe Independents Name Rushcliffe Independents England Reject Application incomplete 22 December Consensus Name Consensus All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 22 December Hextable Independents Emblem England Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 22 December Potteries Alliance Name Potteries Alliance England Reject Application incomplete 22 December Propel Description Propel: Free Wales / Propel: Cymru Rydd Wales Approve 22 December The Just Party Name The Just Party England Reject Application incomplete 22 December The Sustainable Party Name The Sustainable Party England Reject Application incomplete 22 December Workers Voice UK Name Workers Voice UK All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 13 December The Independent Choice Name The Independent Choice England Approve 13 December The Independent Choice Emblem England Approve 08 December Democratic Liberation Party / Plaid Rhyddhad Democraidd Name Democratic Liberation Party / Plaid Rhyddhad Democraidd All of Great Britain Approve 08 December Democratic Liberation Party / Plaid Rhyddhad Democraidd Description For Liberty, Integrity, Rule of Law All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 December Kingston Independent Residents Group Description Kingston Independent Residents – James Giles candidate England Reject Likely to hinder an elector's understanding of directions for voting given on ballot papers 08 December

Kingston Independent Residents Group Description Kingston Independent Residents – Leader: James Giles England Reject Likely to hinder an elector's understanding of directions for voting given on ballot papers November 2022 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 24 November Merseyside Community Independents Name Merseyside Community Independents England Reject Application incomplete 21 November Democrats Description Democrats: "Stop spoiling our country!" England and Wales Approve 21 November Democrats Description Democrats - "End mass immigration now!" England and Wales Approve 21 November Democrats Description Democrats: - "Deport all illegal immigrants!" England and Wales Approve 21 November the Borough first Independents Emblem England Reject Does not meet the minimum requirements for emblems 21 November Unify Party / Plaid Uno Name Unify Party / Plaid Uno All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 15 November Breakthrough Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 15 November South Holland Independents Emblem England Approve 15 November The Hedge Party Name The Hedge Party England Reject Application incomplete, Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 15 November UK Independence Party (UKIP) Emblem Northern Ireland Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 15 November UK Independence Party (UKIP) Emblem All of Great Britain Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 15 November West Windsor Residents Association Name West Windsor Residents Association England Reject Application incomplete 11 November Sovereignty Emblem Scotland Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered emblem 07 November Ashfield Independents Description Ashfield Independents Putting Eastwood First England Approve 07 November Ashfield Independents Description Ashfield Independents Putting Brinsley First England Approve 07 November Ashfield Independents Description Ashfield Independents Putting Underwood First England Approve 07 November Ashfield Independents Description Ashfield Independents Putting Jacksdale First England Approve 07 November Bolton for Change Emblem England Approve 07 November Havering Boro Independent Group Emblem England Approve 07 November Havering Boro Independent Group Emblem England Reject Does not meet the minimum requirements for emblems 07 November Havering Boro Independent Group Emblem England Approve 07 November Morecambe Bay Independents Description Morecambe Bay Independent England Approve 07 November Morecambe Bay Independents Description Morecambe BayIndependent Group England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 07 November Morecambe Bay Independents Description The Bay Independent Group Morecambe England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 07 November Morecambe Bay Independents Description Morecambe Bay Independents "People Before Politics" England Approve 07 November Morecambe Bay Independents Description Independent Group for Morecambe Bay England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 07 November Morecambe Bay Independents Description The Official Morecambe Bay Independent Candidate England Approve 07 November Propel Description Free Wales / Cymru Rydd Wales Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description October 2022 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 20 October Rother Association of Independent Councillors Name Rother Association of Independent Councillors England Reject Application incomplete 19 October Labour Party Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 19 October Polegate Residents Association Emblem England Approve 11 October Blue

Revolution Description Blue Revolution, Small State Socialism England Approve
September 2022 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The
identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration
decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 30 September FederalUK Name
FederalUK All of Great Britain Approve 30 September FederalUK Description FederalUK
All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 30
September FederalUK Description FederalUK party All of Great Britain Approve 30
September FederalUK Description FederalUK Putting Citizens First All of Great Britain
Approve 30 September FederalUK Description FederalUK for unity All of Great Britain
Approve 30 September FederalUK Description FederalUK empowering people All of Great
Britain Approve 30 September FederalUK Description FederalUK levelling up for all All
of Great Britain Approve 30 September FederalUK Description FederalUK empowering
communities All of Great Britain Approve 30 September FederalUK Description FederalUK
Party All of Great Britain Reject Duplicate of a description in the same application
30 September FederalUK Description FederalUK.Party All of Great Britain Approve 30
September FederalUK Emblem All of Great Britain Reject Contains an abbreviation which
is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 30 September Patriotic
Alternative Name Patriotic Alternative All of Great Britain Reject Application
incomplete 07 September Independents for Herefordshire Name Independents for
Herefordshire England Reject Application incomplete, Confusingly similar to another
already registered party 01 September Freedom Alliance- Integrity, Society, Economy
Description FFS. For Freedom's Sake. Freedom Alliance. All of Great Britain Reject
Offensive 01 September Freedom Alliance- Integrity, Society, Economy Description
Yorkshire Freedom Alliance All of Great Britain Approve 01 September Freedom
Alliance- Integrity, Society, Economy Description Welsh Freedom Alliance All of Great
Britain Approve 01 September Freedom Alliance- Integrity, Society, Economy
Description Scottish Freedom Alliance. All of Great Britain Approve 01 September
Freedom Alliance- Integrity, Society, Economy Description Freedom Alliance. Truth.
Empowerment. Decentralisation. Liberation. All of Great Britain Approve 01 September
Freedom Alliance- Integrity, Society, Economy Description People Before Banks.
Freedom Alliance All of Great Britain Approve 01 September Freedom Alliance-
Integrity, Society, Economy Description Stop Digital Slavery. Freedom Alliance. All
of Great Britain Approve 01 September Freedom Alliance- Integrity, Society, Economy
Description End Lies, Fear and Corruption. Freedom Alliance All of Great Britain
Reject Contains more than 6 words 01 September Freedom Alliance- Integrity, Society,
Economy Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 01 September Freedom Alliance- Integrity,
Society, Economy Emblem All of Great Britain Reject Contains an abbreviation which is
likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote August 2022 Date of decision
Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part
of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/
Reason for rejection 30 August Alliance for London Description Alliance for London:
Heart of Europe England Approve 30 August Alliance for London Description Alliance
for London: At Europe's Heart England Approve 30 August Democratic Liberation Party
Name Democratic Liberation Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete
19 August Alba Party Description Alba Party: Yes, Scotland should be an independent
country Scotland Reject Contains more than 6 words 19 August Alba Party Description
Alba Party: Yes to Scottish Independence Scotland Approve 19 August Alba Party
Description Alba Party: Scotland's future in Scotland's hands Scotland Reject
Contains more than 6 words 19 August Alba Party Description Alba Party: Alba for
Independence Scotland Approve 19 August Londependence / Rejoin EU Joint description

Londependence: Rejoin EU England Approve 19 August Merseyside Community Independents Name Merseyside Community Independents England Reject Application incomplete 19 August Morecambe Bay Independents Description Bay Independent Group England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 19 August Morecambe Bay Independents Description Morecambe Independent Group England Approve 19 August Morecambe Bay Independents Description Morecambe & Heysham Independent Group England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 19 August Morecambe Bay Independents Description Morecambe Bay Independents – People Before Profit England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 19 August Morecambe Bay Independents Description Morecambe Bay Independents - MBI England Approve 19 August Morecambe Bay Independents Description Morecambe Bay Independents – Bay Independent Group England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 19 August Morecambe Bay Independents Description Morecambe Bay Independents – Morecambe Independent Group England Approve 19 August Morecambe Bay Independents Description Morecambe Bay Independents – Morecambe First England Approve 19 August Morecambe Bay Independents Description Morecambe Bay Independents – Heysham First England Approve 19 August Morecambe Bay Independents Description Morecambe Bay Independents - Heysham England Approve 19 August Morecambe Bay Independents Description Morecambe Independent England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 19 August Morecambe Bay Independents Description Heysham Independent England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 19 August Poole Engage Party Name Poole Engage Party England Approve 19 August Poole Engage Party Description Poole Engage – With U 4 U England Approve 19 August Poole Engage Party Description Poole Engage – With U 4 Poole England Approve 19 August Poole Engage Party Description Poole Engage – Local 4 U England Approve 19 August Poole Engage Party Description Poole Engage – Poole Local England Approve 19 August Poole Engage Party Description Poole Engage – Poole Local 4 U England Approve 19 August Poole Engage Party Description Poole Engage – Working 4 U England Approve 19 August Poole Engage Party Description Poole Engage – Working With U 4 U England Reject Contains more than 6 words 19 August Poole Engage Party Description Poole Engage – Pride in Community England Approve 19 August Poole Engage Party Description Poole Engage – Essentially Poole England Approve 19 August Poole Engage Party Description Poole Engage – Essentially Local England Approve 19 August Poole Engage Party Description Poole Engage – Action not Words England Approve 19 August Poole Engage Party Description Poole Engage – Independents 4 U England Approve 19 August Poole Engage Party Emblem England Reject Duplicate party emblem 19 August Poole Engage Party Emblem England Approve 19 August True and Fair Party Name True & Fair Party England and Wales Approve 19 August Ulster Unionist Party Emblem Northern Ireland Approve 01 August Democracy for Chorley Emblem England Approve 01 August Democracy for Chorley Emblem England Approve 01 August System Change / Newid System Name System Change All of Great Britain Approve 01 August System Change / Newid System Name Newid System All of Great Britain Approve 01 August System Change / Newid System Description System Change All of Great Britain Reject Duplicate of party name 01 August System Change / Newid System Description System Change, not climate change All of Great Britain Approve 01 August System Change / Newid System Description System Change All of Great Britain Reject Duplicate of party name 01 August System Change / Newid System Description Newid System All of Great Britain Reject Duplicate of party name 01 August System Change / Newid System Description Scottish System Change All of Great Britain Approve 01 August System Change / Newid System Description System Change and TUSC All of Great Britain Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party 01 August System Change / Newid System Emblem All of

Great Britain Approve 01 August System Change / Newid System Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 01 August System Change / Newid System Emblem All of Great Britain Approve July 2022 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 12 July Malvern Hills Independent Name Malvern Hills Independent England Approve 12 July Malvern Hills Independent Emblem England Approve 04 July Poole Together Party Name Poole Together Party England Reject Application incomplete, Confusingly similar to another already registered party 04 July The Party for Poole People Ltd. Description Poole People – Poole Together England Approve 04 July The Party for Poole People Ltd. Description Poole People – Let's Poole Together England Approve 04 July The Party for Poole People Ltd. Description Poole People – for people, planet, Poole England Approve 04 July The Party for Poole People Ltd. Description Poole People –people, planet & Poole England Approve 04 July The Party for Poole People Ltd. Description Poole People – let's Poole together England Approve 04 July The Party for Poole People Ltd. Description Poole People – standing up for Poole England Approve 04 July The Party for Poole People Ltd. Description Poole People – people, planet & Poole England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 04 July The Sovereign Party Description The Sovereign Party – Freedom and Rights / Plaid Sofren – Rhyddid A Hawliau Wales Approve 04 July The Sovereign Party Description The Sovereign Party – Freedom and Fairness / Plaid Sofren – Rhyddid A Thegwch Wales Approve 04 July The Sovereign Party Description The Sovereign Party – For Freedom / Plaid Sofren – Dros Ryddid Wales Approve 04 July The Sovereign Party Description The Sovereign Party – No More Lockdowns / Plaid Sofren – Dim Mwy O Locdowns Wales Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 04 July The Sovereign Party Description The Sovereign Party – Freedom not Tyranny / Plaid Sofren – Rhyddid Nid Gormes Wales Approve 04 July The Sovereign Party Description The Sovereign Party – For Freedom + Wales / Plaid Sofren – Dros Ryddid, Dros Gymru Wales Reject Contains more than 6 words 04 July The Sovereign Party Description The Sovereign Party – For Wales / Plaid Sofren – Dros Gymru Wales Approve June 2022 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 21 June Alliance for London / Rejoin EU Joint Description Alliance for London: Rejoin EU England Approve 21 June Bolton For Change Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 21 June Durham City People's Party Emblem England Approve 21 June Science Party Name Science Party England Approve 21 June Science Party Description Science Before Politics England Refuse Does not meet the requirements of a description 21 June Science Party Emblem England Approve 21 June Vanguard Party Description Vanguard Party championing Dumfries and Galloway All of Great Britain Approve 21 June Vanguard Party Description Vanguard Party championing the North West All of Great Britain Approve 21 June Vanguard Party Description Vanguard Party championing West Cumbria Mining All of Great Britain Approve 21 June Vanguard Party Description Vanguard Party championing Woodhouse Colliery All of Great Britain Approve 21 June Vanguard Party Description Vanguard Party championing Cumberland All of Great Britain Approve 21 June Wigan Independents Description Shevington Independents part of Wigan Independents England Approve 21 June Wigan Independents Description Orrell Independents part of Wigan Independents England Approve 21 June Wigan Independents Description Ashton Independents part of Wigan Independents England Approve 21 June Wigan Independents Description Bryn Independents part of Wigan Independents England Approve 21 June Wigan Independents

Description Abram Independents part of Wigan Independents England Approve 21 June
Wigan Independents Description Hindley Independents part of Wigan Independents
England Approve 21 June Wigan Independents Description Aspull Independents part of
Wigan Independents England Approve 06 June Bridge Party Name Bridge Party England
Reject Application incomplete 06 June Democracy for Chorley Name Democracy for
Chorley England Approve 06 June Democracy for Chorley Description Democracy for
Chorley Party England Approve 06 June Democracy for Chorley Emblem England Reject
Contains a tick and is likely to contradict instructions or guidance given for voting
on ballot papers 06 June Democracy for Chorley Emblem England Reject Contains a tick
and is likely to contradict instructions or guidance given for voting on ballot
papers 06 June Democracy for Chorley Emblem England Reject Contains a tick and is
likely to contradict instructions or guidance given for voting on ballot papers 06
June Veterans and People's Party Emblem All of Great Britain Approve May 2022 Date of
decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied
for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further
information/ Reason for rejection 23 May Havering Boro Independent Group Name
Havering Boro Independent Group England Approve 23 May Havering Boro Independent
Group Description Havering Boro Independent Group – St Edward's England Approve 23
May Havering Boro Independent Group Description Havering Boro Independent Group – St
Alban's England Approve 23 May Havering Boro Independent Group Description Havering
Boro Independent Group - Mawneys England Approve 23 May Interactive Democracy
Description Interactive Democracy – Machine Learning Behavioural Analytics All of
Great Britain Approve 23 May Interactive Democracy Description Interactive Democracy
– Collective intelligence All of Great Britain Approve 23 May Interactive Democracy
Description Interactive Democracy – Blockchain Authentication All of Great Britain
Approve 23 May Interactive Democracy Description Interactive Democracy - Crypto
Proof-of-Stake Consensus Mechanism All of Great Britain Reject Contains more than 6
words 05 May Malvern Hills Independents Name Malvern Hills Independents England
Reject Application incomplete 05 May UK Independence Party (UKIP) Emblem All of Great
Britain Approve April 2022 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark
applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to
Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 26 April Kilmarnock &
Hurlford Regeneration Party Name Kilmarnock & Hurlford Regeneration Party Scotland
Reject Application incomplete 25 April Bolton for Change Description Bolton for
Change Back in Lancashire England Approve 25 April Durham City People's Party Name
Durham City People's Party England Approve 25 April Durham City People's Party Emblem
England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are
unable to be read 25 April Hadley & Leegomery Residents Association Name Hadley &
Leegomery Residents Association England Approve 25 April Hadley & Leegomery Residents
Association Emblem England Approve 25 April Hadley & Leegomery Residents Association
Emblem England Reject Likely to hinder an elector's understanding of directions for
voting given on ballot papers 25 April Middleton Independents Party Emblem England
Approve 25 April National Identity Networking Gang Name National Identity Networking
Gang England Approve 25 April National Identity Networking Gang Emblem England
Approve 25 April The Borough first Independents Emblem England Reject Likely to
mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 01 April Independent Network
Description Ealing Independent Network All of Great Britain Approve 01 April Irish
Republican Socialist Party Name Irish Republican Socialist Party Northern Ireland
Approve 01 April Irish Republican Socialist Party Name Páirtí Poblachtach Sóisialach
na h-Éireann Northern Ireland Approve 01 April Irish Republican Socialist Party

Description IRSP – for a socialist Republic Northern Ireland Approve 01 April Irish Republican Socialist Party Emblem Northern Ireland Approve 01 April Official Monster Raving Loony Party Name The Official Monster Raving Loony Party All of Great Britain Approve 01 April Official Monster Raving Loony Party Name Plaid Swyddogol yr Anghenfilaidd Ddihirod Gwallgof All of Great Britain Approve 01 April Official Monster Raving Loony Party Description Official Monster Raving Loony Party All of Great Britain Approve 01 April Patriotic Alternative Name Patriotic Alternative All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 01 April Sinn Féin Emblem Northern Ireland Approve 01 April We Matter Party Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote March 2022 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 24 March Brighton & Hove Independents Name Brighton & Hove Independents England Approve 24 March Change for Plymouth Emblem England Approve 24 March Temple and Farringdon Together Description Together, for a better City England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 24 March Temple and Farringdon Together Description Working Together for a better City England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 24 March Temple and Farringdon Together Description Together in the City of London England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 24 March Temple and Farringdon Together Description Temple and Farringdon Together England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 24 March Temple and Farringdon Together Description Together England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 24 March The Community Party Name The Community Party England Approve 24 March The Community Party Description Community Party England Approve 24 March The Community Party Description Community Candidate England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 24 March The Community Party Emblem England Approve 20 March Charter Party Name Charter Party All of Great Britain Approve 20 March Charter Party Name Parti Siarter All of Great Britain Approve 20 March Climate Party Name Climate Party All of Great Britain Approve 20 March Climate Party Description The Climate and Biodiversity Party All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 20 March Climate Party Description The Climate and Nature Party All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 20 March Climate Party Description The Climate and Wellbeing Party All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 20 March Climate Party Description The Wellbeing Party All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 20 March Climate Party Description Climate Party - Nature, Climate, Wellbeing All of Great Britain Approve 20 March Climate Party Description Climate Party - 2030 Zero Carbon All of Great Britain Approve 20 March Climate Party Description 2030 Zero Carbon All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 20 March Climate Party Description Climate Party - Eco Economy All of Great Britain Approve 20 March Climate Party Description Wellbeing Party - Climate and Ecological Economics All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 20 March Climate Party Description The Wellbeing and Climate Action Party All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 20 March Climate Party Description Climate Party - Carbon Zero Growth All of Great Britain Approve 20 March Climate Party Description Climate Action Party All of Great Britain Approve 20 March Independents for Frome -- England Approve Application to change from minor party to registered political party 20 March Irish Republican Socialist Party / Páirtí Poblachtach Sóisialach na h-Éireann Name Irish Republican Socialist Party / Páirtí Poblachtach Sóisialach na

h-Éireann Northern Ireland Reject Application incomplete 20 March National Housing Party United Kingdom Name National Housing Party United Kingdom All of Great Britain Approve 20 March National Housing Party United Kingdom Description National Housing Party Citizens Deserve Homes All of Great Britain Approve 20 March National Housing Party United Kingdom Description National Housing Party Homes For Citizens All of Great Britain Approve 20 March National Housing Party United Kingdom Description National Housing Party Putting UK First All of Great Britain Approve 20 March National Housing Party United Kingdom Description National Housing Party UK Citizens First All of Great Britain Approve 20 March National Housing Party United Kingdom Description National Housing Party Cutting Waiting Lists All of Great Britain Approve 20 March National Housing Party United Kingdom Description National Housing Party Our People First All of Great Britain Approve 20 March National Housing Party United Kingdom Description National Housing Party Against Globalist Poverty All of Great Britain Approve 20 March National Housing Party United Kingdom Description National Housing Party For Affordable Housing All of Great Britain Approve 20 March National Housing Party United Kingdom Description National Housing Party Leave UN Now All of Great Britain Approve 20 March National Housing Party United Kingdom Description National Housing Party No More Refugees All of Great Britain Approve 20 March National Housing Party United Kingdom Description National Housing Party Stopping Permanent Immigration All of Great Britain Approve 20 March National Housing Party United Kingdom Description National Housing Party No Foreign Ownership All of Great Britain Approve 20 March National Housing Party United Kingdom Emblem All of Great Britain Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 20 March No More Lockdowns Name The Sovereign Party / Plaid Sofren Wales Approve 20 March No More Lockdowns Description Freedom not fear / Rhyddid nid ofn Wales Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 20 March No More Lockdowns Description For freedom / Dros ryddid Wales Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 20 March No More Lockdowns Description Freedom and fairness / Rhyddid a thegwch Wales Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 20 March No More Lockdowns Description Freedom not tyranny / Rhyddid nid gormes Wales Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 20 March No More Lockdowns Description Freedom not Force. No More Mandates / Rhyddid nid gorfodaeth Wales Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 20 March No More Lockdowns Description No more lockdowns for Wales / Dim mwy o gloi lawr i Gymru Wales Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 20 March No More Lockdowns Description Freedom and sovereignty / Rhyddid a sofraniaeth Wales Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 20 March No More Lockdowns Description No more restrictions / Dim rheoliadau Wales Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 20 March No More Lockdowns Description For Wales, for freedom / Dros Gymru, dros ryddid Wales Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 20 March No More Lockdowns Description For freedom, for Wales / Dros ryddid, dros Gymru Wales Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 20 March No More Lockdowns Description Freedom and sovereignty / Rhyddid a sofraniaeth Wales Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 20 March No More Lockdowns Description No more lockdowns / Dim mwy o gloi lawr Wales Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 20 March No More Lockdowns Emblem Wales Approve 20 March No More Lockdowns Emblem Wales Reject Does not meet the minimum requirements for emblems 14 March British Freedom Name British Freedom All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete, Confusingly similar to another already registered party 14 March Havering Independent Residents Group Name Havering Independent Residents Group

England Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party, Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 14 March Justice for Men & Boys Name Children and Families Party All of Great Britain Approve 14 March Justice for Men & Boys Description Bedford Children and Families Party All of Great Britain Approve 14 March Neighbourhood Meet, Greet & Treat Name Neighbourhood Meet, Greet & Treat England Reject Application incomplete 14 March Royal Tunbridge Wells Residents Party Name Royal Tunbridge Wells Residents Party England Approve 14 March Royal Tunbridge Wells Residents Party Description The RTW Residents Party England Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 14 March Royal Tunbridge Wells Residents Party Description The RTW Residents Party candidate England Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 14 March Royal Tunbridge Wells Residents Party Description Royal Tunbridge Wells Residents Party candidate England Approve 14 March Royal Tunbridge Wells Residents Party Emblem England Approve 14 March Royston Town Party Description Royston Town Party, putting Royston first. England Approve 14 March Shevington Independents Name Wigan Independents England Approve 14 March Shevington Independents Description Shevington Independents part Wigan Independents England Approve 14 March Shevington Independents Description Standish Independents part Wigan Independents England Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party, Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 14 March Shevington Independents Description Orrell Independents part Wigan Independents England Approve 14 March Shevington Independents Description Ashton Independents part Wigan Independents England Approve 14 March Shevington Independents Description Bryn Independents part Wigan Independents England Approve 14 March Shevington Independents Description Abram Independents part Wigan Independents England Approve 14 March Shevington Independents Description Leigh Independents part Wigan Independents England Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party, Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 14 March Shevington Independents Description Hindley Independents part Wigan Independents England Approve 14 March Shevington Independents Description Winstanley Independents Part of Wigan Independents England Approve 14 March Shevington Independents Description Tyldesley Independents Part of Wigan Independents England Approve 14 March Shevington Independents Description Atherton Independents Part of Wigan Independents England Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party, Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 14 March Sutton Independent Residents Name Sutton Independent Residents England Reject Application incomplete, Confusingly similar to another already registered party 14 March The People's Independent Party Name The People's Independent Party England Approve 14 March The People's Independent Party Description Local people representing local people England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 14 March The People's Independent Party Emblem England Reject Does not meet the minimum requirements for emblems 14 March The Voice of Gwynedd/Llais Gwynedd Name The Voice of Gwynedd/Llais Gwynedd Wales Reject Application incomplete 09 March Democracy Decentralised Name Democracy Decentralised England Reject Application incomplete, Confusingly similar to another already registered party 09 March Little Lever & Darcy Lever First Name Little Lever & Darcy Lever First England Approve 09 March Little Lever & Darcy Lever First Description To represent Little Lever and Darcy Lever and to seek fairness and to seek representation across the Borough England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 09 March Little Lever & Darcy Lever First Emblem England Reject Does not meet the minimum requirements for emblems 09 March Middleton Independents Party Name

Middleton Independents Party England Approve 09 March Middleton Independents Party Emblem England Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party 09 March Northern Independence Party Description Northern Independence – Essential Workers, Essential Wages England Approve 09 March Northern Independence Party Description Northern Independence Party – Repay Essential Workers England Approve 09 March Northern Independence Party Description Northern Independence – They Party, We Work England Approve 09 March Northern Independence Party Description Northern Independence Party – End Westminster Corruption England Approve 09 March Northern Independence Party Description Northern Independence – The North Deserves Better England Approve 09 March Northern Independence Party Description Northern Independence Party – Free The North England Approve 09 March Northern Independence Party Description Northern Independence Candidate – Serving the North England Approve 09 March Northern Independence Party Description NIP for a Free, Fair North England Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 09 March Northern Independence Party Description Northern Independence Party – Bring Power North England Approve 09 March Northern Independence Party Description Northern Independence Party – Northern By Choice England Approve 09 March Northern Independence Party Description Northern Independence Party – Nationalise Energy Companies England Approve 09 March Northern Independence Party Description Northern Independence Party – Raise Minimum Wage England Approve 09 March Northern Independence Party Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelling out the abbreviation are unable to be read 09 March Northern Independence Party Emblem England Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 09 March Northern Independence Party Emblem England Approve 09 March Plaid Cymru – The Party of Wales/Green Party Joint description Plaid Cymru, Green Party, Common Ground / Plaid Cymru, Plaid Werdd, Tir Cyffredin Wales Approve 09 March Taking the Initiative Party Description United People's Independent Party England and Wales Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 07 March Kilmarnock & Hurlford Regeneration Party Name Kilmarnock & Hurlford Regeneration Party Scotland Reject Application incomplete 07 March The Rubbish Party Emblem Scotland Approve February 2022 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 28 February Confelicity Name Confelicity England Approve 28 February Confelicity Description Idealism Pragmatism Localism Undivided Democracy England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 28 February Confelicity Emblem England Approve 28 February Croydon Community Partnership Name Croydon Community Partnership England Reject Application incomplete 28 February Freedom Alliance- Integrity, Society, Economy Description Freedom Alliance. Freedom for the People. All of Great Britain Approve 28 February Freedom Alliance- Integrity, Society, Economy Description Freedom Alliance. Truth, Equality and Health. All of Great Britain Approve 28 February Freedom Alliance- Integrity, Society, Economy Description Freedom Alliance. Real People. Real Alternative All of Great Britain Approve 28 February Freedom Alliance- Integrity, Society, Economy Description Freedom Alliance. Stop the Great Reset. All of Great Britain Approve 28 February Freedom Alliance- Integrity, Society, Economy Description Freedom Alliance. No More Experimental Jabs. All of Great Britain Approve 28 February Freedom Alliance- Integrity, Society, Economy Description Freedom Alliance. No Vaccine Passports. All of Great Britain Approve 28 February Freedom Alliance- Integrity, Society, Economy Description Freedom Alliance. People Power.Politics. All of Great Britain Approve 28 February Freedom Alliance-

Integrity, Society, Economy Description Freedom Alliance. We are the 99%. All of Great Britain Approve 28 February Freedom Alliance- Integrity, Society, Economy Description Freedom Alliance. Leave Our Children Alone. All of Great Britain Approve 28 February Freedom Alliance- Integrity, Society, Economy Description Freedom Alliance. No More Lockdowns. Ever. All of Great Britain Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party 28 February Freedom Alliance- Integrity, Society, Economy Emblem All of Great Britain Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 28 February Highbridge and Burnham-on-Sea Independents Name Highbridge and Burnham-on-Sea Independents England Approve 28 February Highbridge and Burnham-on-Sea Independents Description HAB Independents England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 28 February Highbridge and Burnham-on-Sea Independents Description HABI England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 28 February Highbridge and Burnham-on-Sea Independents Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 28 February Highbridge and Burnham-on-Sea Independents Emblem England Approve 28 February Hornchurch and Upminster Independents Description Hornchurch and Upminster Independents – Squirrels Heath England Approve 28 February Pro Life Anti Vax Name Pro Life Anti Vax Northern Ireland Reject Application incomplete 28 February Putting Croydon First Name Putting Croydon First England Reject Application incomplete 28 February Science Party Name Science Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 28 February The Resume Party (NI) Name The Resume Party (NI) Northern Ireland Approve 28 February The Resume Party (NI) Description Resume Northern Ireland Approve 28 February The Resume Party (NI) Description Resume NI Northern Ireland Approve 28 February The Resume Party (NI) Emblem Northern Ireland Approve 28 February The Resume Party (NI) Emblem Northern Ireland Approve 25 February Scottish Eco-Devolutionist Party (SEDP) Name Scottish Eco-Federalist Party (SEFP) Scotland Approve 25 February Scottish Eco-Devolutionist Party (SEDP) Description Centre-left soft-unionist environmentalist party Scotland Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 25 February Scottish Eco-Devolutionist Party (SEDP) Description Centre-left environmentalist party Scotland Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 25 February Scottish Eco-Devolutionist Party (SEDP) Description Soft-unionist environmentalist party Scotland Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 25 February Scottish Eco-Devolutionist Party (SEDP) Description Prioritise the fight against climate change Scotland Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 25 February Scottish Eco-Devolutionist Party (SEDP) Description Centre-left soft-unionist environmentalists Scotland Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 25 February Scottish Eco-Devolutionist Party (SEDP) Description Centre-left environmentalists Scotland Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 25 February Scottish Eco-Devolutionist Party (SEDP) Description Soft-unionist environmentalists Scotland Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 25 February Scottish Eco-Devolutionist Party (SEDP) Emblem Scotland Approve 25 February Scottish Socialist Party Description Scottish Socialist Party – Save Public Services Scotland Approve 25 February Scottish Socialist Party Description Scottish Socialist Party – People Not Profit Scotland Approve 25 February Scottish Socialist Party Description Scottish Socialist Party – Free Public Transport Scotland Approve 25 February Scottish Socialist Party Description Scottish Socialist Party – Rent Controls Now Scotland Approve 25 February Scottish Socialist Party Description Scottish Socialist Party – National Care Service Scotland Approve 25 February Scottish Socialist Party Description Scottish Socialist Party Independent Socialist Scotland Scotland Approve 25 February Scottish Socialist

Party Description Scottish Socialist Party – Abolish Council Tax Scotland Approve 25 February Scottish Socialist Party Description Scottish Socialist Party – Build Council Houses Scotland Approve 25 February Scottish Socialist Party Description Scottish Socialist Party – End Fuel Poverty Scotland Approve 25 February Scottish Socialist Party Description Scottish Socialist Party – Fight All Cuts Scotland Approve 25 February Scottish Socialist Party Description SSP – Socialist Party – Fight All Cuts Scotland Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 25 February Scottish Socialist Party Description SSP – Socialist Green New Deal Scotland Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 25 February Scottish Socialist Party Emblem Scotland Approve 23 February Whitby Area Independents Name Whitby Area Independents England Approve 23 February Whitby Area Independents Description Local people before party politics England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 23 February Whitby Area Independents Description Local people, local issues England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 23 February Whitby Area Independents Description Doing what is right for Whitby England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 23 February Whitby Area Independents Description New Opportunity, fresh start England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 23 February Whitby Area Independents Description Putting Whitby first England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 23 February Whitby Area Independents Description Working for local residents England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 23 February Whitby Area Independents Emblem England Approve 23 February Whitby Area Independents Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 23 February Whitby Area Independents Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 21 February Change for Plymouth Name Change for Plymouth England Approve 21 February Change for Plymouth Description C4P - an independent coalition for Plymouth England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 21 February Change for Plymouth Description Change for Plymouth - an independent coalition. England Approve 21 February Change for Plymouth Description C4P - a coalition of independent candidates. England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 21 February Change for Plymouth Description C4P - citizen-led change in Plymouth. England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 21 February Change for Plymouth Description C4P - putting flatpack democracy into action. England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 21 February Change for Plymouth Description C4P - creating change through citizen action. England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 21 February Change for Plymouth Description C4P - creating change through independent action. England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 21 February Change for Plymouth Description Change for Plymouth - an association of independents. England Approve 21 February Change for Plymouth Description Change for Plymouth - a coalition of independents. England Approve 21 February Change for Plymouth Description C4P - creating change through independent politics. England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 21 February Change for Plymouth Description Change for Plymouth - citizen-led independent politics. England Approve 21 February Change for Plymouth Description C4P - an association of independent candidates. England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 21 February Change for Plymouth Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 21 February Chislehurst Matters Name Chislehurst Matters England Approve 21 February Chislehurst Matters Description Chislehurst Matters England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 21 February Chislehurst Matters Emblem England

Approve 21 February CumbriaFirst Description The Cumbria Party All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 21 February CumbriaFirst Description Cumbria Party All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 21 February CumbriaFirst Description CumbriaParty All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 21 February Independents for Frome Name Independents for Frome England Reject Application incomplete 21 February Malden Village Independent Residents Association Name Malden Village Independent Residents Association England Reject Application incomplete 21 February National Identity Networking Gang Name National Identity Networking Gang England Reject Application incomplete 21 February The AB Road Xperience Name The AB Road Xperience All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete, Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 21 February Traditional Unionist Voice – TUV Description TUV – No Sea Border Northern Ireland Approve 21 February Traditional Unionist Voice – TUV Description TUV – Traditional Unionist Voice Northern Ireland Approve 21 February Upminster and Cranham Residents Association Emblem England Approve 15 February British Unionist Party - B.U.P. Description British Unionist Party (BUP) All of Great Britain Approve 15 February British Unionist Party - B.U.P. Description British Unionist Party All of Great Britain Approve 15 February British Unionist Party - B.U.P. Description British Unionists All of Great Britain Approve 15 February British Unionist Party - B.U.P. Description British Unionists – For A Better Britain All of Great Britain Approve 15 February British Unionist Party - B.U.P. Description British Unionists – Putting Britain Together All of Great Britain Approve 15 February British Unionist Party - B.U.P. Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 15 February British Unionist Party - B.U.P. Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 15 February Scottish Green Party Description Scottish Green Councillors - Working for Scotland Scotland Approve 15 February Scottish Green Party Description Scottish Greens - Think Global Act Local Scotland Approve 15 February Scottish Green Party Description Scottish Greens - Delivering For Our Community Scotland Approve 15 February Scottish Green Party Description Re-elect your Scottish Green Councillor Scotland Approve 15 February Scottish Green Party Description Elect a Scottish Green Councillor Scotland Approve 14 February Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 14 February Bolton For Change Description Get Bolton back into Lancashire England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 14 February Charter Party Name Charter Party All of Great Britain Approve 14 February Heritage Party Name Heritage Party Northern Ireland Approve 14 February Heritage Party Description Heritage Party - Freedom. Family. Nation. Northern Ireland Approve 14 February Heritage Party Description Heritage Party - Pro-freedom. Pro-family. Pro-life. Northern Ireland Approve 14 February Heritage Party Description Heritage Party - Traditional Family Values Northern Ireland Approve 14 February Heritage Party Description Heritage Party - Free Speech and Liberty Northern Ireland Approve 14 February Heritage Party Description Heritage Party - Social Conservatism Northern Ireland Approve 14 February Heritage Party Description Heritage Party - No More Lockdowns Northern Ireland Approve 14 February Heritage Party Emblem Northern Ireland Approve 14 February Kingston Independent Residents Group Description Kingston Independent Residents Group –Demanding Better England Approve 14 February Kingston Independent Residents Group Description Kingston Independent Residents – James Giles' candidate England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 14 February Kingston Independent Residents Group Description Kingston Independent Residents (Vice-Chair: James Giles) England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 14 February Labour Party Description Aberdeen Labour All of

Great Britain Approve 14 February Liberal Democrats Description Liberal Democrats - For a fair deal All of Great Britain Approve 14 February National Distributist Party Emblem England Approve 14 February Reform UK/Bolton For Change Joint description Reform UK and Bolton For Change England Approve 14 February Trade Union and Socialist Coalition Description Socialists in Waltham Forest England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 14 February The Community Party Name The Community Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 08 February Abolish the TV Licence Party Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 08 February Abolish the TV Licence Party Emblem England Approve 08 February Abolish the TV Licence Party Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 08 February Community First Emblem England Approve 08 February Reform Derby Description For a better Derby England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 February Reform Derby Description Derby's only independent party England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 February Reform Derby Description Reforming Derby politics for the good England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 February Reform Derby Description A party just for Derby England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 February Reform Derby Description Especially for Derby England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 February Reform Derby Description Independent of Westminster England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 February Reform Derby Description Reform: Derby's only independent party England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 February Reform Derby Description Reform: Independent from Westminster England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 February Tandridge Residents Group Name Tandridge Residents Group England Approve 08 February Tandridge Residents Group Description Betchingley & Nutfield Residents England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 February Tandridge Residents Group Description Burstow, Horne & Outwood Residents England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 February Tandridge Residents Group Description Caterham Residents England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 February Tandridge Residents Group Description Dormansland & Felcourt Residents England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 February Tandridge Residents Group Description Felbridge Residents England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 February Tandridge Residents Group Description Godstone Residents England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 February Tandridge Residents Group Description Lingfield & Crowhurst Residents England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 February Tandridge Residents Group Description Tatsfield & Titsey Residents England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 February Tandridge Residents Group Description Warlingham Residents England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 February Tandridge Residents Group Description Whyteleafe Residents England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 February Tandridge Residents Group Description Woldingham Residents England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 February Tandridge Residents Group Emblem England Approve 07 February Scottish Unionist Party Name Scottish Unionist Party Scotland Approve 07 February Scottish Unionist Party Description Scottish Unionist Party, British and Proud Scotland Approve 07 February Scottish Unionist Party Description Scottish Unionist Party, United We Stand Scotland Approve 07 February Scottish Unionist Party Description Scottish Unionists Scotland Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party 07 February Scottish

Unionist Party Description Scottish Unionists, Proudly Scottish, Proudly British
Scotland Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party 07 February
Scottish Unionist Party Emblem Scotland Approve 07 February Scottish Unionist Party
Emblem Scotland Approve 03 February Alba Party Emblem Scotland Approve 03 February
Alba Party Emblem Scotland Approve 03 February UK Independence Party (UKIP)
Description UKIP – Referendum on Immigration All of Great Britain Approve 03 February
UK Independence Party (UKIP) Description UKIP – Save my Gas Boiler All of Great
Britain Approve 03 February UK Independence Party (UKIP) Description UKIP Save the
Union All of Great Britain Approve 03 February UK Independence Party (UKIP)
Description UKIP – Say No to Net Zero All of Great Britain Approve 03 February UK
Independence Party (UKIP) Description UKIP – Scrap Holyrood All of Great Britain
Approve January 2022 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied
for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to
Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 31 January Britain
First Description Britain First - Save The Union All of Great Britain Approve 31
January Britain First Description Britain First - Cymru Am Byth All of Great Britain
Approve 31 January Britain First Description Britain First - Long Live England All of
Great Britain Approve 31 January Britain First Description Britain First - Housing
For Locals All of Great Britain Approve 31 January Britain First Description Britain
First - No To Immigration All of Great Britain Approve 31 January Britain First
Description Britain First - British People First All of Great Britain Approve 31
January Britain First Description Britain First - Close The Borders All of Great
Britain Approve 31 January Britain First Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 31
January Royston Town Party Name Royston Town Party England Approve 31 January Royston
Town Party Description Local party fighting to the needs of the residents of Royston.
England Reject Contains more than 6 words 31 January Royston Town Party Emblem
England Approve 31 January Royston Town Party Emblem England Approve 31 January Ward
of Candlewick Teams Name Ward of Candlewick Teams England Reject Application
incomplete 25 January Fareham Independent Group Name Fareham Independent Group
England Approve 25 January Fareham Independent Group Description Fareham Independent
Group Individuals Working Together England Approve 25 January Fareham Independent
Group Emblem England Approve 25 January Fareham Independent Group Emblem England
Approve 25 January NonPol Name NonPol England Reject Application incomplete, Likely
to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 25 January Rejoin EU Description
Rejoin EU London All of Great Britain Approve 25 January Rejoin EU Description Rejoin
EU Progressive Alliance All of Great Britain Reject Likely to mislead voters as to
the effect of their vote 25 January Rejoin EU Description Rejoin EU Bring in PR All
of Great Britain Approve 25 January Rejoin EU Description Rejoin EU, The UK's
Progressive Alliance All of Great Britain Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the
effect of their vote 25 January Rejoin EU Description Rejoin EU For a Progressive
Alliance All of Great Britain Approve 25 January Rejoin EU Description Rejoin EU
Reject the Bigots All of Great Britain Reject Offensive 25 January Resurrection Name
Resurrection England Approve 25 January Resurrection Description Resurrection Shahed.
In Sha Allah England Reject Likely to hinder an elector's understanding of directions
for voting given on ballot papers 25 January Resurrection Description Resurrection
Shahed (Whitechapel). In Sha Allah England Reject Likely to hinder an elector's
understanding of directions for voting given on ballot papers 25 January Resurrection
Description Resurrection Young People. In Sha Allah England Approve 25 January
Resurrection Description Resurrection of the Youth of Whitechapel England Approve 25
January Resurrection Description Resurrection of the Youth Tower Hamlets England

Approve 25 January Resurrection Description Dirilis Shahed. In Sha Allah England Reject Likely to hinder an elector's understanding of directions for voting given on ballot papers 25 January Resurrection Description Dirilis Shahed (Whitechapel). In Sha Allah England Reject Likely to hinder an elector's understanding of directions for voting given on ballot papers 25 January Resurrection Description Resurrection Young People. In Sha Allah England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 25 January Resurrection Emblem England Approve 25 January Resurrection Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 25 January Resurrection Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 25 January The People's Independent Party Name The People's Independent Party England Reject Application incomplete 10 January Democrats Description Democrats – Stop the Migrant Invasion! England and Wales Reject Offensive 10 January Portsmouth Independent Party Name Portsmouth Independent Party England Approve 10 January Portsmouth Independent Party Description Portsmouth Independents, Putting St Judes First England Approve 10 January Portsmouth Independent Party Description Portsmouth Independents, Eastney & Craneswater First England Approve 10 January Portsmouth Independent Party Emblem England Approve 10 January The Liberal Party Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 10 January Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition Name Clymbaid Undebwyr Llafur a Sosialwyr All of Great Britain Approve 10 January UK Independence Party (UKIP) Description UK Independence Party Northern Ireland Approve 10 January UK Independence Party (UKIP) Description UKIP – Save the Union Northern Ireland Approve 10 January UK Independence Party (UKIP) Description UKIP – Scrap Stormont Northern Ireland Approve 10 January UK Independence Party (UKIP) Description UKIP – Say No to the protocol Northern Ireland Approve 10 January UK Independence Party (UKIP) Description UKIP – Save Britain Northern Ireland Approve 10 January UK Independence Party (UKIP) Description UKIP – Save my Gas Boiler Northern Ireland Approve 2021 party registration decisions December 2021 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 24 December Abolish the TV Licence Party Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 24 December Abolish the TV Licence Party Emblem England Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 24 December Abolish the TV Licence Party Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 24 December Science Party Name Science Party England Reject Application incomplete 20 December Hornchurch and Upminster Independents Description Hornchurch and Upminster Independents - Rainham England Approve 20 December National Distributist Party Name National Distributist Party England Approve 20 December National Distributist Party Description Patriotism Distributism Unionist Monarchist England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 20 December National Distributist Party Emblem England Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 20 December New world order Name New world order England and Wales Approve 20 December New world order Description Independence sovereignty England and Wales Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 20 December New world order Emblem England and Wales Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 16 December Britain First Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 09 December The Resume Party Name The Resume Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 09 December Uno Name Uno Wales Approve 09 December Uno Emblem

Wales Approve 07 December Heritage Party Description Heritage Party - Freedom. Family. Nation All of Great Britain Approve 07 December Heritage Party Description Heritage Party - Pro-freedom, Pro-family, Pro-life All of Great Britain Approve 07 December Heritage Party Description Heritage Party - No More Lockdowns All of Great Britain Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party 07 December Heritage Party Description Scottish Heritage Party All of Great Britain Approve 07 December Heritage Party Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 07 December Little Lever & Darcy Lever First Name Little Lever & Darcy Lever First England Reject Application incomplete 07 December Redcar & Cleveland Independent Name Redcar & Cleveland Independent England Approve 07 December Redcar & Cleveland Independent Description People & Families England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 07 December Redcar & Cleveland Independent Description People Before Politics England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 07 December Redcar & Cleveland Independent Description Serving the people of TS6 England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 07 December Redcar & Cleveland Independent Description Serving the Residents of Brotton England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 07 December Redcar & Cleveland Independent Description Representing the Residents of East Cleveland England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 07 December Redcar & Cleveland Independent Description Representing the Coatham Ward England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 07 December Redcar & Cleveland Independent Description Building the Future of Loftus England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 07 December Redcar & Cleveland Independent Description Your voice in the Kirkleatham Ward England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 07 December Redcar & Cleveland Independent Description Your voice in the Newcomen Ward England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 07 December Redcar & Cleveland Independent Description Building a Better Borough England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 07 December Redcar & Cleveland Independent Description Your Voice for Guisborough England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 07 December Redcar & Cleveland Independent Description For People in the Borough England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 07 December Redcar & Cleveland Independent Emblem England Approve 07 December Tandridge Residents Name Tandridge Residents England Reject Application incomplete 07 December The Motoring Party Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 07 December The Socialist Party of Great Britain Description Socialist Party GB (World Socialist Movement) All of Great Britain Approve 07 December True and Fair Party Name True and Fair Party England and Wales Approve 07 December True and Fair Party Emblem England and Wales Approve November 2021 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 23 November Beacon Liverpool Name Beacon Liverpool England Reject Application incomplete 23 November Havering Residents Association Description Havering Residents Association – St Edward's England Approve 23 November Havering Residents Association Description Havering Residents Association – St Alban's England Approve 23 November Havering Residents Association Description Havering Residents Association – Squirrels Heath England Approve 23 November Havering Residents Association Description Havering Residents Association – Rush Green / Crowlands England Approve 23 November Havering Residents Association Description Havering Residents Association – Mawneys England Approve 23 November Havering Residents Association Description Havering Residents Association - Heaton England Approve 23 November Havering Residents Association Description Havering Residents

Association – Havering – atte – Bower England Approve 23 November Havering Residents Association Description Havering Residents Association – Harold Wood England Approve 23 November Havering Residents Association Description Havering Residents Association - Gooshays England Approve 23 November Havering Residents Association Description Havering Residents Association – Marshalls/ Rise Park England Approve 23 November Havering Residents Association Emblem England Approve 23 November Independent Network Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 23 November Independent Network Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 23 November National Housing Party United Kingdom Name National Housing Party United Kingdom All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 23 November Rainham Resident's Association Name Rainham Independent Residents Association England Approve 23 November Rainham Resident's Association Description Rainham Independent Residents Association (Rainham/Wennington) England Approve 23 November Rainham Resident's Association Description Rainham Independent Residents Association (Beam Park) England Approve 23 November Rainham Resident's Association Description Rainham Independent Residents Association (South Hornchurch) England Approve 23 November Resurrection Name Resurrection England Reject Application incomplete 23 November Rejoin EU Description Rejoin.London All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 23 November Rejoin EU Description London Progressive Alliance To Rejoin EU All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 23 November Rejoin EU Description United Kingdom Progressive Alliance To RejoinEU All of Great Britain Reject Contains more than 6 words 23 November Rejoin EU Description Progressive Alliance All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 23 November Rejoin EU Description The UK Progressive Alliance All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 23 November Rejoin EU Description Progressive Alliance For PR & RejoinEU All of Great Britain Reject Contains more than 6 words 17 November Lewisham People Before Profit Name People Before Profit England Approve 17 November Lewisham People Before Profit Description Lewisham People Before Profit England Approve 17 November Lewisham People Before Profit Description Hackney People Before Profit England Approve 17 November Lewisham People Before Profit Description People Before Profit – Scrap Executive Mayors England Approve 17 November Lewisham People Before Profit Description London People Before Profit England Approve 17 November Lewisham People Before Profit Description People Before Profit – Bring Back Democracy England Approve 16 November Constitution Party Name Constitution Party All of Great Britain Approve 16 November Constitution Party Description Constitution Party, Independence for England All of Great Britain Approve 16 November Constitution Party Description Constitution Party, Self-Determination for England All of Great Britain Approve 16 November Constitution Party Description The Constitution is the Solution All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 16 November Constitution Party Description Constitution Party, Parliament All of Great Britain Approve 16 November Constitution Party Description Constitution Party, England, One Nation All of Great Britain Approve 16 November Constitution Party Description Constitution Party, Bill of Rights All of Great Britain Approve 16 November Constitution Party Description Constitution Party. Freedom, Magna Carta All of Great Britain Approve 16 November Constitution Party Description Constitution Party, Freedom All of Great Britain Approve 16 November Constitution Party Description Constitution. In God We Trust All of Great Britain Approve 16 November Constitution Party Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 15 November Speak Political Name Speak Political All of Great Britain Approve 15 November1 Speak Political Description The Voice for the Animals All of Great Britain Reject Does not

meet the requirements of a description 09 November Fareham Independent Group Name Fareham Independent Group England Reject Application incomplete 09 November Kingston Independent Residents Group Description Kingston Independent Residents – Save our Kingfisher! England Approve 09 November United Democratic Party Name United Democratic Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete October 2021 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 19 October Citizens First Name Citizen's First All of GB Approve 19 October Hadleigh Together Name Hadleigh Together England Approve 19 October Hadleigh Together Emblem England Approve 19 October Harold Wood Hill Park Residents Association Description Harold Residents Association England Reject Contains an unqualified prohibited word 19 October Independent for Newmarket Name Independent for Newmarket England Approve 19 October Independent for Newmarket Description Independents for Newmarket England Approve 19 October Independent for Newmarket Description Newmarket Independents England Approve 19 October Independent for Newmarket Description Newmarket Independent England Approve 19 October Independent for Newmarket Description The Independent for Newmarket Candidate England Approve 19 October Independent for Newmarket Description Independent for Newmarket Candidate England Approve 19 October Independent for Newmarket Description Ifnewmarket England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 19 October Independent for Newmarket Description ifNewmarket candidate England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 19 October Independent for Newmarket Emblem England Approve 19 October Rise Name Rise All of Great Britain Approve 19 October Social Democratic Party Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 19 October True and Fair Party Name True and Fair Party England and Wales Reject Application incomplete 07 October The Cheshire Action Party Name The Cheshire Action Party England Reject Application incomplete; Confusingly similar to another already registered party 07 October Communist Party of Ireland Name Communist Party of Ireland Northern Ireland Reject Application incomplete September 2021 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 30 September Restore Scotland Name Sovereignty Scotland Approve 27 September Britain First Name Britain First All of Great Britain Approve 27 September National Liberal Party – True Liberalism Emblem All of Great Britain Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote, Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 27 September Political Transformation Party Name Political Transformation Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 27 September Speak Political Name Speak Political All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 20 September Harold Wood Hill Park Residents Association Description Harold Residents' Association's England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 20 September Havering Residents Association Name Havering's Residents' Associations England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 20 September Havering Residents Association Description Havering's Residents' Associations – St Edward's England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 20 September Havering Residents Association Description Havering's Residents' Associations – St Alban's England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 20 September Havering Residents Association Description Havering's Residents' Associations – Squirrels Heath England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 20 September Havering Residents Association Description Havering's Residents'

Associations – Rush Green/Crowlands England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 20 September Havering Residents Association Description
Havering's Residents' Associations – Mawneys England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 20 September Havering Residents Association
Description Havering's Residents' Associations – Heaton England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 20 September Havering Residents Association Description Havering's Residents' Associations – Havering – Atte- Bower England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 20 September Havering Residents Association Description Havering's Residents' Associations – Harold Wood England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 20 September Havering Residents Association Description Havering's Residents' Associations – Gooshays England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 20 September Havering Residents Association Description Havering's Residents' Associations – Marshalls/Rise Park England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 20 September Havering Residents Association Description Havering's Residents' Associations – Emerson Park England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 20 September Havering Residents Association Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 20 September Havering Residents Association Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 20 September Vanguard Party Description Vanguard Party championing the Scottish Borders All of Great Britain Approve 20 September Vanguard Party Description Vanguard Party championing Leaderdale and Melrose All of Great Britain Approve 20 September Vanguard Party Description Vanguard Party championing Galashiels All of Great Britain Approve 20 September Vanguard Party Description Vanguard Party championing Selkirkshire All of Great Britain Approve 20 September Vanguard Party Description Vanguard Party championing Hawick and Denholm All of Great Britain Approve 20 September Vanguard Party Description Vanguard Party championing Hawick and Hermitage All of Great Britain Approve 20 September Vanguard Party Description Vanguard Party championing Tweeddale All of Great Britain Approve 20 September Vanguard Party Description Vanguard Party championing Berwickshire All of Great Britain Approve 20 September Vanguard Party Description Vanguard Party championing Kelso All of Great Britain Approve 20 September Vanguard Party Description Vanguard Party championing Jedburgh All of Great Britain Approve 17 September Transform! Name Transform! England Reject Application incomplete 13 September Castle Baynard Independents Party Emblem England Approve 13 September Castle Baynard Independents Party Emblem England Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party 13 September Castle Baynard Independents Party Emblem England Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party 13 September Democrats and Veterans Direct Democracy Party Name Five Star Direct Democracy Party Northern Ireland Approve 13 September Democrats and Veterans Direct Democracy Party Emblem Northern Ireland Approve 13 September Ealing Independents Name Ealing Independents England Reject Application incomplete 13 September Constitution Party Name Constitution Party England Reject Application incomplete 13 September Latitudes Name Latitudes England Reject Application incomplete 13 September Rise Name Rise All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 13 September The Realists' Party Name The Motoring Party All of Great Britain Approve 13 September The Resume Party Name The Resume Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 10 September Blue Revolution Description Blue Revolution. Letting the People Speak England Approve 10 September Blue Revolution Description Blue Revolution. A Boston Independents Group England Approve 10 September

Blue Revolution Description Blue Revolution. For People, not Parties England Approve 10 September Blue Revolution Description Blue Revolution. Standing up for Boston England Approve 10 September Blue Revolution Description Blue Revolution. Voice for Local People England Approve 07 September Cross-Party Party Name Cross-Party Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 01 September National Party of the United Kingdom Name National Party of the United Kingdom All of Great Britain Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party August 2021 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 23 August The Cheshire Action Party Name The Cheshire Action Party England Reject Application incomplete 23 August The People's Independent Party Name The People's Independent Party England Reject Application incomplete 19 August Alba Party Description Alba for Independence Scotland Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 19 August Alba Party Description Alba Party for independence Scotland Approve 19 August Alba Party Description Alba Party for independence now Scotland Approve 19 August Alba Party Description Alba Party for Scottish independence Scotland Approve 19 August Alba Party Description Alba Party it's time for independence Scotland Approve 19 August Alba Party Description Your local Alba independence champion Scotland Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 19 August Alba Party Description Your local Alba Party independence champion Scotland Approve 19 August Alba Party Emblem Scotland Approve 19 August Alba Party Emblem Scotland Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 16 August Citizens First Name Citizen's First Party Scotland Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party 16 August Devizes Guardians Emblem England Approve 16 August Leigh & Atherton Independents Description Atherleigh Independent England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 16 August Leigh & Atherton Independents Description Atherton Independent England Approve 16 August Leigh & Atherton Independents Description Leigh East Independent England Approve 16 August Leigh & Atherton Independents Description Leigh South Independent England Approve 16 August Leigh & Atherton Independents Description Leigh West Independent England Approve 16 August Leigh & Atherton Independents Emblem England Approve 16 August Portsmouth Independent Party Name Portsmouth Independent Party England Approve 16 August Portsmouth Independent Party Description Portsmouth Independent Party England Reject Duplicate of party name 16 August Portsmouth Independent Party Description Portsmouth Independents, Drayton and Farlington First England Approve 16 August Portsmouth Independent Party Description Portsmouth Independents, Putting Baffins First England Approve 16 August Portsmouth Independent Party Description Portsmouth Independents, Putting Central Southsea First England Approve 16 August Portsmouth Independent Party Description Portsmouth Independents, Putting Charles Dickens First England Approve 16 August Portsmouth Independent Party Description Portsmouth Independents, Putting Copnor First England Approve 16 August Portsmouth Independent Party Description Portsmouth Independents, Putting Cosham First England Approve 16 August Portsmouth Independent Party Description Portsmouth Independents, Putting Hilsea First England Approve 16 August Portsmouth Independent Party Description Portsmouth Independents, Putting Milton First England Approve 16 August Portsmouth Independent Party Description Portsmouth Independents, Putting Nelson First England Approve 16 August Portsmouth Independent Party Description Portsmouth Independents, Putting Paulsgrove First England Approve 16 August Portsmouth Independent Party Emblem England Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 16 August The Pensioner's

party Description Pensioner's Party is a political party All of Great Britain Approve
16 August The Pensioner's party Name The Pensioner's party All of Great Britain
Approve 16 August Young People's Party YPP Description Shared Ground formerly Young
People's Party All of Great Britain Approve 16 August Young People's Party YPP Name
Shared Ground All of Great Britain Approve 13 August Vanguard Party Description
Vanguard Party championing proportional representation All of Great Britain Approve
13 August Vanguard Party Description Vanguard Party championing regional regeneration
All of Great Britain Approve 13 August Vanguard Party Description Vanguard Party
championing the Union All of Great Britain Approve 13 August Vanguard Party
Description Vanguard Party championing traditional values All of Great Britain
Approve 13 August Voters' Union Party Name Voters' Union Party All of Great Britain
Reject Application incomplete July 2021 Date of decision Applicant name Type of
identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the
application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for
rejection 29 July Stockport Fights Austerity No to Cuts Name Stockport Fights
Austerity No to Cuts England Approve 23 July Castle Baynard Independents Party Name
Castle Baynard Independents Party England Approve 23 July Castle Baynard Independents
Party Emblem England Reject Confusingly similar to another registered Emblem 23 July
FederalUK Name FederalUK All of Great Britian Reject Confusingly similar to another
registered party 23 July Leigh, Atherton, Tyldesley Together Name Leigh and Atherton
Independents England Approve 23 July Leigh, Atherton, Tyldesley Together Description
Independents for Atherton England Approve 23 July Leigh, Atherton, Tyldesley Together
Description Independents for Atherleigh England Reject Does not meet the requirements
of a description 23 July Leigh, Atherton, Tyldesley Together Description Independents
for Leigh East England Approve 23 July Leigh, Atherton, Tyldesley Together
Description Independents for Leigh South England Approve 23 July Leigh, Atherton,
Tyldesley Together Description Independents for Leigh West England Approve 23 July
Leigh, Atherton, Tyldesley Together Description Independents for Leigh and Atherton
England Approve 23 July Leigh, Atherton, Tyldesley Together Description Independents
for Leyth & Brent England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 23
July Our Precious World Party Name Our Precious World Party All of Great Britain
Approve Does not meet the requirements of a description 23 July Our Precious World
Party Emblem All of Great Britain Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt
out in the emblem are unable to be read 23 July Our Precious World Party Emblem All
of Great Britain Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as
to the effect of their vote 23 July Our Precious World Party Emblem All of Great
Britain Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the
effect of their vote 23 July Somerset Independents Description Somerset Independents
Standing Up for Residents England Approve 23 July The Reclaim Party Emblem All of
Great Britain 16 July Patriotic Alternative Name Patriotic Alternative All of Great
Britain Reject Application incomplete 12 July Communist Leeague Election Campaign
Name Communist Leeague Election Campaign All of Great Britain Reject Application
incomplete 12 July Latitudes Name Latitudes All of Great Britain Reject Application
incomplete 12 July Our Ventnor Name Our Ventnor All of Great Britain Reject
Application incomplete 12 July The You Will See Party Name The You Will See Party All
of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 12 July You Choose Party Name You
Choose Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 05 July Both Unions
Party (GB) Name Alliance 4 Freedoms All of Great Britain Approve 05 July Both Unions
Party (GB) Description Alliance 4 Freedoms: British European Unity All of Great
Britain Approve 05 July Both Unions Party (GB) Description Alliance 4 Freedoms:

Promoting British unity All of Great Britain Approve 05 July Both Unions Party (GB Description Alliance 4 Freedoms: promoting European unity All of Great Britain Approve 05 July Both Unions Party (GB Description Alliance 4 Freedoms: European People's Party All of Great Britain Reject Confusingly similar to another registered party 05 July Both Unions Party (GB Description Alliance 4 Freedoms: Scotland Britain Europe All of Great Britain Approve 05 July Both Unions Party (GB Description Alliance 4 Freedoms: replace Elecotral Commission All of Great Britain Approve 05 July Both Unions Party (GB Description Alliance 4 Freedoms: Mayday save Britain All of Great Britain Approve 05 July Both Unions Party (GB Description Alliance 4 Freedoms: promoting British unity All of Great Britain Approve 05 July Both Unions Party (GB Description Alliance 4 Freedoms: Mind the Gap! All of Great Britain Approve 05 July Both Unions Party (GB Description Alliance 4 Freedoms: promoting European unity All of Great Britain Approve 05 July Both Unions Party (GB Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 05 July Skegness Urban District Society Emblem England Approve 05 July The Pensioner's Party Name The Pensioner's Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 05 July Unity in Action Name Unity in Action All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete June 2021 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 23 June Young People's Party YPP Name Common Ground – Shared Ground All of Great Britain Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party 18 June Abolish the Scottish Parliament Party Emblem Scotland Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 18 June Northern Independence Party Name Northern Independence Party England Approve 18 June Northern Independence Party Description Independence for the North of England England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 18 June Northern Independence Party Description End the North South Divide England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 18 June Northern Independence Party Description The North Must Be Free England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 18 June Northern Independence Party Description A Free North a Fair North England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 18 June Northern Independence Party Description End London Rule; Free The North England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 18 June Northern Independence Party Description Break the Chains of Westminster England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 18 June Northern Independence Party Description The Party for an Independent North England Approve 18 June Northern Independence Party Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 15 June Breakthrough Party Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 15 June Taking the Initiative Party Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 15 June Yorkshire Party Description Yorkshire Party – Five Towns Team England Approve 15 June Yorkshire Party Emblem England Approve 14 June Republic Party Name Republic Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 07 June Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Emblem All of Great Britain Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 07 June Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Emblem All of Great Britain Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 07 June End Austerity – Stockport Against Cuts Name End Austerity – Stockport Against Cuts England Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party 07 June Fair and Honest Party Name Fair and Honest Party England Reject Application incomplete 07 June Federal UK Name Federal UK All of Great Britain Reject Confusingly similar to

another already registered party 07 June Five Star Direct Democracy Party Description 5 Star Direct Democracy – Taking Back Control All of Great Britain Reject Contains more than 6 words 07 June Five Star Direct Democracy Party Description 5 Star – Your independent, inclusive Voice All of Great Britain Reject Likely to hinder an elector's understanding of directions for voting given on ballot papers 07 June Five Star Direct Democracy Party Description 5 Star – The People's Movement All of Great Britain Reject Likely to hinder an elector's understanding of directions for voting given on ballot papers 07 June Five Star Direct Democracy Party Description 5 Star Direct Democracy – for Kirklees All of Great Britain Reject Likely to hinder an elector's understanding of directions for voting given on ballot papers 07 June Five Star Direct Democracy Party Description 5 Star Direct Democracy – Holme Valley All of Great Britain Reject Likely to hinder an elector's understanding of directions for voting given on ballot papers 07 June Five Star Direct Democracy Party Description There is a Better Way – 5 Star Direct Democracy All of Great Britain Reject Likely to hinder an elector's understanding of directions for voting given on ballot papers 07 June Five Star Direct Democracy Party Description 5 Star – Cleaning up Politics All of Great Britain Reject Likely to hinder an elector's understanding of directions for voting given on ballot papers 07 June Five Star Direct Democracy Party Description 5 Star – Fighting Corruption All of Great Britain Reject Likely to hinder an elector's understanding of directions for voting given on ballot papers 07 June Hornchurch and Upminster Independents Emblem England Approve 07 June Residents for Guildford and Villages Description Residents for Guildford and Villages England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 07 June Residents for Guildford and Villages Description Residents for Guildford and Villages Candidate England Approve 07 June Scottish Eco-Devolutionist Party Description SEDP – Environmental Unionist Party Scotland Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 07 June Scottish Eco-Devolutionist Party Emblem Scotland Approve 07 June Scottish Eco-Devolutionist Party Emblem Scotland Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 07 June The Burning Pink Party Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 07 June The Phoenix Political Party Description For The Country, For The People. All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 07 June The Phoenix Political Party Emblem All of Great Britain Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 07 June Wyre Alliance Name Wyre Alliance England Reject Application incomplete May 2021 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 26 May Stone Independents Description Stone Independents working for Stone England Approve 26 May Stone Independents Description Stone Independents are local residents working for Stone England Reject Contains more than 6 words 26 May Stone Independents Description Stone Independents are independent minded individuals working for stone England Reject Contains more than 6 words 26 May West Dunbartonshire Community Party Name West Dunbartonshire Community Party Scotland Approve 26 May West Dunbartonshire Community Party Name The West Dunbartonshire Community Party Scotland Approve 26 May West Dunbartonshire Community Party Emblem Scotland Reject The proposed emblem does not meet the text size requirements 26 May West Dunbartonshire Community Party Emblem Scotland Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 25 May Abolish the Scottish Parliament Party Description Abolish Holyrood – Save £100,000,000 Yearly Scotland Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 25 May Abolish the Scottish Parliament Party Description Abolish Holyrood – Save £100,000,000 Every Year

Scotland Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 25 May Alba Party Description Mandate for Independence Scotland Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 25 May Alba Party Description Get Independence Done Scotland Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 25 May Alba Party Description Make Independence Happen Scotland Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 25 May Alba Party Description The Supermajority – a Mandate for Independence Scotland Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 25 May Alba Party Description The Supermajority for Independence Scotland Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 25 May Alba Party Description First vote Party, Second vote Country Scotland Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 25 May Alba Party Description For the Independence Supermajority Scotland Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 25 May Alba Party Emblem Scotland Reject Contains an unqualified prohibited word 25 May All For Unity Description All for Unity (A4U) Scotland Approve 25 May All For Unity Description All 4 Unity (A4U) Scotland Approve 25 May All For Unity Description All for Unity - George Galloway's team Scotland Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 25 May All For Unity Description All 4 Unity - George Galloway's team Scotland Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 25 May Ashfield Independents Description Ashfield Independents £1million More For Roads England Approve 25 May Labour Party Description Anas Sarwar – Labour’s National Recovery Plan All of Great Britain Reject Likely to hinder an elector’s understanding of directions for voting given on ballot papers 25 May Labour Party Description Anas Sarwar – Get Scotland Back Better All of Great Britain Reject Likely to hinder an elector’s understanding of directions for voting given on ballot papers; Does not meet the requirements of a description 25 May Scottish Green Party Description Ariane Burgess for Highland and Islands Scotland Reject Likely to hinder an elector’s understanding of directions for voting given on ballot papers; Does not meet the requirements of a description 25 May Scottish Green Party Description Maggie Chapman for North East Scotland Scotland Reject Likely to hinder an elector’s understanding of directions for voting given on ballot papers; Does not meet the requirements of a description 25 May Scottish Green Party Description Laura Moodie for South of Scotland Scotland Reject Likely to hinder an elector’s understanding of directions for voting given on ballot papers; Does not meet the requirements of a description 25 May Scottish Green Party Description Gillian Mackay for Central Scotland Scotland Reject Likely to hinder an elector’s understanding of directions for voting given on ballot papers; Does not meet the requirements of a description 25 May Scottish Green Party Description Re-elect Mark Ruskell as Green MSP Scotland Reject Likely to hinder an elector’s understanding of directions for voting given on ballot papers; Does not meet the requirements of a description 25 May Scottish Green Party Description Re-elect Ross Greer in West Scotland Scotland Reject Likely to hinder an elector’s understanding of directions for voting given on ballot papers; Does not meet the requirements of a description 25 May Scottish Green Party Description Re-elect Patrick Harvie in Glasgow Scotland Reject Likely to hinder an elector’s understanding of directions for voting given on ballot papers; Does not meet the requirements of a description 25 May Scottish Green Party Description Re-elect Alison Johnstone in Lothian Scotland Reject Likely to hinder an elector’s understanding of directions for voting given on ballot papers; Does not meet the requirements of a description 25 May Veterans and People’s Party Description Hartlepool Veterans’ and People’s Party All of Great Britain Approve 25 May Workers Party of Britain Description Workers Party - Straight talking, straight forward All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description

25 May Workers Party of Britain Description Workers Party of Britain (WPB) All of Great Britain Approve 25 May Workers Party of Britain Description Workers Party - Supporting Britain's Key Workers All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 25 May Workers Party of Britain Description Workers Party - Wales All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 25 May Workers Party of Britain Description Workers Party - Scotland All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 25 May Workers Party of Britain Description Workers Party - Cymru All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 25 May Workers Party of Britain Description Workers Party - Merseyside All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 25 May Workers Party of Britain Description Workers Party (George Galloway - leader) All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 25 May Workers Party of Britain Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 25 May Workers Party of Britain Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 17 May Abolish the Town Council Party Name Abolish the TV License Party England Approve 17 May Abolish the Town Council Party Description Abolish the TV License England Approve 17 May Abolish the Town Council Party Description Abolish the BBC TV License England Approve 17 May Abolish the Town Council Party Description Abolish the Broadcast Receiving License England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 17 May Abolish the Town Council Party Description Abolish the Television Broadcast Receiving License England Approve 17 May Abolish the Town Council Party Description Abolish the BBC Broadcast Receiving License England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 17 May Abolish the Town Council Party Description Abolish the Television TV License England Approve 17 May Abolish the Town Council Party Description Abolish the BBC Television Licence England Approve 17 May Abolish the Town Council Party Description Abolish the TV Broadcast Receiving License England Approve 17 May Both Unions Party Name Alliance 4 Freedoms All of Great Britain Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party 17 May Both Unions Party Description Alliance 4 Freedoms: British European Unity All of Great Britain Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party 17 May Both Unions Party Description Alliance 4 Freedoms: promoting British unity All of Great Britain Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party 17 May Both Unions Party Description Alliance 4 Freedoms: European People's Party All of Great Britain Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party 17 May Both Unions Party Description Alliance 4 Freedoms: Scotland Britain Europe All of Great Britain Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party 17 May Both Unions Party Description Alliance 4 Freedoms: replace Electoral Commission All of Great Britain Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party 17 May Both Unions Party Description Alliance 4 Freedoms: Mayday Save Britain All of Great Britain Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party 17 May Both Unions Party Description Alliance 4 Freedoms: Mind the Gap! All of Great Britain Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party 17 May Both Unions Party Description Alliance 4 Freedoms: rejoin EU All of Great Britain Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party 17 May Both Unions Party Emblem All of Great Britain Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered emblem 17 May Church of the Militant Elvis Description Militant Elvis Bus-Pass Party England Approve 17 May Church of the Militant Elvis Description Militant Elvis and the Yeti Party England Approve 17 May Local Independents for Tiverton Name Local Independents

for Tiverton England Approve 17 May Local Independents for Tiverton Description
Independents with green and progressive policies England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 17 May Local Independents for Tiverton Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 17 May The Democratic Party Description The People's Party All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description April 2021 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 30 April Communist League Election Campaign Name Communist League Election Campaign England Reject Application complete 30 April Hatfield DN7 First Name Hatfield DN7 First England Approve 30 April Hatfield DN7 First Description Hatfield DN7 Community Together England Approve 30 April Hatfield DN7 First Emblem England Approve 30 April Hatfield DN7 First Emblem England Approve 30 April Our Precious World Party Name Our Precious World Party All of Great Britain Reject Application Incomplete 30 April Restore Scotland Emblem Scotland Approve 30 April Restore Scotland Emblem Scotland Approve 07 April Kingston Independent Residents Group Description Kingston Independent Residents - James Giles' Team England Reject Likely to hinder an elector's understanding of directions for voting given on ballot papers 07 April Kingston Independent Residents Group Description Kingston Independent Residents - No to Overdevelopment England Approve 07 April Kingston Independent Residents Group Description Kingston Independent Residents - Unlock Chessington's Potential England Approve March 2021 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 29 March BAME Lives Matter Name BAME Lives Matter All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 29 March Scottish National Party (SNP) Description Both Votes SNP for IndyRef2 Scotland Approve 29 March Scottish National Party (SNP) Description Nicola Sturgeon for SNP First Minister Scotland Approve 29 March Scottish National Party (SNP) Description Vote SNP for IndyRef2 Scotland Approve 22 March Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Description Alliance for Democracy and Freedom ADF All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Description Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Bradford All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Description Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Doncaster All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Description Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Durham All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Description Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Hartlepool All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Description Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Herefordshire All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Description Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Hull All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Description Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Hull All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Description Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Hull All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Description Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Hull All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Description Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Hull All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Description Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Hull All of Great Britain Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 22 March Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Emblem

All of Great Britain Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 22 March Alliance For Green Socialism Description Alliance for Green Socialism - LGBT All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Alliance For Green Socialism Description Alliance for Green Socialism - Environmental Socialists All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Alliance For Green Socialism Description Alliance for Green Socialism and Environment All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Alliance For Green Socialism Description Alliance for Green Socialism - Ecological Socialists All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Alliance For Green Socialism Description Green Socialists - The Left Green Alliance All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Alliance For Green Socialism Description Green Socialists - Fighting for the Planet All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Alliance For Green Socialism Description Green Socialists - Build more Council Houses All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Alliance For Green Socialism Description AGS: Publishers of "Green Socialist" All of Great Britain Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 22 March Breakthrough Party Emblem All of Great Britain Reject Likely to contradict instructions or guidance given for voting on ballot papers 22 March Bucks Together Emblem England Reject Does not meet the requirements of an emblem 22 March Bucks Together Name Bucks Together England Approve 22 March Conservative and Unionist Party Description Conservative Candidate – More Police, Safer Streets All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Conservative and Unionist Party Description End Division, No Referendum, Rebuild Scotland All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 22 March Conservative and Unionist Party Description Not Another Referendum, Time for Recovery All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 22 March Hampshire Independents Description Portsmouth Independents England Reject Does not meet requirements of a description 22 March Hampshire Independents Emblem England Approve 22 March Independent Green Voice Description Independent Green Voice - Organic, Local, Democratic All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Independent Green Voice Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Interactive Democracy Description Interactive Democracy – Social Network All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Interactive Democracy Description Interactive Democracy – Real Time Decision Making All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Interactive Democracy Description Interactive Democracy - Crypto All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Interactive Democracy Description Interactive Democracy – Public Network All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Interactive Democracy Description Interactive Democracy - Cryptocurrency All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Interactive Democracy Description Interactive Democracy - Cryptocurrency All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Kingston Independent Residents Group Description Kingston Independent Residents Group - Kingston Matters England Approve 22 March Kingston Independent Residents Group Description Kingston Independent Residents Group - Malden Matters England Approve 22 March Kingston Independent Residents Group Description Kingston Independent Residents Group - Surbiton Matters England Approve 22 March Kingston Independent Residents Group Description Chessington Matters - Kingston Independent Residents Group England Approve 22 March Kingston Independent Residents Group Description Kingston Independent Residents Group - Norbiton Matters England Approve 22 March Kingston Independent Residents Group Description Kingston Independent Residents Group - Tolworth Matters England Approve 22 March Kingston Independent Residents Group Description Kingston Independent Residents Group (KIRG) England Approve 22 March Kingston Independent Residents Group Description Kingston Independent Residents Group - Berrylands Matters England Approve 22 March Leckhampton Green Land Action Group

Description Longterm Protection of Leckhampton England Reject Does not meet requirements of a description 22 March Leckhampton Green Land Action Group Description Protecting Leckhampton England Reject Does not meet requirements of a description 22 March Leckhampton Green Land Action Group Description Protecting Leckhampton's Green Spaces England Reject Does not meet requirements of a description 22 March Leckhampton Green Land Action Group Description Protecting Leckhampton's much loved Green Fields England Reject Does not meet requirements of a description 22 March Leckhampton Green Land Action Group Description Standing for the Protection of Leckhampton England Reject Does not meet requirements of a description 22 March Leckhampton Green Land Action Group Description Standing against Unsustainable Development England Reject Does not meet requirements of a description 22 March Leckhampton Green Land Action Group Description Holding the Line on Leckhampton's Fields England Reject Does not meet requirements of a description 22 March Leckhampton Green Land Action Group Description LEGLAG England Reject Does not meet requirements of a description 22 March Leckhampton Green Land Action Group Description Standing for Longterm Protection of Leckhampton England Reject Does not meet requirements of a description 22 March Leckhampton Green Land Action Group Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 22 March Leckhampton Green Land Action Group Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 22 March Leckhampton Green Land Action Group Name Leckhampton Green Land Action Group England Approve 22 March Lincolnshire Independents Lincolnshire First Description Lincolnshire First Lincolnshire Independent England Approve 22 March Plaid Cymru - The Party of Wales Description Plaid Cymru: O Blaidd Cymru / Plaid Cymru - Vote for Wales Wales Approve 22 March Psychedelic Future Party Description Psychedelic Movement: Change Your Mind All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Psychedelic Future Party Description Psychedelic Movement: Future Movement All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Psychedelic Future Party Description Psychedelic Movement: Psyche Movement All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Psychedelic Future Party Description Psychedelic Movement: Kamaclipse! All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Psychedelic Future Party Description Psychedelic Movement All of Great Britain Reject Same as party name 22 March Psychedelic Future Party Description Psychedelic Movement: Psychedelic Economy All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Psychedelic Future Party Description Movement: Tomorrow's Tomorrow Today All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Psychedelic Future Party Description Psychedelic Movement: Future Party All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Psychedelic Future Party Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Psychedelic Future Party Name Psychedelic Movement All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Reform UK Description ReformUK - London Deserves Better All of Great Britain Approve 22 March Reform UK Description ReformUK - Change Scottish Politics for Good All of Great Britain Reject Contains more than six words 22 March Reform UK Description ReformUK - Change Welsh Politics for Good All of Great Britain Reject Contains more than six words 22 March Reform UK Description ReformUK - Change British Politics for Good All of Great Britain Reject Contains more than six words 22 March Reform UK Description ReformUK - Changing Politics for Good All of Great Britain Approve 22 March South Devon Alliance Description Take back what belongs to you England Reject Does not meet requirements of a description 22 March South Devon Alliance Description Because Devon belongs to you England Reject Does not meet requirements of a description 22 March South Devon Alliance Description Free from National party politics England Reject Does not meet requirements of a description 22 March South Devon Alliance Description A future we can live by England Reject Does not meet requirements of a description 22 March South

Devon Alliance Description Because Devon deserves better England Reject Does not meet requirements of a description 22 March South Devon Alliance Description Before paradise is lost England Reject Does not meet requirements of a description 22 March South Devon Alliance Description South Devon first, last and always England Reject Does not meet requirements of a description 22 March South Devon Alliance Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 22 March South Devon Alliance Description Protecting nature and defending the truth England Reject Does not meet requirements of a description 22 March South Devon Alliance Description Speaking truth to power England Reject Does not meet requirements of a description 22 March South Devon Alliance Description Your people, your party, your choice England Reject Does not meet requirements of a description 22 March South Devon Alliance Description Common sense, not party politics England Reject Does not meet requirements of a description 22 March South Devon Alliance Description Take back the Devon you love England Reject Does not meet requirements of a description 22 March South Devon Alliance Name South Devon Alliance England Approve 22 March Tattenham & Preston Residents Emblem England Approve 22 March The People's Independent Party Name The People's Independent Party England Reject Application incomplete 22 March Wessex Regionalists Emblem England Approve 17 March Count Binface Party Description Count Binface for Mayor of London England Approve 17 March Count Binface Party Emblem England Approve 17 March Count Binface Party Name Count Binface Party England Approve 17 March Shevington Independents Name Shevington Independents England Approve 17 March Shevington Independents Description Shevington Independents working for you England Approve 17 March Shevington Independents Description Shevington Independents Representing you England Approve 17 March Shevington Independents Description Voice of Shevington is Shevington Independents England Approve 16 March Basildon Community Residents Party Description To campaign against Masterplan England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 16 March Basildon Community Residents Party Emblem England Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 16 March Basildon Community Residents Party Emblem England Approve 16 March Basildon Community Residents Party Name Basildon Community Residents Party England Approve 16 March Cranford Residents Name Cranford Residents England Approve 16 March Cranford Residents Emblem England Approve 16 March Cranford Residents Emblem England Approve 16 March Direct Democracy Party United Kingdom (DDPUK) Name Direct Democracy Party United Kingdom (DDPUK) All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 16 March Direct Democracy Party United Kingdom (DDPUK) Name Direct Democracy Party United Kingdom (DDPUK) Northern Ireland Reject Application incomplete 16 March Gwlad Emblem Wales Approve 16 March Hartlepool People Name Hartlepool People England Reject Application incomplete 16 March Keep Equality Safe Party Description All For One, One For All England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 16 March Keep Equality Safe Party Emblem England Approve 16 March Keep Equality Safe Party Name Keep Equality Safe Party England Approve 16 March Let London Live Name Let London Live England Approve 16 March Let London Live Description Let London Live Party. Fighting to end unjust and unscientific covid restrictions. England Reject Contains more than six words 16 March Let London Live Emblem England Approve 16 March Let London Live Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 16 March Liberal Democrats Description Scottish Liberal Democrats - Put Recovery First England Approve 16 March Liberal Democrats Description Welsh Liberal Democrats - Put Recovery First/ Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru - Adfywio yw'r flaenoriaeth England Approve 16 March London Real Party Description London Real Party – Transform London England Approve 16

March London Real Party Emblem England Reject Does not meet the requirements of an emblem 16 March London Real Party Name London Real Party England Approve 16 March Our Ryde Emblem England Approve 16 March Our Ryde Emblem England Approve 16 March Shildon and Dene Valley Independent Party Name Shildon and Dene Valley Independent Party England Reject Does not meet the minimum requirements for a political party 16 March South Holland Independents Description South Holland Independents, putting you first England Approve 16 March South Holland Independents Description South Holland Independents, working for you England Approve 16 March South Holland Independents Description South Holland Independents, District before party England Approve 16 March South Holland Independents Emblem England Approve 16 March South Holland Independents Name South Holland Independents England Approve 16 March The Independent Socialist Party GB Name The Independent Socialist Party GB England Reject Contains an unqualified prohibited word, and is confusingly similar to another already registered party 16 March Time Party Description Time - People Before Politics All of Great Britain Approve 16 March Time Party Description Time – People Not Politics All of Great Britain Approve 16 March Time Party Description Time – Setting The Standard All of Great Britain Approve 16 March UK Truth Name UK Truth England Reject Application incomplete 15 March Cymru Sovereign Description Freedom Not Tyranny / Rhyddid Nid Gormes Wales Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 15 March Cymru Sovereign Description Wales, Nation of Freedom / Cymru, Gwlad Rhyddid Wales Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 15 March Cymru Sovereign Description No More lockdowns For Wales / Dim Mwy O Gloi Lawr i Gymru Wales Approve 15 March Cymru Sovereign Description Sovereignty and Freedom / Sofrniaeth a Rhyddid Wales Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 15 March Cymru Sovereign Description Freedom Not Fear / Rhyddid Nid Ofn Wales Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 15 March Cymru Sovereign Description No More Lockdown / Dim Mwy o Gloi Lawr Wales Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 15 March Cymru Sovereign Description Yes to Freedom / Ie i Rhyddid Wales Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 15 March Cymru Sovereign Emblem Wales Approve 15 March Cymru Sovereign Emblem Wales Approve 15 March Cymru Sovereign Emblem Wales Approve 15 March Cymru Sovereign Name No More Lockdowns Wales Approve 11 March Action for Independence Description Action for Independence Max the Yes Scotland Approve 11 March Action for Independence Emblem Scotland Approve 11 March Action for Independence Emblem Scotland Approve 11 March Action for Independence Emblem Scotland Approve 11 March Scottish Eco-Devolutionist Party (SEDP) Description Fighting climate change without supporting independence Scotland Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 11 March Scottish Eco-Devolutionist Party (SEDP) Emblem Scotland Reject Contains a cross and is likely to contradict instructions or guidance given for voting on ballot papers 11 March Scottish Eco-Devolutionist Party (SEDP) Emblem Scotland Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 11 March Scottish Eco-Devolutionist Party (SEDP) Emblem Scotland Reject Contains a cross and is likely to contradict instructions or guidance given for voting on ballot papers 11 March Scottish Eco-Devolutionist Party (SEDP) Name Scottish Eco-Devolutionist Party (SEDP) Scotland Approve 09 March The Honesty Party / Y Blaid Gonestrwydd Name The Honesty Party / Y Blaid Gonestrwydd All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 09 March Unity in Action Name Unity in Action All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 09 March We Matter Party Description Political Social & Economic Change NOW!! England Reject Does not meet the

requirements of a description 09 March We Matter Party Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 09 March We Matter Party Name We Matter Party England Approve 08 March Chichester and Harbour Independents Emblem England Approve 08 March Chichester and Harbour Independents Name Chichester and Harbour Independents England Approve 08 March Freedom Alliance – Integrity, Society and Economy Description Freedom Alliance. Scotland's Opposition to Lockdown All of Great Britain Approve 08 March Freedom Alliance – Integrity, Society and Economy Description Freedom Alliance. Liberty, Equality and Justice All of Great Britain Approve 08 March Freedom Alliance – Integrity, Society and Economy Description Freedom Alliance. People Matter All of Great Britain Approve 08 March Freedom Alliance – Integrity, Society and Economy Description Freedom Alliance. Make Scotland Free All of Great Britain Approve 08 March Freedom Alliance – Integrity, Society and Economy Description Freedom Alliance. Personal Liberty and Freedom All of Great Britain Approve 08 March Freedom Alliance – Integrity, Society and Economy Description Freedom Alliance. Independent Britain All of Great Britain Approve 08 March Freedom Alliance – Integrity, Society and Economy Description Freedom Alliance. No Lockdowns. No Curfews All of Great Britain Approve 08 March Freedom Alliance – Integrity, Society and Economy Description Freedom Alliance. No Lockdowns. No Curfews All of Great Britain Approve 08 March Freedom Alliance – Integrity, Society and Economy Description Freedom Alliance. Supporting Medical Freedom All of Great Britain Approve 08 March Freedom Alliance – Integrity, Society and Economy Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 08 March Freedom Alliance – Integrity, Society and Economy Name Freedom Alliance – Integrity, Society and Economy All of Great Britain Approve 08 March Freedom Alliance – Integrity, Society and Economy Description Freedom Alliance. Make Britain Free All of Great Britain Approve 08 March Freedom Alliance – Integrity, Society and Economy Description Freedom Alliance. The Real Alternative All of Great Britain Approve 08 March Freedom Alliance – Integrity, Society and Economy Description Freedom Alliance. Dignity and Democracy All of Great Britain Approve 08 March Gloucester Independents Name Gloucester Independents England Reject Application incomplete 08 March Harmony Party UK Description Our members lead. All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 March Harmony Party UK Description Democratic, Inclusive, Socialist, Compassionate, Open. All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 March Harmony Party UK Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 08 March Harmony Party UK Name Harmony Party UK All of Great Britain Approve 08 March Independent Alliance for Reform / Y Gynghrair Annibynnol dros Ddiwygio Name Independent Alliance for Reform / Y Gynghrair Annibynnol dros Ddiwygio Wales Reject Application incomplete 08 March PLUR (Peace Love Unity Respect) Party Name PLUR (Peace Love Unity Respect) Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 08 March Reform UK / Reform Derby Joint Description Reform Derby and Reform UK All of Great Britain Approve 08 March Saddleworth People Matter! Name Saddleworth People Matter! England Reject Application incomplete 08 March The Democratic Network Description A Sussex Network Candidate England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 March The Democratic Network Description A Democratic Network Candidate England Approve 08 March The Democratic Network Description A Network Candidate England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 March The Democratic Network Description The Sussex Network England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 March The Democratic Network Description East Sussex Network England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 March The Democratic Network Description West Sussex Network England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08

March The Democratic Network Description East Sussex Democratic Network England Approve 08 March The Democratic Network Description The Bexhill Network England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 March The Democratic Network Name The Democratic Network England Approve 04 March Saving Scotland Party Name Saving Scotland Party Scotland Reject Application incomplete 02 March Northern Independence Party Name Northern Independence Party England Reject Application incomplete 02 March Propel Description Neil McEvoy Propel Wales Reject Likely to contradict instructions or guidance given for voting on ballot papers 02 March Propel Description Propel: Better for Wales' / Propel: Gwell i Gymru Wales Approve 02 March Propel Description Propel: Wales Needs Champions / Propel: Mae Cymru Angen Pencampwyr Wales Approve 02 March Propel Description Propel: Not Politics as Usual / Propel Nid Gwleidyddiaeth fel Arfer Wales Approve 02 March Propel Emblem Wales Approve 02 March Propel Emblem Wales Approve 02 March Propel Emblem Wales Approve 02 March Propel Name Propel Wales Approve 02 March Shevington Independents Name Shevington Independents England Reject Application incomplete 02 March The Phoenix Political Party Description Accountability, Transparency, Strategy All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 02 March The Phoenix Political Party Emblem All of Great Britain Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered emblem 02 March The Phoenix Political Party Name The Phoenix Political Party All of Great Britain Approve 02 March Wigan Independents Description Standish Independents working for you England Approve 02 March Wigan Independents Description Voice of Standish is Standish Independents England Approve 02 March Wigan Independents Description Standish Independents Representing you England Approve 02 March Wigan Independents Name Standish Independents England Approve 02 March Young People's Party YPP Description Common Ground formerly Young People's Party All of Great Britain Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party 02 March Young People's Party YPP Description Common Ground formerly Young People's Party All of Great Britain Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party 02 March Young People's Party YPP Name Common Ground All of Great Britain Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party February 2021 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 25 February the Borough first Independents Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 22 February Heritage Party Description Heritage Party – David Kurten All of Great Britain Reject Contains a person's name which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 22 February Heritage Party Description Heritage Party – Make Britain Great Again All of Great Britain Approve 22 February National Lion Democratic Party Name National Lion Democratic Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 22 February YES to Independence Name YES to Independence Scotland Reject Application incomplete 08 February Alba Party Name Alba Party Scotland Approve 08 February Black Lives Matter Name Black Lives Matter All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete. Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote. 08 February Canvey First Name Canvey First England Approve 08 February Canvey First Description campaigning for Canvey Island issues England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 February Canvey First Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 08 February Chase Community Independents Group Description Chase Community Independents Councillor England Approve 08 February Chase Community Independents Group Description Chase Community Independents Group: Cannock First England Approve 08 February Chase Community Independents Group Description

Chase Community Independents Group: Hednesford First England Approve 08 February
Chase Community Independents Group Description Chase Community Independents Group:
Rugeley First England Approve 08 February Chase Community Independents Group
Description Chase Community Independents Group: Staffordshire First England Approve
08 February Chase Community Independents Group Description Chase Community
Independents Group: Cannock Together England Approve 08 February Chase Community
Independents Group Description Chase Community Independents Group: Hednesford
Together England Approve 08 February Chase Community Independents Group Description
Chase Community Independents Group: Rugeley Together England Approve 08 February
Chase Community Independents Group Description Chase Community Independents Group:
Staffordshire Together England Approve 08 February Chase Community Independents Group
Description Chase Community Independents People Before Politics England Approve 08
February Christchurch Independents Name Christchurch Independents England Approve 08
February Christchurch Independents Description The Christchurch Independents Party
England Approve 08 February Christchurch Independents Emblem England Approve 08
February Independents across Nottinghamshire Name Independents across Nottinghamshire
England Approve 08 February Scotland's Independence Referendum Party Name Scotland's
Independence Referendum Party Scotland Approve 08 February Scotland's Independence
Referendum Party Emblem Scotland Approve 08 February Scottish Family Party
Description Scottish Family Party - Promoting Traditional Values All of Great Britain
Approve 08 February Scottish Family Party Description Scottish Family Party -
Promoting Traditional Values All of Great Britain Approve 08 February UK Independence
Party (UKIP) Description UKIP – NO to SNP All of Great Britain Approve 08 February UK
Independence Party (UKIP) Description UKIP – Get rid of Holyrood All of Great Britain
Approve 08 February Whitehill & Bordon Community Party Name Whitehill & Bordon
Community Party England Approve 08 February Whitehill & Bordon Community Party
Description Lindford Community England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a
description 08 February Whitehill & Bordon Community Party Description Whitehill,
Bordon & Lindford Community England Approve 08 February Whitehill & Bordon Community
Party Description Whitehill & Bordon Community England Approve 08 February Whitehill
& Bordon Community Party Description Whitehill Community England Approve 08 February
Whitehill & Bordon Community Party Description Bordon Community England Approve 08
February Whitehill & Bordon Community Party Emblem England Approve 08 February
Whitehill & Bordon Community Party Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as
the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 08 February Whitehill &
Bordon Community Party Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words
spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 05 February Action for Independence
Name Action for Independence Scotland Approve 05 February Brexit Express (BE) Name
The Reclaim Party All of Great Britain Approve 01 February All For Unity Name All For
Unity Scotland Approve 01 February All For Unity Description All for Unity - No to
Separatism Scotland Approve 01 February All For Unity Description All 4 Unity - No to
Separatism Scotland Approve 01 February All For Unity Description All for Unity
(George Galloway) Scotland Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their
vote 01 February All For Unity Description All 4 Unity (George Galloway) Scotland
Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 01 February All For
Unity Description All 4 Unity Scotland Approve 01 February All For Unity Emblem
Scotland Approve January 2021 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark
applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to
Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 25 January
Breakthrough Party Name Breakthrough Party Great Britain Approve 25 January

Breakthrough Party Emblem Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of an emblem 19 January Chichester And Harbour Independents Name Chichester And Harbour Independents England Reject Application incomplete 19 January Freedom Alliance- Integrity, Society, Economy Name Freedom Alliance- Integrity, Society, Economy Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 19 January The Liberal Party Description Your Local Liberal Party Great Britain Approve 11 January Patriotic Alternative Name Patriotic Alternative Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 11 January Vanguard Party Description Vanguard Party four Nations in Union Great Britain Approve 11 January Vanguard Party Description Vanguard Party Championing social conservatism Great Britain Approve 11 January Welsh Nation Party / Plaid y Genedl Gymreig Name Welsh Nation Party / Plaid y Genedl Gymreig Wales Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party. Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote. 08 January Andover Alliance Name Andover Alliance England Approve 08 January Andover Alliance Description Andover Alliance England Reject Duplicate of party name 08 January Andover Alliance Emblem England Approve 08 January Hatfield DN7 First Name Hatfield DN7 First England Reject Application incomplete 08 January Our Ryde Name Our Ryde England Approve 08 January Our Ryde Description Working for Ryde England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 January Our Ryde Description Putting Ryde First England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 January Our Ryde Description Our Ryde, Our Town, Our Place England Approve 08 January Our Ryde Description Our Ryde, Our Town England Approve 08 January Our Ryde Description One Ryde, One Town England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 January Our Ryde Description One Ryde, Our Ryde, One Town England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 January Our Ryde Description Ticket to Ryde, Our Ryde England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 January Our Ryde Description Ryde before politics England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 January Our Ryde Description Let's make Ryde better England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 January Our Ryde Emblem England Approve 08 January Restore Scotland Name Restore Scotland Scotland Approve 08 January The Autonomous Party Name The Autonomous Party All of Great Britain Approve 08 January The Autonomous Party Description Autonomous Party All of Great Britain Approve 08 January The Autonomous Party Description Autonomous All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 08 January The Autonomous Party Description Autonomous UK All of Great Britain Approve 08 January The Autonomous Party Description Autonomous International All of Great Britain Approve 08 January The London Party Name The London Party England Reject Application incomplete 07 January All For Unity Name All For Unity Scotland Reject Application incomplete 04 January Bucks Residents Association Emblem England Approve 04 January Bucks Residents Association Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 04 January Christian Democratic Party Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 04 January Christian Democratic Party Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 04 January Christian Democratic Party Emblem All of Great Britain Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 04 January Independents for Rame and Maker (INFORM) Name Independents for Rame and Maker (INFORM) England Approve 04 January Independents for Rame and Maker (INFORM) Emblem England Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 04 January Independents for Rame and Maker (INFORM) Emblem England Approve 04 January Independents for Rame and Maker (INFORM) Emblem England Approve 04 January Light Party Name Light Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 04 January

Proud of Oldham & Saddleworth Emblem England Approve 04 January Proud of Oldham & Saddleworth Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 04 January The Brexit Party Name Reform UK All of Great Britain Approve 04 January The Brexit Party Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 04 January UK Independence Party (UKIP) Description UKIP Scrap the Senedd All of Great Britain Approve 04 January UK Independence Party (UKIP) Description UKIP Scrap The Assembly/Senedd All of Great Britain Approve 04 January UK Independence Party (UKIP) Description UKIP Save Britain All of Great Britain Approve 2020 party registration decisions December 2020 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 30 December Abolish The Welsh Assembly Party Name Abolish The Welsh Assembly Party Wales Approve 30 December Abolish The Welsh Assembly Party Emblem Wales Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 30 December Abolish the Welsh Assembly Party/Diddymu'r Parti Cynulliard Name Abolish the Welsh Assembly Party/Diddymu'r Parti Cynulliard Wales Reject Same as an already registered party 17 December Vote YES-2-Scotland's Independence Referendum Party Name Vote YES-2-Scotland's Independence Referendum Party Scotland Reject Contains more than 6 words 15 December Alliance for London Description Alliance for London: all Londoners Together England Approve 15 December Alliance for London Description Alliance for London: London in Europe England Approve 15 December Alliance for London Description Alliance for London: Londoners First England Approve 15 December Alliance for London Description Alliance for London: the London Party England Approve 15 December Alliance for London Description Alliance for London: the Londoners' Party England Approve 15 December Edlington and Warmsworth First Name Edlington and Warmsworth First England Approve 15 December Edlington and Warmsworth First Description Edlington and Warmsworth Residents First England Approve 15 December Edlington and Warmsworth First Description Edlington and Warmsworth the Forgotten Towns England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 15 December Edlington and Warmsworth First Emblem England Approve 14 December Hornchurch and Upminster Independents Name Hornchurch and Upminster Independents All of Great Britain Approve 14 December Hornchurch and Upminster Independents Description Hornchurch and Upminster Independents Beam Park All of Great Britain Approve 14 December Hornchurch and Upminster Independents Description Hornchurch and Upminster Independents Cranham All of Great Britain Approve 14 December Hornchurch and Upminster Independents Description Hornchurch and Upminster Independents Elm Park All of Great Britain Approve 14 December Hornchurch and Upminster Independents Description Hornchurch and Upminster Independents Emerson Park All of Great Britain Approve 14 December Hornchurch and Upminster Independents Description Hornchurch and Upminster Independents Hacton All of Great Britain Approve 14 December Hornchurch and Upminster Independents Description Hornchurch and Upminster Independents South Hornchurch All of Great Britain Approve 14 December Hornchurch and Upminster Independents Description Hornchurch and Upminster Independents St Andrew's All of Great Britain Approve 14 December Hornchurch and Upminster Independents Description Hornchurch and Upminster Independents St George's All of Great Britain Approve 14 December Hornchurch and Upminster Independents Description Hornchurch and Upminster Independents Upminster All of Great Britain Approve 14 December Northern Heart Name Northern Heart All of Great Britain Approve 14 December Northern Heart Description Northern Heart (UK) All of Great Britain Approve 14 December Northern Heart

Description Northern Heart (UK) Bolton All of Great Britain Approve 14 December
Northern Heart Description Northern Heart (UK) Bury All of Great Britain Approve 14 December
Northern Heart Description Northern Heart (UK) Manchester All of Great Britain Approve 14 December
Northern Heart Description Northern Heart (UK) Oldham All of Great Britain Approve 14 December
Northern Heart Description Northern Heart (UK) Rochdale All of Great Britain Approve 14 December
Northern Heart Description Northern Heart (UK) Salford All of Great Britain Approve 14 December
Northern Heart Description Northern Heart (UK) Stockport All of Great Britain Approve 14 December
Northern Heart Description Northern Heart (UK) Tameside All of Great Britain Approve 14 December
Northern Heart Description Northern Heart (UK) Trafford All of Great Britain Approve 14 December
Northern Heart Description Northern Heart (UK) Wigan All of Great Britain Approve 14 December
Northern Heart Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 14 December
Northern Heart Emblem All of Great Britain Approve November 2020 Date of decision
Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/
Reason for rejection 23 November Conservative and Unionist Party Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 23 November Conservative and Unionist Party Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 23 November Vectis Party Name Vectis Party England Approve 23 November Vectis Party Emblem England Approve 23 November Vectis Party Description Vectis Party - For the Island England Approve 23 November Vectis Party Description Vectis Party - Proud of the Island England Approve 23 November Vectis Party Description Vectis Party - Stop over-development England Approve 23 November Vectis Party Description Vectis Party - Better healthcare now England Approve 23 November Vectis Party Description Vectis Party - Subsidise mainland hospital travel England Approve 23 November Vectis Party Description Vectis Party - For jobs and careers England Approve 23 November Vectis Party Description Vectis Party - Care for our elderly England Approve 23 November Vectis Party Description Vectis Party - For Vectis people England Approve 23 November Vectis Party Description Vectis Party - Supporting Young Islanders England Approve 23 November Vectis Party Description Vectis Party - local control, local decisions England Approve 23 November Vectis Party Description Listening. Taking Action. Getting Results. England Approve 23 November Plaid Cymru - The Party of Wales Description Plaid Cymru - Plaid Cymru Newydd / Plaid Cymru - New Wales Party England Approve 11 November Ashfield Independents Emblem England Approve 09 November National Lion Democratic Party Name National Lion Democratic Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 09 November Shildon and Dene Valley Independent Party Name Shildon and Dene Valley Independent Party England Approve 09 November Shildon and Dene Valley Independent Party Emblem England Approve 09 November UK Independence Party (UKIP) Description Scrap the Senedd All of the Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 09 November UK Independence Party (UKIP) Description Scrap the Senedd/Assembly All of the Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 09 November UK Independence Party (UKIP) Emblem All of the Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description October 2020 Date of decision
Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/
Reason for rejection 18 October Buckinghamshire Residents Association Name Bucks Residents Association England Approve 18 October Buckinghamshire Residents Association Description Putting Bucks Residents First England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 18 October Buckinghamshire Residents Association

Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 18 October Buckinghamshire Residents Association Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 18 October Heritage Party Name Heritage Party All of Great Britain Approve 18 October Heritage Party Description Heritage Party - Scrap HS2 All of Great Britain Approve 18 October Heritage Party Description Heritage Party – Free Speech and Liberty All of Great Britain Approve 18 October Heritage Party Description Heritage Party - Make London Great Again All of Great Britain Approve 18 October Heritage Party Description Heritage Party - Make London Safe Again All of Great Britain Approve 18 October Heritage Party Description Heritage Party - Traditional Family Values All of Great Britain Approve 18 October Heritage Party Description Heritage Party - Social Conservatism All of Great Britain Approve 18 October Heritage Party Description Heritage Party - Keep Britain Free All of Great Britain Approve 18 October Heritage Party Description Heritage Party - Protect the Green Belt All of Great Britain Approve 18 October Heritage Party Description Heritage Party - Keep Our Countryside Green All of Great Britain Approve 18 October Heritage Party Description Heritage Party - End Mass Immigration All of Great Britain Approve 18 October Heritage Party Description Heritage Party - Make Britain Safe Again All of Great Britain Approve 18 October Heritage Party Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 18 October The London Party Name The London Party England Reject Application incomplete 16 October Propel Party Name Propel Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 16 October Thames Ditton / Weston Green Residents' Association Emblem England Approve 16 October The Liberal Party Description Local Liberals All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 15 October A Fresh Start for Sheringham Name A Fresh Start for Sheringham England Approve 15 October A Fresh Start for Sheringham Description Listening. Taking Action. Getting Results. England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 15 October A Fresh Start for Sheringham Emblem England Approve 15 October Alderley Edge First Emblem England Approve 15 October Chakras Name Chakras All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 15 October Christian Democratic Party Emblem All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a emblem 15 October Hornchurch and Upminster Independents Name Hornchurch and Upminster Independents England Reject Application incomplete 15 October Our Island Emblem England Approve 15 October Our Island Emblem England Approve 15 October Our Island Emblem England Approve 15 October the Borough first Name the Borough first Independents England Approve 15 October the Borough first Description tBfl - the Borough first Independents England Approve 07 October The Burning Pink Party Name The Burning Pink Party All of Great Britain Approve September 2020 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 28 September Alliance 4 Unity Name Alliance 4 Unity Scotland Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote; application incomplete 28 September Northern Heart Name Northern Heart All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 28 September Residents for Chesham Name Residents for Chesham England Approve 28 September Residents for Chesham Description Association of independent candidates England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 28 September Residents for Chesham Emblem England Approve 28 September The Mystic Party Name The Mystic Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 15 September Evolve Wales Party Name Evolve Party Wales / Plaid Esblygu Cymru Wales Reject Application incomplete 15 September Wyre Alliance Name Wyre Alliance All of Great Britain Reject Application

incomplete 14 September Putting Crewe First, Independent Residents Emblem England Approve 14 September Social Democratic Party Emblem England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 14 September Vectis Party Name Vectis Party England Reject Application incomplete 09 September Plaid Cymru - The Party of Wales Description Plaid Cymru New Wales Party / Plaid Cymru - Cymru Newydd Wales Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 09 September Plaid Cymru - The Party of Wales Description Plaid Cymru: Adam Price First Minister / Plaid Cymru: Prif Weinidog Adam Price Wales Reject Likely to hinder an elector's understanding of directions for voting given on ballot papers 09 September Plaid Cymru - The Party of Wales Description Plaid Cymru: Llais Sir Gâr / Plaid Cymru: Carmarthenshire's Voice Wales Approve 09 September Plaid Cymru - The Party of Wales Description Plaid Cymru: Achub ein Hysbyty / Plaid Cymru: Save Our Hospital Wales Approve 9 September Scotia Future Name Scotia Future Scotland Approve 9 September Scotia Future Emblem Scotland Approve 9 September Scotia Future Emblem Scotland Approve 9 September Scotia Future Emblem Scotland Approve 9 September Old Windsor Residents Association Name Old Windsor Residents Association England Approve 9 September Old Windsor Residents Association Emblem England Approve 9 September Old Windsor Residents Association Description Representing Old Windsor Ward England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 9 September Somerset Independents Name Somerset Independents England Approve 9 September Somerset Independents Description Somerset Independents Putting You First England Approve 9 September Somerset Independents Description Somerset Independents Putting Your Area First England Approve 9 September Somerset Independents Description Somerset Independents Putting Somerset Residents First England Approve 9 September Somerset Independents Description Somerset Independents Putting Mendip Residents First England Approve 9 September Somerset Independents Description Somerset Independents Putting Sedgemoor Residents First England Approve 9 September Somerset Independents Description Somerset Independents Promoting Democracy and Right England Approve 9 September Somerset Independents Description Somerset Independents Protecting Your Environment England Approve 9 September Somerset Independents Description Somerset Independents Protecting Wildlife England Approve 9 September Somerset Independents Description Somerset Independents Putting Taunton Residents First England Approve 9 September Somerset Independents Description Somerset Independents Standing Up For You England Approve 9 September Somerset Independents Description Somerset Independents Its Your County England Approve 9 September Somerset Independents Emblem England Approve 9 September Somerset Independents Emblem England Approve 9 September Somerset Independents Emblem England Approve 4 September Heritage Party Name Heritage Party England Reject Application incomplete 2 September Essex Independence Name Essex Independence England Approve 2 September Essex Independence Description Essex Independence Ltd England Approve 2 September Essex Independence Description The Essex Independence Party England Approve 2 September Essex Independence Emblem England Approve 1 September Active for Westhoughton Emblem England Approve 1 September Alliance for Independence Name Alliance for Independence Scotland Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote; application incomplete 1 September Chase Community Independents Group Name Chase Community Independents Group England Approve 1 September Chase Community Independents Group Emblem England Approve 1 September Rotherham Democratic Party Emblem England Approve 1 September Skelmersdale Independent Party Description Skelmersdale Independents putting Skem First England Approve 1 September Wigan Independents Description Aspull Independents part of Wigan Independents England Approve 1 September Wigan Independents Description Orrell Independents part of Wigan

Independents England Approve 1 September Wigan Independents Description Abram
Independents part of Wigan Independents England Approve August 2020 Date of decision
Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part
of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/
Reason for rejection 19 August Christian Democratic Party for a Consensus Name
Christian Democratic Party All of Great Britain Approve 19 August Christian
Democratic Party for a Consensus Emblem All of Great Britain Reject Contains a cross
which is likely to contradict instructions or guidance on ballot papers 18 August
Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Name Alliance for Democracy and Freedom All of
Great Britain Approve 18 August Edlington and Warmsworth First Name Edlington and
Warmsworth First England Reject All of Great Britain 18 August NI Common Sense Basic
Income Party Name NI Common Sense Basic Income Party Northern Ireland Reject All of
Great Britain 18 August Our Humanity Matters Name Our Humanity Matters All of Great
Britain Reject Application Incomplete 18 August People's Party for Democracy &
Justice Name People's Party for Democracy & Justice All of Great Britain Reject
Application Incomplete 18 August Vanguard Party Description Vanguard Party champion
for proportional representation All of Great Britain Approve 18 August Vanguard Party
Description Vanguard Party champion for regional regeneration All of Great Britain
Approve 18 August Vanguard Party Description Vanguard Party champion for
disadvantaged children All of Great Britain Approve 18 August Vanguard Party
Description Vanguard Party champion for traditional values All of Great Britain
Approve 18 August Vanguard Party Description Vanguard Party championing Rule of Law
All of Great Britain Approve 18 August Vanguard Party Description Vanguard Party
championing Freedom of Speech All of Great Britain Approve 18 August Vanguard Party
Description Vanguard Party championing Take Back Control All of Great Britain Reject
Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote July 2020 Date of decision
Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part
of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/
Reason for rejection 24 July Active For Westhoughton Emblem England Reject Likely to
mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 24 July
Beyond Politics Name Beyond Politics All of Great Britain Reject Likely to mislead
voters as to the effect of their vote 24 July One Kearsley Emblem England Approve 24
July Skelmersdale Independent Party Description Standing up for Birch Green England
Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 24 July Skelmersdale
Independent Party Description CleanUp Skem England Reject Does not meet the
requirements of a description 22 July Independence for Scotland Party Emblem Scotland
Approve 22 July Independence for Scotland Party Emblem Scotland Approve 6 July
Abolish the Scottish Parliament Party Description Abolish Scottish Parliament Party -
Abolish Holyrood Scotland Approve 6 July Abolish the Scottish Parliament Party
Description Abolish Holyrood - Abolish Scottish Parliament Party Scotland Approve 6
July Abolish the Scottish Parliament Party Description Abolish Holyrood - Abolish
Scottish Parliament Party Scotland Approve 6 July Abolish the Scottish Parliament
Party Description Abolish Holyrood - Abolish Scottish Parliament Party Scotland
Approve 6 July Abolish the Scottish Parliament Party Description Abolish Scottish
Parliament Party - Scrap Holyrood Scotland Approve 6 July Abolish the Scottish
Parliament Party Description Abolish Scottish Parliament Party - Dissolve Holyrood
Scotland Approve 6 July Abolish the Scottish Parliament Party Description Abolish
Scottish Parliament - No More Referendums Scotland Approve 6 July Abolish the
Scottish Parliament Party Description Abolish Scottish Parliament Party - Scrap
Devolution Scotland Approve 6 July Abolish the Scottish Parliament Party Description

Abolish Scottish Parliament Party - Abolish Devolution Scotland Approve 6 July
Abolish the Scottish Parliament Party Emblem Scotland Approve 6 July Abolish the
Scottish Parliament Party Emblem Scotland Approve 6 July Chase Independents, Bringing
Our Community Together Name Chase Independents, Bringing Our Community Together
England Reject Application incomplete 6 July Irish Freedom Party Name Irish Freedom
Party Northern Ireland Reject Application incomplete 6 July Scotia Future Name Scotia
Future Scotland Reject Application incomplete 3 July Broxtowe Independents Name
Broxtowe Independents England Reject Application incomplete 3 July Essex Independence
Name Essex Independence England Reject Application incomplete 3 July Evolve / Esblygu
Name Evolve / Esblygu All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 3 July Our
Island Name Our Island England Approve 3 July Rotherham Democratic Party Emblem
England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are
unable to be read June 2020 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark
applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to
Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 23 June Active for
Westhoughton Description The Active for Westhoughton Candidate England Approve 23
June Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Name Alliance for Democracy and Freedom All
of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 23 June Five Star Direct Democracy
Party Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 23 June Heritage Party Name Heritage Party
All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 23 June Heritage Party Name
Heritage Party Northern Ireland Reject Application incomplete 23 June Medway's
Independents Name Medway's Independents England Reject Application incomplete 23 June
Old Windsor Residents Association Name Old Windsor Residents Association England
Reject Application incomplete 23 June One Kearsley Name One Kearsley England Approve
23 June One Kearsley Emblem England Reject Contains a tick and is likely to
contradict instructions or guidance given for voting on ballot paper 23 June Putting
Crewe First, Independent Residents Group Name Putting Crewe First, Independent
Residents Group England Approve 23 June Putting Crewe First, Independent Residents
Group Description Putting Crewe First, Independent Residents Group England Reject
Does not meet requirements of a description 23 June Putting Crewe First, Independent
Residents Group Description Independent Residents Group England Reject Does not meet
requirements of a description 23 June Putting Crewe First, Independent Residents Group
Description Putting Crewe First England Reject Does not meet requirements of a
description 23 June Putting Crewe First, Independent Residents Group Description
Crewe First England Reject Does not meet requirements of a description 23 June Putting
Crewe First, Independent Residents Group Description Put Crewe First England Reject
Does not meet requirements of a description 23 June Putting Crewe First, Independent
Residents Group Description Put the Independent Residents Group England Reject Does
not meet requirements of a description 23 June Putting Crewe First, Independent
Residents Group Description Independent Residents Group Putting YOU First England
Reject Does not meet requirements of a description 23 June Putting Crewe First,
Independent Residents Group Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the
words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 23 June Tomorrow's World Order
Name Tomorrow's World Order All of Great Britain Approve 23 June UK Voice Name UK
Voice All of Great Britain Approve 23 June UK Voice Description UK VOICE-safer and
stronger UK All of Great Britain Approve 23 June UK Voice Emblem All of Great Britain
Approve 23 June UK Voice Name UK Voice Northern Ireland Approve 23 June UK Voice
Description UK VOICE-safer and stronger UK Northern Ireland Approve 23 June UK Voice
Emblem Northern Ireland Approve 23 June Wyre Alliance Name Wyre Alliance All of Great
Britain Reject Application Incomplete 15 June Somerset Independents Name Somerset

Independents England Reject Application Incomplete 01 June Active for Westhoughton Name Active for Westhoughton England Approve 01 June Active for Westhoughton Description Active for Westhoughton England Reject Does not meet requirements of a description 01 June Active for Westhoughton Emblem England Approve 01 June Our Island Name Our Island England Reject Application incomplete May 2020 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 11 May Steel City Independents Name Steel City Independents England Reject Application incomplete 04 May Active for Westhoughton Name Active for Westhoughton England Reject Application incomplete 04 May Heavy Woollen District Independents Description Heavy Woollen District Independents England Approve 04 May Scotia Future Name Scotia Future Scotland Reject Application incomplete April 2020 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 29 April UK Voice Name UK Voice All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 29 April UK Voice Name UK Voice Northern Ireland Reject Application incomplete 28 April Patriotic Alternative Name Patriotic Alternative All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 28 April Vanguard Party Name Vanguard Party All of Great Britain Approve 28 April Vanguard Party Description Scottish Vanguard Party All of Great Britain Approve 28 April Vanguard Party Description Scottish Vanguard Party candidate All of Great Britain Approve 28 April Vanguard Party Description Vanguard Party champion for the Union All of Great Britain Approve 28 April Vanguard Party Description Vanguard Party champion for the Union All of Great Britain Approve 28 April Vanguard Party Description Vanguard Party championing the Union All of Great Britain Approve 28 April Vanguard Party Description Vanguard Party spearhead for political reform All of Great Britain Approve 28 April Vanguard Party Description Vanguard Party spearhead for regional regeneration All of Great Britain Approve 28 April Vanguard Party Description Vanguard Party spearheading a Scottish renaissance All of Great Britain Approve 28 April Vanguard Party Description Vanguard Party spearheading a Welsh renaissance All of Great Britain Approve 28 April Vanguard Party Description Vanguard Party spearheading the UK's renaissance All of Great Britain Approve 28 April Vanguard Party Description Vanguard Party the pro-Union champion All of Great Britain Approve 28 April Vanguard Party Description Welsh Vanguard Party All of Great Britain Approve 28 April Vanguard Party Description Welsh Vanguard Party candidate All of Great Britain Approve 27 April Independence for Scotland Party Name Independence for Scotland Party Scotland Approve 27 April Independence for Scotland Party Emblem Scotland Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 23 April Political Unity for Progress Name Political Unity for Progress All of Great Britain Approve 23 April Political Unity for Progress Description Political Unity for Progress Candidate All of Great Britain Approve 23 April Political Unity for Progress Description The Political Unity for Progress Candidate All of Great Britain Approve 23 April Political Unity for Progress Description Your Political Unity for Progress Candidate All of Great Britain Approve 23 April Political Unity for Progress Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 23 April Putting Crewe First, Independent Residents Group Name Putting Crewe First, Independent Residents Group England Reject Application incomplete 23 April The Go Vote Party Name The Go Vote Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 17 April Workers Party of Britain Name Workers Party of Britain All of Great Britain Approve 17 April Workers Party of Britain Description Workers Party All of Great

Britain Approve 17 April Workers Party of Britain Description Workers Party - Birmingham All of Great Britain Approve 17 April Workers Party of Britain Description Workers Party - London All of Great Britain Approve 17 April Workers Party of Britain Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 16 April Democrats and Veterans Direct Democracy Party Name Five Star Direct Democracy Party All Of Great Britain Approve 16 April Democrats and Veterans Direct Democracy Party Emblem All Of Great Britain Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 16 April Hampshire Independents Emblem England Reject Likely to hinder an elector's understanding of directions for voting given on ballot papers 16 April Hampshire Independents Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 1 April Holland on Sea & Eastcliff Matters Description Holland On Sea & Eastcliff Residents England Approve 1 April Holland on Sea & Eastcliff Matters Description Holland On Sea Residents England Approve 1 April Rejoin EU Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 1 April Women's Equality Party Description Vote Women's Equality Party on orange All of Great Britain Approve March 2020 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 19 March Gwlad Gwlad Name Gwlad Wales Approve 19 March Gwlad Gwlad Description Gwlad – Annibyniaeth i Gymru / Gwlad – Independence for Wales Wales Approve 19 March Gwlad Gwlad Description Gwlad – Dinoethi hunnan-dyb y Bae / Gwlad – Bursting the Cardiff Bay Bubble Wales Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 19 March Gwlad Gwlad Description Gwlad – Plaid Annibyniaeth Cymru / Gwlad – The Welsh Independence Party Wales Approve 19 March Gwlad Gwlad Description Gwlad – Plaid Diddymu San Steffan / Gwlad – The Abolish Westminster Party Wales Approve 19 March Gwlad Gwlad Description Gwlad – Y Blaid Gymradael / Gwlad – The Wexit Party Wales Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 19 March Gwlad Gwlad Description Gwlad – Yn Paratoi am Annibyniaeth / Gwlad – Preparing for Independence Wales Approve 19 March New Liberal Centre Party Name New Liberal Centre All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 19 March The Honesty Party Name The Honesty Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 10 March Fleetwood & Wyre Reform Party Name Fleetwood & Wyre Reform Party England Reject Application incomplete 10 March Jammu Kashmir National Awami Party UK Name National Equality Party All of Great Britain Approve 10 March Jammu Kashmir National Awami Party UK Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 10 March Jammu Kashmir National Awami Party UK Emblem All of Great Britain Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the Emblem are unable to be read 10 March Jammu Kashmir National Awami Party UK Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 10 March Kingston Independent Residents Group Description Kingston Independent Residents Group - Berrylands England Approve 10 March Kingston Independent Residents Group Description Kingston Independent Residents Group - Chessington England Approve 10 March Kingston Independent Residents Group Description Kingston Independent Residents Group - Coombe England Approve 10 March Kingston Independent Residents Group Description Kingston Independent Residents Group – Old Malden England Approve 10 March Kingston Independent Residents Group Description Kingston Independent Residents Group – Surbiton England Approve 10 March Kingston Independent Residents Group Description Kingston Independent Residents Group = Tolworth England Approve 10 March Kingston Independent Residents Group Description Kingston Independent Residents Group New Malden England Approve 10 March Kingston Independent Residents Group Description Kingston Independent Residents Group-Norbiton England Approve 10 March Kingston Independent Residents Group Emblem England Approve 10 March Londependence Emblem England Approve 10 March Our West Midlands Name Approve

England Approve 10 March Our West Midlands Emblem England Approve 10 March Political Unity for Progress Name Political Unity for Progress All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 10 March Reform Derby Name Reform Derby England Approve 10 March Reform Derby Description Reform Derby England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 10 March Reform Derby Emblem England Approve 10 March Reform Derby Emblem England Approve 10 March The Priority Party Name The Priority Party All of Great Britain Approve 10 March The Priority Party Description The Priority Party. All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 10 March The Priority Party Description The Priority Party. Common sense thinking. All of Great Britain Approve 10 March The Priority Party Description The Priority Party. For your family. All of Great Britain Approve 10 March The Priority Party Description The Priority Party. Helping your family. All of Great Britain Approve 10 March The Priority Party Description The Priority Party. Your family, prioritised. All of Great Britain Approve 10 March The Priority Party Description The Priority Party. Your family's future. All of Great Britain Approve 10 March The Priority Party Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 10 March Time Party Name Time Party All of Great Britain Approve 10 March Time Party Description It's Time ! All of Great Britain Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party 10 March Time Party Description Time - Empowering The People All of Great Britain Approve 10 March Time Party Description Time for Reform All of Great Britain Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party 10 March Time Party Description Time for The People All of Great Britain Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party 10 March Time Party Emblem All of Great Britain Approve February 2020 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 24 February Bolton For Change Name Bolton For Change England Approve 24 February Bolton For Change Description Bolton For Change Breightmet England Approve 24 February Bolton For Change Description Bolton For Change Tonge with Haulgh England Approve 24 February Bolton For Change Description Bolton For Change Horwich & Blackrod England Approve 24 February Bolton For Change Description Bolton For Change Halliwell England Approve 24 February Bolton For Change Description Bolton For Change Astley Bridge England Approve 24 February Bolton For Change Description Bolton For Change Crompton England Approve 24 February Bolton For Change Description Bolton For Change Smithills England Approve 24 February Bolton For Change Description Bolton For Change Farnworth and Kearsley England Approve 24 February Bolton For Change Description Bolton For Change Horwich North East England Approve 24 February Bolton For Change Description Bolton For Change Bromley Cross England Approve 24 February Bolton For Change Description Bolton For Change Bradshaw England Approve 24 February Bolton For Change Emblem England Approve 24 February Go Vote Party Name Go Vote Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 24 February Hampshire Independents Name Hampshire Independents England Approve 24 February Hampshire Independents Emblem England Approve 24 February Old Swan Against The Cuts Description End Austerity - Stockport Against the Cuts England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 24 February Rotherham Democratic Party Name Rotherham Democratic Party England Approve 24 February Rotherham Democratic Party Description Rotherham Democratic Party England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 24 February Rotherham Democratic Party Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 24 February Steel City Independents Name Steel City Independents England Reject Application incomplete 24 February The Universal Good

Party Description The Universal Good Party-Good Ancestors All of Great Britain
Approve 24 February Tomorrow's World Order Name Tomorrow's World Order All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 17 February Barnsley Independent Group Emblem England Approve 17 February Charford Residents' Association Emblem England Approve 17 February Christian Peoples Alliance Emblem England Approve 10 February Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Name Alliance for Democracy and Freedom All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 10 February Barnsley Independent Group Name Barnsley Independent Group England Approve 10 February Barnsley Independent Group Description Barnsley Independent Group The Barnsley Party England Approve 10 February Barnsley Independent Group Description Barnsley Independent Group Putting Barnsley First England Approve 10 February Barnsley Independent Group Description Barnsley Independent Group Taking Back Control England Approve 10 February Barnsley Independent Group Description Barnsley Independent Group Barnsley Independent Group your Community Candidate England Approve 10 February Barnsley Independent Group Description Barnsley Independent Group Reforming Barnsley England Approve 10 February Barnsley Independent Group Description Barnsley Independent Group Description Barnsley Independent Group for Direct Democracy England Approve 10 February British Union & Sovereignty Party Name British Unionist Party - B.U.P. All of Great Britain Approve 10 February British Union & Sovereignty Party Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 10 February Local Voice Name Local Voice England Reject Application incomplete 10 February Portsmouth Independent Party Name Portsmouth Independent Party England Reject Application incomplete 10 February Independent Scotland Party Name Independent Scotland Party Scotland Reject Application incomplete 10 February Rejoin EU Name Rejoin EU All of Great Britain Approve 10 February Rejoin EU Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 03 February Independent Union Name Independent Union England Approve 03 February Independent Union Description Hartlepool Independent Union England Approve 03 February Independent Union Description Independent Union - Hartlepool Independents England Approve 03 February Independent Union Description Independent Union - Putting Seaton First England Approve 03 February Independent Union Description Independent Union - Putting Hartlepool First England Approve 03 February Independent Union Description Independent Union - Hartlepool England Approve 03 February Ingleby Barwick Independent Society Name Ingleby Barwick Independent Society England Approve 03 February Ingleby Barwick Independent Society Emblem England Approve 03 February Patriotic Alternative Name Patriotic Alternative All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 03 February Progressive People's Party Name Progressive Peoples Party All of Great Britain Approve 03 February Progressive People's Party Description Y Blaid Flaengar All of Great Britain Approve 03 February Progressive People's Party Description The Progressive People's Party Candidate / Ymgeisydd y Blaid Flaengar All of Great Britain Approve 03 February Progressive People's Party Description The Progressive People's Party Candidate / Ymgeisydd Plaid Flaengar y Bobl All of Great Britain Approve 03 February Progressive People's Party Emblem All of Great Britain Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party 03 February The Reform Party Name The Reform Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 03 February Vanguard Party Name Vanguard Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 03 February Workers Party of Britain Name Workers Party of Britain All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete January 2020 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 24 January Christian Democratic Party Name Christian Democratic Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 23 January Christian Democratic Party

Name Christian Democratic Party Northern Ireland Reject Application incomplete 23 January Harold Wood Hill Park Residents Association Emblem England Approve 23 January Harold Wood Hill Park Residents Association Emblem England Approve 23 January Holland on Sea & Eastcliff Matters Description Holland On Sea & East Clacton Residents England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 23 January Independent Alliance - South Tyneside Name Independent Alliance - South Tyneside England Approve 23 January Medway Independents Name Medway Independents England Reject Application incomplete 23 January The Priority Party Name The Priority Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 15 January Basingstoke & Deane Independents Name Basingstoke & Deane Independents Approve 15 January Basingstoke & Deane Independents Description Basingstoke & Deane Independents England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 15 January Basingstoke & Deane Independents Description Brookvale & Kings Furlong England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 15 January Basingstoke & Deane Independent Description Norden Independentsn England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 15 January Basingstoke & Deane Independents Description Popley Independents England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 15 January Basingstoke & Deane Independents Description Kempshott & Bucksin Independents England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 15 January Basingstoke & Deane Independents Description Basingstoke Independents England Approve 15 January Basingstoke & Deane Independents Description Hatch Warren & Beggarwood Independents England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 15 January Basingstoke & Deane Independents Description Bramley Independents England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 15 January Basingstoke & Deane Independents Description Whitchurch, Overton & Laverstoke Independents England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 15 January Basingstoke & Deane Independents Description Bramley & Sherfield on Loddon Independents England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 15 January Basingstoke & Deane Independents Emblem England Approve 15 January Basingstoke & Deane Independents Emblem England Approve 15 January Basingstoke & Deane Independents Emblem England Approve 15 January The Anti-Corruption Party Name The Anti-Corruption Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 15 January Tunbridge Wells Alliance Emblem England Approve 15 January UK Truth Name UK Truth England and Wales Reject Application incomplete 2019 party registration decisions December 2019 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 23 December Aontú Description Aontú for Life, Unity, Economic Justice Northern Ireland Approve 23 December Aontú Emblem Northern Ireland Approve 23 December Black Country Party Name Black Country Party England Approve 23 December Black Country Party Emblem England Approve 23 December British Liberal Provident Party Name British Liberal Provident Party All of Great Britain Approve 23 December British Liberal Provident Party Description Make Britain, Great Britain Once Again! All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 23 December British Liberal Provident Party Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 23 December Charford Residents' Association Name Charford Residents' Association England Name 23 December Charford Residents' Association Description The voice of Charford England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 23 December Charford Residents' Association Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblems are unable to be read 23 December Heavy Woollen District Independents Description Batley and Spen Independents (Heavy Woollen) England Reject

Does not meet the requirements of a Description 23 December Kent Independents Political Alliance Group Name Kent Independents Political Alliance Group England Reject Application incomplete 23 December Our West Midlands Name Our West Midlands England Reject Application incomplete 23 December Volt United Kingdom Name Volt United Kingdom All of Great Britain Approve 23 December Volt United Kingdom Name Volt Y Deyrnas Unedig All of Great Britain Approve 23 December Volt United Kingdom Description Volt UK - The Pan-European Party All of Great Britain Approve 23 December Volt United Kingdom Description Volt UK - The UK in Europe All of Great Britain Approve 23 December Volt United Kingdom Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 23 December Volt United Kingdom Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 23 December Volt United Kingdom Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 16 December The Honesty Party Name The Honesty Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete November 2019 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 11 November Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Name Alliance for Democracy and Freedom All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 11 November Birkenhead Social Justice Party Emblem England Approve 11 November Co-operative Party Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 11 November Esher Residents Association Emblem England Approve 11 November Harold Wood Hill Park Residents Association Emblem Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the Emblem are unable to be read 11 November Harold Wood Hill Park Residents Association Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the Emblem are unable to be read 11 November Leave Means Leave Name Leave Means Leave All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 11 November UK Truth Name UK Truth All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 5 November Birkenhead Social Justice Party Name Birkenhead Social Justice Party England Approve 5 November Birkenhead Social Justice Party Description Working hard for Birkenhead England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 5 November British Liberal Provident Party Name British Liberal Provident Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 5 November Cornerstone Name Cornerstone All of Great Britain Approve 5 November reset Name reset All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 5 November Seaham Community Party Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the Emblem are unable to be read 5 November Shropshire Party Name Shropshire Party England Approve 5 November Shropshire Party Description Shropshire Party candidate England Approve 5 November Shropshire Party Emblem Approve 5 November Shropshire Party Emblem England Approve 5 November The Universal Good Party Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 5 November The Universal Good Party Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 5 November The Universal Good Party Emblem All of Great Britain Approve October 2019 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 24 October Citizens Independent Social Thought Alliance Name Drug Law Reform Party Northern Ireland Approve 24 October Coventry Citizens Party Name Coventry Citizens Party England Approve 24 October Coventry Citizens Party Description Coventry Citizens Party England Reject Duplicate of party Name 24 October Coventry Citizens Party Emblem England Approve 24 October Holland on Sea & Eastcliff Matters Description Holland & East Clacton Residents England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 24 October The Centrist Party Name The Unity Party UK All of Great Britain Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 16 October Barnsley First Name Barnsley First England Reject Application incomplete 16 October Democrats and

Veterans Direct Democracy Party Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 16 October
Democrats and Veterans Direct Democracy Party Emblem Northern Ireland Approve 14
October Andover Independents Party Emblem England Approve 14 October Core
Independents Name Core Independents All of Great Britain Approve 14 October Core
Independents Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 14 October It's Our County
(Herefordshire) Emblem England Approve 7 October A People's Referendum Name A
People's Referendum England Reject Application incomplete 7 October The Constitution
and Reform Party Name The Constitution and Reform Party England Approve September
2019 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity
mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision
Further information/ Reason for rejection 29 September Christian Peoples Alliance
Emblem All of Great Britain Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to
mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 29 September The Brexit Means Brexit
Party Name The Brexit Means Brexit Party All of Great Britain Reject Confusingly
similar to another already registered party 29 September The Brexit Means Brexit
Party Emblem All of Great Britain Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt
out in the emblem are unable to be read 29 September The Brexit Means Brexit Party
Emblem All of Great Britain Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to
mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 29 September The Brexit Means Brexit
Party Emblem All of Great Britain Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt
out in the emblem are unable to be read 29 September The Brexit Party Description
Brexit Party All of Great Britain Reject Duplicate of party name 29 September The
Brexit Party Description Brexit Party, Vote to Leave All of Great Britain Approve 29
September The Brexit Party Description The Brexit Party, Vote to Leave All of Great
Britain Approve 29 September The Universal Good Party Name The Universal Good Party
All of Great Britain Approve 29 September The Universal Good Party Description The
Universal Good Party – Great Givers All of Great Britain Approve 29 September The
Universal Good Party Description The Universal Good Party – Great Neighbours All of
Great Britain Approve 29 September The Universal Good Party Description The Universal
Good Party – Great Servants All of Great Britain Approve 29 September The Universal
Good Party Description Transformation by the Universal Good Party All of Great
Britain Approve 29 September The Universal Good Party Description TUGP The Universal
Good Party All of Great Britain Approve 27 September The British Restoration Society
Name The British Restoration Society All of Great Britain Reject Confusingly similar
to another already registered party 27 September The Independent Group for Change
Emblem All of Great Britain Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in
the emblem are unable to be read 27 September The Together Party Name The Together
Party All of Great Britain Approve 26 September Ashfield Independents Description
Ashfield Independents Putting Brinsley First England Approve 26 September Ashfield
Independents Description Ashfield Independents Working Hard For You England Approve
26 September Ashfield Independents Emblem England Approve 26 September Britain
Together Name Britain Together England Reject Application incomplete 26 September
Esher Residents Association Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the
words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 26 September Interactive
Democracy Description Byzantine Fault Tolerance Interactive Democracy All of Great
Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 26 September
Interactive Democracy Description Digital Interactive Democracy All of Great Britain
Approve 26 September Interactive Democracy Description Interactive Democracy –
Behavioural Analytics All of Great Britain Approve 26 September Interactive Democracy
Description Interactive Democracy - Blockchain All of Great Britain Approve 26

September Interactive Democracy Description Interactive Democracy – Consensus Multiperson Decision Making All of Great Britain Approve 26 September Interactive Democracy Description Interactive Democracy - Decentralised All of Great Britain Approve 26 September Interactive Democracy Description Interactive Democracy – Distributed Ledger Technology All of Great Britain Approve 26 September Motherworld Party Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 26 September Proud of Oldham & Saddleworth Name Proud of Oldham & Saddleworth England Approve 26 September Proud of Oldham & Saddleworth Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 26 September The British Restoration Society Name The British Restoration Society All of Great Britain Approve 2 September Andover Independents Party Name Andover Independents Party England Approve 2 September Andover Independents Party Description Andover Independents England Approve 2 September Andover Independents Party Description The Andover Independents England Approve 2 September Andover Independents Party Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 2 September Britain First Name Britain First Northern Ireland Reject Application incomplete 2 September Failsworth Independent Party Description Failsworth Independent Party England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 2 September Failsworth Independent Party Description Failsworth Independents England Approve 2 September Failsworth Independent Party Emblem England Approve 2 September Failsworth Independent Party Emblem England Approve 2 September Failsworth Independent Party Name Failsworth Independent Party England Approve 2 September Gwlad Gwlad Description Drois ein Gwlad/For our Country Wales Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 2 September Gwlad Gwlad Description Dros y Genedl/For the Nation Wales Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 2 September Gwlad Gwlad Description Ein Gwlad Wales Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party 2 September Gwlad Gwlad Description Gwlad Gwlad – Ein Gwlad Wales Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 2 September Gwlad Gwlad Description Plaid Annibyniaeth Cymru/The Welsh Independence Party Wales Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 2 September Gwlad Gwlad Description Plaid Diddymu San Steffan/The Abolish Westminster Party Wales Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 2 September Gwlad Gwlad Description Plaid Syncretaidd Cymru/Wales's Syncretic Party Wales Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 2 September Gwlad Gwlad Description Y blaid Gymraeal/The Wexit Party Wales Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 2 September Gwlad Gwlad Description Yn Erbyn Lygredd Bae Caerdydd/Fighting Corruption in Cardiff Bay Wales Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 2 September Independent Network Description Independent Network (Buckinghamshire) All of Great Britain Approve 2 September Independent Network Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 2 September Interactive Democracy Description Distributed Ledger Technology All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet requirements of a description 2 September Interactive Democracy Description Blockchain Democracy All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet requirements of a description 2 September Interactive Democracy Description Decentralised Democracy All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet requirements of a description 2 September Interactive Democracy Description Byzantine Fault Tolerance Voting System All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet requirements of a description 2 September Interactive Democracy Description Behavioural Analytics Collective Intelligence Democracy All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet requirements of a description 2 September Interactive Democracy Description Consensus Achievement in Multiperson Decision Making All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet requirements of a

description 2 September Interactive Democracy Description Open Agora All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet requirements of a description August 2019 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 23 August British Union & Sovereignty Party Name British Unionist Party (BUP) All of Great Britain Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party 23 August British Union & Sovereignty Party Name British Unionist Party (BUP) Northern Ireland Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party 23 August Global Republic Name Global Republic Scotland Reject Application incomplete 19 August Birkenhead Social Justice Party Name Birkenhead Social Justice Party England Reject Application incomplete 19 August Newcastle Independents Description Newcastle Independents - Putting Lemington Ward First England Approve 19 August Newcastle Independents Description Newcastle Independents - Putting Callerton Throckley First England Approve 19 August Newcastle Independents Description Newcastle Independents - Putting Tyneside First England Approve 19 August Newcastle Independents Description Newcastle Independents - Fix Our Broken Politics England Approve 19 August Newcastle Independents Description Newcastle Independents - Always Putting Newcastle First England Approve 19 August Newcastle Independents Emblem England Approve 19 August Newcastle Independents Emblem England Approve 19 August Newcastle Independents Emblem England Approve 19 August United Kingdom Liberty Party Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 6 August Mansfield Independent Forum Name Mansfield Independents England Approve Change of party name application 6 August Mansfield Independent Forum Description Mansfield Independents Putting People Before Politics England Approve 6 August Mansfield Independent Forum Description Mansfield Independents Working Hard All Year Round England Reject Contains more than 6 words 6 August Mansfield Independent Forum Description Mansfield Independents - The Community Champions England Approve 6 August Mansfield Independent Forum Description Mansfield Independents Putting Local People First England Approve 6 August Mansfield Independent Forum Description Mansfield Independents - Keeping You Informed England Approve 6 August Mansfield Independent Forum Description Think Local - Think Mansfield Independents England Approve 6 August Mansfield Independent Forum Description Mansfield Independents - Putting Local Residents First England Approve 6 August Mansfield Independent Forum Description Mansfield Independents - Warsop Voice England Approve 6 August Mansfield Independent Forum Description Mansfield Independents - Local People - Local Issues - Local Solutions England Reject Contains more than 6 words 6 August Mansfield Independent Forum Description Mansfield Independents - The Ones Who Really Care England Reject Contains more than 6 words 6 August Mansfield Independent Forum Description Mansfield Reject Does not meet the minimum requirements for emblems 6 August The Citizens Movement Party UK Name The Citizens Movement Party UK All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 1 August East Wycombe Independent Party Name Wycombe Independents England Approve Change of party name application 1 August East Wycombe Independent Party Description Your Independent Team for High Wycombe England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 1 August East Wycombe Independent Party Description Your Independent Team for Abbey England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 1 August East Wycombe Independent Party Description Independent for Booker, Cressex and Castlefield England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 1 August East Wycombe Independent Party Description

Your Independent Team for Downley England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 1 August East Wycombe Independent Party Description Your Independent Team for Hazlemere England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 1 August East Wycombe Independent Party Description Your Independent Team for Reyemead and Micklefield England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 1 August East Wycombe Independent Party Description Independent for Terriers and Amersham Hill England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 1 August East Wycombe Independent Party Description Your Independent Team for Totteridge and Bowerdean England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 1 August East Wycombe Independent Party Description Independent for Tylers Green and Loudwater England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 1 August East Wycombe Independent Party Description Your Independent Team for West Wycombe England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 1 August East Wycombe Independent Party Description Your Independent Team for Marlow England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 1 August East Wycombe Independent Party Description An Independent Team for our Community England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 1 August Remain Alliance Party Name Remain Alliance Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete July 2019 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 14 July Positive Horizon Name Positive Horizon All of Great Britain Approve 14 July Positive Horizon Description Positive Future - Contract Manifesto All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 14 July Positive Horizon Description Positive Future - Positive Solutions All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 5 July The Citizens Movement Party UK Name The Citizens Movement Party UK All of Great Britain Reject Application Incomplete 5 July Change UK - The Independent Group Name The Independent Group for Change All of Great Britain Approve 5 July Positive Horizon Name Positive Horizon Northern Ireland Approve 2 July UK Voice Name UK Voice All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 2 July UK Voice Name UK Voice Northern Ireland Reject Application incomplete 1 July IndividualFirst Name United Kingdom Liberty Party All of Great Britain Approve 1 July IndividualFirst Description UK Liberty Party All of Great Britain Approve 1 July IndividualFirst Description UKLP All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 1 July IndividualFirst Emblem All of Great Britain Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 1 July StrongerOUT Name StrongerOUT All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete June 2019 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 23 June Progressive People's Party Name Plaid Flaengar y Bobl All of Great Britain Approve 23 June Progressive People's Party Description The Progressive People's Party / Plaid Flaengar y Bobl All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 23 June Progressive People's Party Description The Progressive People's Party Candidate / Ymgeisydd Plaid Flaengar y Bobl All of Great Britain Approve 20 June Cornish Liberal Party Name Cornish Liberal Party England Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party 20 June Londependence Name Londependence England Approve 20 June Londependence Description Londependence England Reject Duplicate of party name 20 June Londependence Description #Londependence England Reject Likely to mislead voters, contains a link to online material 20 June Londependence Description The Londependence Party England Approve 20

June Londependence Description Londependence Party England Approve 20 June
Londependence Description Londependence – for London Independence England Approve 20 June
June Londependence Description Londependence – the party for London England Approve 20 June
20 June Londependence Description Londependence – the London Independence Party England Approve 20 June
Londependence Description #Londependence – for London Independence England Reject Likely to mislead voters, contains a link to online material 20 June
Londependence Description #Londependence – the party for London England Reject Likely to mislead voters, contains a link to online material 20 June
Londependence Description #Londependence – the London Independence Party England Reject Likely to mislead voters, contains a link to online material 20 June
Londependence Emblem England Approve 20 June Londependence Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters, contains a link to online material 20 June
Londependence Emblem England Approve 20 June Movement for Active Democracy (M.A.D.) Name Extinction Rebellion All of Great Britain Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 20 June Movement for Active Democracy (M.A.D.) Emblem All of Great Britain Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 20 June Newcastle upon Tyne Community First Party Name Newcastle Independents England Approve 20 June Newcastle upon Tyne Community First Party Description Newcastle First England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 20 June Newcastle upon Tyne Community First Party Description It's time to put Newcastle First England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 20 June Newcastle upon Tyne Community First Party Description Local Community Candidate England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 20 June Newcastle upon Tyne Community First Party Description Lemington First England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 20 June Newcastle upon Tyne Community First Party Description Newcastle upon Tyne Community First Party England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 20 June Newcastle upon Tyne Community First Party Description Newcastle Independent Candidate England Approve 20 June Newcastle upon Tyne Community First Party Description Newcastle Independent Community Candidate England Approve 20 June Newcastle upon Tyne Community First Party Description Newcastle Independents – Putting Denton Westerhope First England Approve 20 June Newcastle upon Tyne Community First Party Description Newcastle Independents – The Newcastle Party England Approve 20 June Newcastle upon Tyne Community First Party Description Newcastle Independents – Putting Newcastle First England Approve 20 June Newcastle upon Tyne Community First Party Description Newcastle Independents – Local Community Candidate England Approve 20 June Newcastle upon Tyne Community First Party Description Newcastle Independents - People Before Politics Always England Approve 20 June Newcastle upon Tyne Community First Party Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 20 June Newcastle upon Tyne Community First Party Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 20 June Positive Alliances Description Contract Manifesto All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 20 June Positive Alliances Description Positive Solutions All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 14 June A New Direction For The UK Name A New Direction For The UK All of Great Britain Approve 14 June A New Direction For The UK Description New Direction All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 14 June A New Direction For The UK Description A New Direction All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 14 June A New

Direction For The UK Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 14 June Democrats and Veterans Party Name Democrats and Veterans Direct Democracy Party All of Great Britain Approve 14 June Democrats and Veterans Party Name Democrats and Veterans Direct Democracy Party Northern Ireland Approve 7 June Positive Alliances Name Positive Alliances Northern Ireland Reject Confusingly similar to another already registered party 7 June Blue Revolution Description For the People Not the Party England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a description 7 June Local Alliance Emblem England Approve May 2019 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 22 May Alliance EPP: European People's Party UK Name Alliance EPP (European People's Party) UK All of Great Britain Approve 22 May Change UK - The Independent Group Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 22 May Harold Wood Hill Park Residents Association Description Independent Harold Hill Residents Association Gooshays England Approve 22 May Harold Wood Hill Park Residents Association Description Independent Harold Hill Residents Association Heaton England Approve 22 May Harold Wood Hill Park Residents Association Description Independent Harold Wood Residents Association England Approve 17 May Civic Party Name Civic Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 17 May Liberal Democrats Description Liberal Democrats - To stop Brexit All of Great Britain Approve 17 May Liberal Democrats Description Scottish Liberal Democrats – To stop Brexit All of Great Britain Approve 17 May Liberal Democrats Description Welsh Liberal Democrats – To stop Brexit / Democraidaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru - i Stopio Brexit All of Great Britain Approve 17 May The For Britain Movement Description The For Britain Movement For Brexit All of Great Britain Approve 17 May The For Britain Movement Description The For Britain Movement For Wales All of Great Britain Approve 17 May The For Britain Movement Description The For Britain Movement, For Scotland All of Great Britain Approve 17 May The For Britain Movement Description The For Britain Movement, For Freedom All of Great Britain Approve 17 May The For Britain Movement Description The For Britain Movement, For Democracy All of Great Britain Approve 17 May The For Britain Movement Description The For Britain Movement, For London All of Great Britain Approve 17 May The For Britain Movement Description The For Britain Movement: For Sovereignty All of Great Britain Approve 17 May The For Britain Movement Description The For Britain Movement, For Liberty All of Great Britain Approve 17 May The For Britain Movement Description The For Britain Movement, For Yorkshire All of Great Britain Approve 17 May The For Britain Movement Description The For Britain Movement, For Justice All of Great Britain Approve 17 May The For Britain Movement Description The For Britain Movement, For England All of Great Britain Approve 17 May The For Britain Movement Description The For Britain Movement, For Truth All of Great Britain Approve 17 May Volt United Kingdom Name Volt United Kingdom All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 5 May Local Alliance Emblem England Approve 5 May Local Alliance Emblem England Approve 5 May Sutton Residents' Party Emblem England Approve 5 May Steyning First Description Steyning First - Protecting and Enhancing Steyning England Approve 5 May UK Independent Voice Name UK Independent Voice All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 5 May UK Independent Voice Name UK Independent Voice Northern Ireland Reject Application incomplete 2 May Bolton People First Name Bolton People First England Reject Application incomplete 2 May Forward Name Forward All of Great Britain Approve 2 May Forward Description Forward For A Better United Kingdom All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 2 May Forward Description Giving Hope For The Future All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the

requirements of a Description 2 May Forward Description Bringing People Together All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 2 May Forward Description Making Communities Safer All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 2 May Forward Description For Our Childrens Future All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 2 May Forward Description Putting the United Kingdom First All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 2 May Forward Description Equality Balance and Restoring Faith All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 2 May Forward Description Forward For A Better Economy All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 2 May Forward Description Restoring Justice Law And Order All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 2 May Forward Emblem All of Great Britain Approve April 2019 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 18 April Positive Alliances Name Positive Alliances All of Great Britain Approve 18 April Radcliffe First Name Radcliffe First England Approve 18 April Radcliffe First Description Making Radcliffe a Priority England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 18 April Radcliffe First Emblem England Approve 18 April UK European Union Party (UKEUP) Name UK European Union Party (UKEUP) All of Great Britain Approve 18 April UK European Union Party (UKEUP) Description Remain! UK EU Party All of Great Britain Approve 18 April UK European Union Party (UKEUP) Description UKEUP All of Great Britain Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote. 18 April UK European Union Party (UKEUP) Description UK EU Party All of Great Britain Approve 18 April UK European Union Party (UKEUP) Description (UKEUP) Remain with Europe! All of Great Britain Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 18 April UK European Union Party (UKEUP) Description (UKEUP) The Remain with Europe Party All of Great Britain Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote; and Confusingly similar to another already registered party 18 April UK European Union Party (UKEUP) Emblem All of Great Britain Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 15 April Advance Together Name Advance Together Scotland and Wales Approve 15 April Advance Together Description The Advance Together Candidate Scotland and Wales Approve 15 April Advance Together Description Advance Together Candidate Scotland and Wales Approve 15 April Advance Together Emblem Scotland and Wales Approve 15 April Animal Welfare Party Description For People, Animals and the Environment All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 15 April Animal Welfare Party Description Animal Welfare Party - People, Animals, Environment All of Great Britain Approve 15 April Animal Welfare Party Description For People, Animals and the Environment Northern Ireland Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 15 April Animal Welfare Party Description Animal Welfare Party - People, Animals, Environment Northern Ireland Approve 15 April Atomist Description Atomist- Intelligent Revolution All of Great Britain Approve 15 April Atomist Description Intelligent Revolution All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 15 April Atomist Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 15 April Change UK – The Independent Group Name Change UK – The Independent Group All of Great Britain Approve 15 April Change UK – The Independent Group Description The Change UK candidate All of Great Britain Approve 15 April Change UK – The Independent Group Emblem All of Great Britain Reject Likely to mislead voters, contains a link to online material 15 April Christian Party "Proclaiming Christ's Lordship Name Christian Parties Alliance

"Proclaiming Christ's Lordship All of Great Britain Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 15 April Christian Party "Proclaiming Christ's Lordship Description Christian Parties Alliance All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 15 April Christian Party "Proclaiming Christ's Lordship Description Christian Parties Alliance (Scotland) All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 15 April Christian Party "Proclaiming Christ's Lordship Description Christian Parties Alliance (Wales) All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 15 April Ideal Bradford Name Ideal Bradford England Approve 15 April Ideal Bradford Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote, Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read. 15 April National Flood Prevention Party Emblem England Approve 7 April Progressive People's Party Name Progressive People's Party All of Great Britain Approve 4 April Independents for Frome Emblem England Approve 4 April Tattenhams Residents' Association Name Tattenham & Preston Residents England Approve 4 April Tattenhams Residents' Association Description Tattenham & Preston Residents Association England Approve 4 April Tattenhams Residents' Association Description Tattenham Corner & Preston Residents England Approve 4 April Tattenhams Residents' Association Description Tattenham Residents Association England Approve 4 April Tattenhams Residents' Association Emblem England Approve 4 April The Brexit Party Description Brexit Party All of Great Britain Approve 4 April The Brexit Party Description Brexit Party For Leaving the EU All of Great Britain Approve 4 April The Brexit Party Description Brexit Party For A Better Future All of Great Britain Approve 4 April The Brexit Party Description Better Off Out Of The EU All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 4 April The Brexit Party Description Nigel Farage's Brexit Party All of Great Britain Reject Likely to hinder an elector's understanding of directions for voting given on ballot papers 4 April The Brexit Party Description Brexit Party, The One to Trust All of Great Britain Approve 4 April The Brexit Party Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 4 April Wigan Standish Shevington Bryn Hindley Independents Name Wigan Independents England Approve 4 April Wigan Standish Shevington Bryn Hindley Independents Description Standish Independents part of Wigan Independents England Approve 4 April Wigan Standish Shevington Bryn Hindley Independents Description Shevington Independents part of Wigan Independents England Approve 4 April Wigan Standish Shevington Bryn Hindley Independents Description Leigh Independents part of Wigan Independents England Approve 4 April Wigan Standish Shevington Bryn Hindley Independents Description Bryn Independents part of Wigan Independents England Approve 4 April Wigan Standish Shevington Bryn Hindley Independents Description Ashton Independents part of Wigan Independents England Approve 4 April Wigan Standish Shevington Bryn Hindley Independents Description Winstanley Independents part of Wigan Independents England Approve 4 April Wigan Standish Shevington Bryn Hindley Independents Description Hindley Independents part of Wigan Independents England Approve 4 April Wigan Standish Shevington Bryn Hindley Independents Description Atheron Independents part of Wigan Independents England Approve 4 April Wigan Standish Shevington Bryn Hindley Independents Description Tyldesley Independents part of Wigan Independents England Approve 4 April Wigan Standish Shevington Bryn Hindley Independents Description HindleyGreen Independents part of Wigan Independents England Reject Contains more than six words 4 April Wigan Standish Shevington Bryn Hindley Independents Description Standish Independents England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 4 April Wigan Standish Shevington Bryn Hindley Independents Description Shevington Independents England

Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 1 April Alliance For Local Living (ALL) Name Alliance For Local Living (ALL) England Approve 1 April Alliance For Local Living (ALL) Description ALL- for people, not party politics England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 1 April Alliance For Local Living (ALL) Description Standing for Better, for ALL, Together England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 1 April Alliance For Local Living (ALL) Description ALL - Independent candidate England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 1 April Alliance For Local Living (ALL) Description ALL for Dorset, Independent candidate England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 1 April Alliance For Local Living (ALL) Description ALL Independents for Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 1 April Alliance For Local Living (ALL) Description ALL for listening and involving community England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 1 April Alliance For Local Living (ALL) Description Alliance for Local Living Independent Candidate England Approve 1 April Alliance For Local Living (ALL) Description ALL for Poole, Independent Candidate England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 1 April Alliance For Local Living (ALL) Description ALL for Bournemouth, Independent Candidate England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 1 April Alliance For Local Living (ALL) Description ALL for Christchurch, Independent Candidate England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 1 April Alliance For Local Living (ALL) Description ALL for Poole People England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 1 April Alliance For Local Living (ALL) Description ALL, Councillors working together, with neighbourhoods England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 1 April Alliance For Local Living (ALL) Emblem England Approve 1 April Alliance For Local Living (ALL) Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 1 April Alliance For Local Living (ALL) Emblem England Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 1 April Britain First Name Britain First Northern Ireland Reject Application incomplete 1 April The Best For Luton Party Name The Best For Luton Party England Approve 1 April The Best For Luton Party Description Best4Luton England Approve 1 April The Best For Luton Party Description The Best4Luton Party England Approve 1 April The Best For Luton Party Description Best for Luton England Approve 1 April The Best For Luton Party Description Best for Luton Candidate England Approve 1 April The Best For Luton Party Description The Best for Luton Candidate England Approve 1 April The Best For Luton Party Emblem England Approve March 2019 Date of decision Applicant name Type of identity mark applied for The identity mark applied for Part of the UK the application applies to Registration decision Further information/ Reason for rejection 25 March Give Me Back Elmo Party Name Give Me Back Elmo Party All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete, Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 25 March Link Party Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 25 March Newton Says No Name Newton Says No England Reject Application incomplete 25 March The People's Voice Name The People's Voice All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete, Confusingly similar to another already registered party 22 March Andover Alliance Name Andover Alliance England Approve 22 March Andover Alliance Description The Andover Alliance England Approve 22 March Andover Alliance Emblem England Approve 22 March Andover Alliance Emblem England Approve 22 March Aontú Name Aontú Northern Ireland Approve 22 March Aontú Emblem Northern Ireland Approve 22 March Bath Northeast Somerset Independent Group (BIG) Emblem England Approve 22 March Bath Northeast Somerset Independent Group (BIG)

Emblem England Reject Does not meet the minimum requirements for emblems 22 March Bath Northeast Somerset Independent Group (BIG) Emblem England Approve 22 March Buckinghamshire Residents Association Name Buckinghamshire Residents Association England Approve 22 March Buckinghamshire Residents Association Description Aylesbury Residents England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 22 March Buckinghamshire Residents Association Description Aylesbury Vale Residents England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 22 March Buckinghamshire Residents Association Description Buckingham Residents England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 22 March Buckinghamshire Residents Association Description Chiltern Residents England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 22 March Buckinghamshire Residents Association Description Milton Keynes Residents England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 22 March Buckinghamshire Residents Association Description South Bucks Residents England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 22 March Buckinghamshire Residents Association Description Wycombe Residents England Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 22 March Buckinghamshire Residents Association Emblem England Approve 19 March Best for Middlesbrough Name Best for Middlesbrough England Approve 19 March Best for Middlesbrough Emblem England Approve 19 March Green Party Emblem Northern Ireland Approve 19 March Medway People's Voice Name Medway People's Voice England Reject Application incomplete 19 March People's Vote Party Name People's Vote Party All of Great Britain Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 19 March Renew Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 19 March Renew Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 19 March Saddleworth, Yorkshire & Proud! Name Saddleworth First! England Approve 19 March Saddleworth, Yorkshire & Proud! Emblem England Approve 19 March Save Our Beeston and Holbeck Independents Emblem England Approve 19 March Tewkesbury Independents Name Tewkesbury and Twyning Independents England Approve Change of party name application 19 March The For Britain Movement Description For The Forgotten Majority All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 19 March The For Britain Movement Description The Democratic Populist Party All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 19 March The For Britain Movement Description The Popular Democratic Party All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 19 March The For Britain Movement Description For The People, For Britain All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 19 March The For Britain Movement Description For Democracy, For Britain All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 19 March The For Britain Movement Description For Our Children, For Britain All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 19 March The For Britain Movement Description For The Future, For Britain All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 19 March The For Britain Movement Description For Freedom, For Britain All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 19 March The For Britain Movement Description For Sovereignty, For Britain All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 19 March The For Britain Movement Description For Truth, For Britain All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 19 March UK Independence Party (UKIP) Description UKIP - UK Unionists Northern Ireland Approve 19 March UK Independence Party (UKIP) Description UKIP - For The Union Northern Ireland Approve 19 March UK Independence Party (UKIP) Description UKIP – Unionist For Brexit Northern Ireland Approve 19 March Westhoughton First Independents Name Westhoughton First Independents England Approve 19 March Westhoughton First Independents Emblem

England Approve 19 March Westhoughton First Independents Emblem England Approve 19 March Westhoughton First Independents Emblem England Approve 15 March Progressive Centre Party Name Centre Progressive Party England Approve Change of party name application 12 March Keep Penrith & Eden Special (KPES) Name Keep Penrith & Eden Special (KPES) England Reject Application incomplete 12 March Labour Party NI Name Labour Party NI Northern Ireland Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 12 March Polegate Residents' Association Emblem England Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 12 March Progress and Reform Party Name Progress and Reform Party All of Great Britain Approve 12 March Progress and Reform Party Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 12 March Prosper UK Name Prosper UK All of Great Britain Approve 12 March Prosper UK Description A modern political party for an independent and prosperous Britain. All of Great Britain Reject Contains more than 6 words 12 March Prosper UK Emblem All of Great Britain Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 12 March Residents for Guildford and Villages Name Residents for Guildford and Villages England Approve 12 March Residents for Guildford and Villages Description Residents for Guildford and Villages England Reject Duplicate of party name 12 March Residents for Guildford and Villages Description R4GV England Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 12 March Residents for Guildford and Villages Description Residents for Guildford and Holy Trinity England Approve 12 March Residents for Guildford and Villages Description Residents for Guildford, Clandon & Horsley England Approve 12 March Residents for Guildford and Villages Description Residents for Guildford and Worplesdon England Approve 12 March Residents for Guildford and Villages Description Residents for Guildford, Ash and Tongham England Approve 12 March Residents for Guildford and Villages Description Residents for Guildford and Send England Approve 12 March Residents for Guildford and Villages Description Residents for Guildford, Ripley and Ockham England Approve 12 March Residents for Guildford and Villages Description Residents for Guildford and Pilgrims England Approve 12 March Residents for Guildford and Villages Description Residents for Guildford and Onslow Village England Approve 12 March Residents for Guildford and Villages Description Residents for Guildford and Merrow England Approve 12 March Residents for Guildford and Villages Description Residents for Guildford and Shalford England Approve 12 March Residents for Guildford and Villages Emblem England Approve 12 March Volt United Kingdom Name Volt United Kingdom All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 11 March Alliance for Local Living (ALL) Name Alliance for Local Living (ALL) England Reject Application incomplete 11 March Brexit Express (BE) Name Brexit Express (BE) All of Great Britain Approve 11 March Brexit Express (BE) Description Take Back Control of Our Laws All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 11 March Brexit Express (BE) Description Take Back Control of Our Money All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 11 March Brexit Express (BE) Description Take Back Control of Our Borders All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 11 March Brexit Express (BE) Description Achieve a full and clean Brexit All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 11 March Brexit Express (BE) Description Promote the maintenance of the Union All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 11 March Brexit Express (BE) Description A low tax business friendly country All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 11 March Brexit Express (BE) Description Advance Free Trade Agreements All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a

Description 11 March Brexit Express (BE) Description Strong Defence Capabilities All of Great Britain Reject Does not meet the requirements of a Description 11 March Civic Party Name Civic Party England Reject Application incomplete 11 March Core Party UK Name Core Party UK All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 11 March Independence Name Independence All of Great Britain Reject Application incomplete 11 March Yarm Residents Association Name Yarm Residents Association England Approve 11 March Yarm Residents Association Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 6 March Social Democratic Party Description Social Democratic Party: Fighting For Brexit All of Great Britain Approve 6 March Social Democratic Party Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 6 March Social Democratic Party Emblem All of Great Britain Approve 4 March Bath & Northeast Somerset Independent Group Name Bath Northeast Somerset Independent Group (BIG) England Approve Change of party name application 4 March Bath & Northeast Somerset Independent Group Emblem England Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 4 March Bath & Northeast Somerset Independent Group Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 4 March Bath & Northeast Somerset Independent Group Emblem England Reject Likely to mislead voters as the words spelt out in the emblem are unable to be read 4 March British Union & Sovereignty Party Description Union & Sovereignty Party – Rebuild Britain Northern Ireland Approve 4 March British Union & Sovereignty Party Description Union & Sovereignty Party – UK Unionism Northern Ireland Approve 4 March British Union & Sovereignty Party Description Union & Sovereignty Party – Brexit Now Northern Ireland Approve 4 March British Union & Sovereignty Party Description Union & Sovereignty Party UK Northern Ireland Approve 4 March Foundation Party Description Foundation Party – We Work for you All of Great Britain Approve 4 March Foundation Party Description Foundation Party – Your Concerns, Our Priorities All of Great Britain Approve 4 March Foundation Party Description Foundation Party – Openness and common sense All of Great Britain Approve 4 March Foundation Party Description Foundation Party – Cleaning up politics All of Great Britain Approve 4 March Foundation Party Description Foundation Party – Holding politicians to account All of Great Britain Approve 4 March Foundation Party Description Foundation Party – Standing up for Brexit All of Great Britain Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 4 March Foundation Party Description Foundation party – Brexit Without Delay All of Great Britain Approve 4 March Foundation Party Description Foundation Party – No Brexit Betrayal All of Great Britain Approve 4 March Foundation Party Description Foundation Party – Leave Means Leave All of Great Britain Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 4 March Foundation Party Description Foundation Party – The Pro-Brexit Party All of Great Britain Approve 4 March Foundation Party Description Foundation Party – The Brexit Party All of Great Britain Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 4 March Foundation Party Description Foundation Party – The People's Brexit Party All of Great Britain Reject Likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 4 March Fylde Ratepayers Name Lytham St Annes Independents England Approve Change of party name application 4 March Fylde Ratepayers Emblem England Reject Contains an abbreviation which is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote 4 March Independents for Sutton Name Sutton Residents' Party England Approve Change of party name application 4 March Independents for Sutton Description Sutton Coldfield Residents' Party England Approve 4 March Independents for Sutton Description Sutton Residents' Party: Residents for Sutton Coldfield England Reject Contains more than 6 words 4 March Independents for Sutton Description Sutton

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Investigation: Liberal Democrats 2015 UK Parliamentary general election campaign spending return | Electoral Commission Search Investigation: Liberal Democrats 2015 UK Parliamentary general election campaign spending return You are in the Investigations section Home Investigations On this page Issues under investigation Pre-investigation enquiries The investigation and our findings Conclusions First published: 7 December 2016 Last updated: 7 December 2016 The Liberal Democrats The Liberal Democrats ("the Party") is a registered political party in Great Britain. The 2015 United Kingdom Parliamentary General Election ("the 2015 UKPGE") took place on 7 May 2015. Under PPERA and given that the Party's campaign spending exceeded £250,000, the registered campaigns officer of the Party 1 , Mr Tim Gordon, was required to deliver to us a financial return including all campaign spending incurred by the Party during the 2015 UKPGE campaign period, by 7 November 2015. Mr Gordon delivered this return in advance of the statutory deadline. We published this return on 20 January 2016. We later identified various items of expenditure in Liberal Democrat candidate spending returns for the 2015 UKPGE which were stated as split between the Party and the candidate and thus reportable in both returns. However, the Party element did not appear in the Party's original UKPGE return. Following enquiries with the Party, we opened an investigation on 27 June 2016. This is a report of that investigation. It is being published alongside the publication of the outcome of the investigation and the sanction imposed. Summary of outcomes In summary, we found that the Party's 2015 UKPGE campaign spending return was not a complete return as required by PPERA. Accordingly, Mr Gordon committed one offence under PPERA and the Party has been fined £20,000, this being the maximum fine that we may impose. In addition, we identified information raising the suspicion that Mr Gordon may have knowingly or recklessly signed a false declaration that the spending return was complete. This is an offence under section 83(3) of PPERA. We do not have the powers to sanction this offence, and the matter was therefore referred to the Metropolitan Police Service on 24 November 2016. Issues under investigation The scope of the investigation On 20 January 2016 we published the Party's 2015 UKPGE spending return on our online registers database. The return listed 1,335 items of spending incurred in Great Britain, totalling £3,539,106. As part of the Commission's monitoring function, set out in section 145 of PPERA, a review of candidate expenditure returns from the 2015 UKPGE was conducted. Candidate returns from a number of parties, including four from the Liberal Democrats, were selected for the review. The review identified discrepancies on a Liberal Democrat candidate return 2 between the values of three items reported as incurred by the candidate and the total of the three supporting invoices. These discrepancies were the result of the invoice value being apportioned between the Party and the candidate. We reviewed the Party's spending return to verify that the apportioned items had been reported by the Party, but concluded that the apportionments had not been included in the Party return. Subsequent enquiries identified that various other items of expenditure, apportioned to the Party in other candidate returns, also did not appear on the Party's national expenditure return 3 . Enquiries were undertaken with the Party to identify missing items or to explain discrepancies between amounts apportioned to the Party within candidate returns and the amount reported by the Party. Following these enquiries an investigation was launched on 27 June 2016. The investigation focussed on the following two matters: Whether the Party's campaign spending return for the 2015 UKPGE was a complete statement of all campaign payments made. Failures, without reasonable excuse, in relation to this constitute an offence under section 82(4) of PPERA. Whether the Party's campaign spending return for the

2015 UKPGE contained all invoices and receipts related to the statement of payments of over £200 made. Failures, without reasonable excuse, in relation to this may constitute a separate offence under section 82(4) of PPERA. The legal framework The legal framework In accordance with section 24 of PPERA the registered treasurer of a party is responsible for compliance on the part of the Party with all parts of PPERA, unless the Party has a registered campaigns officer. In accordance with section 25 of PPERA, where a party has a registered campaigns officer, such as the Liberal Democrats, they are responsible for ensuring compliance with parts V to VII of PPERA. This includes the preparation and submission of reports prepared under section 80 of PPERA. Section 80(2) of PPERA requires the registered campaigns officer of a party to prepare a campaign spending return at the conclusion of a UKPGE campaign period. Section 80(3) requires that the return contains: a statement of all payments made in respect of campaign spending incurred during the campaign period; a statement of all disputed claims (where the campaigns officer refuses to pay the claim) of which the campaigns officer is aware; and a statement of all the unpaid claims (if any) of which the campaigns officer is aware Section 80(4) requires that the return contains: all invoices or receipts related to the payments (of value greater than £200); and a declaration of all notional spending. Section 82(1) of PPERA requires the registered campaigns officer of a party which incurred more than £250,000 of campaign spending to deliver the campaign spending return within six months of the end of the relevant campaign period. For the 2015 UKPGE, which took place on 7 May 2015, the deadline for delivering the return was 7 November 2015. Under section 82(4)(b) of PPERA, the registered campaigns officer commits an offence if, without reasonable excuse, he or she delivers a return which does not comply with the requirements of section 80(3) or (4) of PPERA. Pre-investigation enquiries Under our monitoring functions set out in section 145 of PPERA, we reviewed a sample of candidate returns from the 2015 UKPGE. These candidate returns were required by the Representation of the People Act 1983 ("the RPA") to include all election expenses incurred by those candidates. The review included Liberal Democrat Party candidates, as well as candidates from other parties. As set out above, we identified apparent discrepancies between the Party's spending return and certain candidate returns, so made enquiries. On 19 April 2016 we wrote to one candidate and their agent to seek clarification on the way three items had been reported in the candidate return 4 . A response to our enquiry was received from the Liberal Democrat Compliance Unit on 3 May 2016. The response explained that the discrepancy between the value of each of the three items, reported as incurred by the candidate, and the value of their invoices, was because some of the value had been apportioned to the Party 5 . We were unable to locate any items on the Party's return which matched the value apportioned to the Party in the candidate return. Consequently, we asked the Party to identify the three items of national expenditure, totalling £6,317, on its UKPGE spending return, and to explain how such apportionments were managed. The Party replied on 3 June 2016 setting out the system it used at the 2015 UKPGE to identify and collate party campaign expenditure. This includes spending incurred on behalf of the Party by Party branches, known as accounting units. Liberal Democrat accounting units are given authority by the central Party to incur campaign spending on its behalf, which must be recorded and reported to the Party. The Party also confirmed that the three items identified by us had not been included on the Party's original return and offered to report them. Upon receipt of this information, we conducted further analysis of other Liberal Democrat candidate returns 6 .The analysis identified 27 items of expenditure, totalling £20,691, that could not be located on the Party's return but appeared to

have been apportioned to the Party by three candidates. On 10 June 2016, we told the Party to report the three items of expenditure missing from its spending return. We also detailed the further 27 items of Party expenditure that appeared to be missing from the Party's return, and advised the Party that it was concerned that the Party's 2015 UKPGE return was not complete. We asked the Party to review all Liberal Democrat candidate expenditure returns to ensure that all items of expenditure apportioned to the Party had been reported. The Party were advised to report any items they identified as missing and confirm that all items of expenditure had been reported to us. The Party responded on 17 June 2016 clarifying that three of the apparently missing items of apportioned expenditure were in the Party return, but the amounts had been incorrectly reported. These errors were put down to accounting unit treasurers recalculating the percentage of Party spend incorrectly which had resulted in a net under declaration of £2.82. The Party also agreed to conduct a review of its spending at the 2015 UKPGE. Given our concern that the Party's return was incomplete and that an offence under PPERA may have been committed, an investigation was commenced on 27 June 2016. We then awaited the outcome of the Party's review. The investigation and our findings The Party cooperated with our enquiries throughout the investigation. Missing campaign spending The Party concluded its review on 25 August 2016. It resulted in an additional 307 payments being reported to us. The 307 additional items included 27 payments totalling £26,714 that had been identified by us as missing from the Party's original return. The items also included a further 280 payments totalling £157,962 identified by the Party during its review. In total the 307 payments were made up of 258 individual payments totalling £144,063 and 49 notional payments totalling £40,614. Each additional item of spending was incurred by or on behalf of one of the Party's accounting units. The total value of the additional payments is £184,676, which when added to the Party's original return (and £2.82 under-declaration), increases the total expenditure incurred by approximately 5% from £3,529,106 to £3,713,785. Outstanding invoices The Party supplied 128 invoices in support of the 307 additional items of expenditure reported. Of the additional invoices, 122 were in support of payments exceeding £200, totalling £134,612. None of the additional invoices supplied by the Party related to items of expenditure which had previously been included within the Party's original return. Explanation provided by the Party The Party explained its system for compiling the 2015 UKPGE spending return broadly worked as follows:- Guidance was issued to agents and registered accounting unit treasurers, and treasurers were given delegated authority to incur Party campaign spending. All Party material was created and approved centrally and given a code to be quoted back to the Party on accounting unit returns where it was used. All template material was created centrally and was given a code to be quoted back to the Party on accounting unit returns where it was used. After the 2015 UKPGE, all accounting units were required to complete a form, either reporting all Party spending incurred or reporting nil spending if appropriate. Forms that were not supplied by a deadline given by the Party were chased by the Party's Compliance Unit right up until the Party's auditors began auditing the Party's return. The Party employed a risk assessment process when chasing outstanding returns. This was based on factors such as the Party's own experience of dealing with treasurers and accounting units on spending returns, donations and accounts returns, turnover declared within their accounts and the volume and value of donations previously declared. During the investigation and when making representations on our proposal to penalise the Party, it explained that the missing spending in its return had resulted from: One particular accounting unit having significant organisational

problems after the election, in part caused by the serious illness of a key accounting unit official. These led to difficulties across the board for the particular accounting unit in terms of producing accounts and donation reports, as well as their Party spending report. Inaccurate reports from seven accounting units. Reports from five accounting units that were received after external auditors had begun the audit of the return, but prior to the submission of the return. The Party stated that its external auditors told it that these payments could not be added to its return at this point. The unexpected absence of the Party's Head of Compliance and Constitutional Support for serious health reasons. Redundancies amongst staff employed by accounting units, which were not within the control or responsibilities of the central Party. The loss of experienced internal resource as a result of major organisational changes within the Party following the result of the 2015 UKPGE, the loss of 49 out of 57 parliamentary seats and further the diversion of resources to conduct a leadership election for the Party. Our findings on the Party's explanation None of these factors constituted a reasonable excuse for the Party's incomplete spending return. The Party's internal system for collating information from accounting units was within its control, as was the ability to dedicate resources to appropriately manage such a system. Large and complex political parties require appropriate financial procedures to manage and account for all of their transactions, including payments incurred by or on behalf of the Party and its accounting units. There is always a risk of human error. However, this risk can be mitigated through the creation and review of adequate financial procedures, through training and through oversight and supervision of professional and voluntary staff. Further, the 2015 UKPGE was a major electoral event. A party with the campaigning experience of the Liberal Democrats should have adequate and robust internal financial procedures in place to meet the reporting obligations arising from the election. The Party's campaigns officer was responsible for ensuring that robust financial procedures were in place to deal with any unexpected issues that could arise, such as the unforeseen illness of a key member of staff. It appears that there was a significant reliance on the Head of Compliance and Constitutional Support's personal knowledge inherent in the system, and this was a contributing factor. We do not consider it appropriate for a compliance system of a larger party spending significant sums of money to rely overly on one individual's personal knowledge. The Party's reliance on accounting units to return forms to the central party reporting Party spending (or confirming a nil return) cannot be relied upon, unless the Party can also dedicate resources to appropriately manage such a system. Such events warrant high levels of compliance to ensure voters can have confidence in the transparency and integrity of political finance. Representations made by the Party on our proposed sanction On 10 November 2016, we issued a notice to the Party setting out our conclusion that Mr Gordon had committed an offence under section 82(4) in delivering an incomplete spending return, and proposing a sanction of £20,000. As required under PPERA, we gave the Party 28 days to make representations on its conclusions and proposed sanction. Those representations were then considered before final decisions on the offence and sanction were taken. The Party were asked to supply evidence of the instructions it purportedly received from its external auditors not to add further spending to the return once the audit had begun, in order that this could be considered as part of its representations, but did not do so. We therefore had no clear evidence to support whether the instructions were given or properly understood by the Party. If given, such instructions would be wrong, as it is not for the auditor to determine whether a spending return is complete. We are not aware of any other party receiving such

instructions from an auditor. We noted that the Party could have contacted us for advice upon receipt of any such instructions, or at any point afterwards. In any event, PPERA places an obligation on a registered campaigns officer to submit a complete and accurate return. This obligation is not changed by instructions from an auditor or any other person not to include campaign spending payments. The Party raised the potential that treasurers in its accounting units may have committed offences under section 76 of PPERA, by not notifying it of Party campaign spending as soon as possible after paying it. To date, the Party has not supplied evidence of any offences under section 76 occurring. If it does so, we will consider the matter in line with our enforcement policy. Irrespective of any offences, however, the Party had a compliance process in train to obtain these returns and in many cases was notified of relevant payments before submitting its return. The matter was therefore within the control of the compliance systems for which Mr Gordon had responsibility. Of particular concern to us was the fact that the explanation provided by the Party made it clear that it was aware of some of the missing payments before the spending return was submitted. The Party stated that it found itself in a position where it faced either submitting a return that included the vast majority of its spending on time, or being penalised for submitting a complete return after the deadline. At no point prior to the submission of the return in November 2015, or between then and when we approached it on this matter in June 2016, did the Party tell us that the return was incomplete. No advice was requested on the instructions purportedly received from the Party's auditors, or on how to take forward any issues with the accuracy or content of the return. PPERA is clear that spending returns must be complete and accurate, and on time, when they are submitted. As a well-established Party with a long history of corresponding with us, the Party should have known to approach us on this matter as early as possible. It was a significant failing by the Party that it did not report this matter. Assurances sought from the Party post-investigation During the investigation, the Party's campaigns officer confirmed that, as a result of the issues highlighted by this matter, the Party had reviewed its systems for compiling party returns at elections and referendums. We advised the Party to ensure this review took into account the various factors that led to an incomplete return for the 2015 UKPGE. In response, the Party explained that it had amended its process for compiling party spending by accounting units, and had developed a new training package for accounting unit treasurers. In addition, the Party has confirmed it is conducting a wider review of its financial compliance processes. We will continue to seek assurances from the Party concerning the findings of its wider review of its processes, specifically on the changes it will make and how and when these will be implemented. Conclusions Offence under section 82(4) of PPERA Mr Tim Gordon, the registered campaigns officer for the Party, failed to deliver to us a campaign spending return which was a statement of all payments made by the Party in respect of its campaign for the 2015 UKPGE. In total 307 payments totalling £184,676 were missing from the Party's 2015 UKPGE campaign spending return without a reasonable excuse. The return therefore failed to comply with section 80(3) of PPERA. In total the missed 307 payments also resulted in 122 invoices in support of such payments being missing. As these were in support of items omitted from the original return only, the failure to include them was part of the same offence under section 84(2). We concluded that Mr Gordon committed one offence under section 82(4)(b) of PPERA in respect of the Party's 2015 UKPGE spending return. Penalty imposed We have imposed a financial penalty on the Liberal Democrats of £20,000. In determining this penalty we took into account a number of mitigating and aggravating

factors. We took into account the Party's cooperation during the investigation. We also considered the extent and value of the missing payments and the overall detriment to transparency in political caused by this offence. We considered the fact that the Party is an established organisation with significant campaign spending. Based on those factors, and recognising the potential damage to public confidence in the controls we regulate and the importance of ensuring future compliance by both the Liberal Democrats and others, we considered that a variable monetary penalty of £20,000 was appropriate. However, we noted that the failure by the Party to notify it that the return was incomplete prior to submission or at any point afterwards was a significant aggravating factor. This would have made a penalty in excess of £20,000 appropriate, were this not the maximum we may impose for a single offence. Potential criminal offence under section 83(3) of PPERA required the Party's campaigns officer to declare that he had examined the return and that, to the best of his knowledge and belief, the return was complete and correct as required by law. A declaration by the campaigns officer to that effect was delivered alongside the Party's 2015 UKPGE. Knowingly or recklessly making a false declaration under this section is a criminal offence under section 83(3) of PPERA. Such offences fall outside the remit of our civil sanctioning powers. This investigation established that the Party's 2015 UKPGE spending return was neither complete nor correct. Further, the evidence provided by the Party indicates that some persons within the Party were aware of some of the missing payments before the spending return was submitted. Consequently some persons within the Party were aware that the return was not complete nor correct prior to the campaigns officer signing the accompanying declaration, raising the potential that it was a false declaration. We have referred this issue to the Metropolitan Police Service. It will be a matter for the police as to what steps they take following the Commission's referral.

1. In accordance with section 25 of PPERA, where a party has a registered campaigns officer, they are responsible for ensuring compliance with Parts V to VII of that Act, as opposed to the party treasurer. This includes the submission of campaign expenditure returns in respect of a UKPGE ■ Back to content at footnote 1

2. Sir Bob Russell (Colchester). There is no suggestion that the data reported by the candidate and agent within the candidate return was wrong. ■ Back to content at footnote 2

3. It is the legal responsibility of the Party's registered campaigns officer to ensure a party's spending return is a complete statement of all payments made by, or on behalf of, the Party. The Commission does not proactively review on a line by line basis whether a party's spending return is complete and accurate prior to publication as it is important to publish the information proactively as soon as possible after we receive it to ensure the greatest transparency around spend and to inform the media's reporting of the issue. The Commission will take appropriate action where it has credible evidence that a failure to comply has occurred and where it is proportionate to do so ■ Back to content at footnote 3

4. Sir Bob Russell (Colchester). There is no suggestion that the data reported by the Candidate and agent within the candidate return was wrong. ■ Back to content at footnote 4

5. Where spending applies to both a party and a candidate's campaign, the spending must be split accordingly between campaigns. In such circumstances an honest assessment, based on the facts, must be made to determine the proportion of spending that can be fairly attributed to the Party and candidate. Spending apportioned to the Party must be included in the Party's spending return. ■ Back to content at footnote 5

6. Ed Davey (Kingston and Surbiton), Tim Farron (Westmorland and Lonsdale) and Mark Williams (Ceredigion). There is no suggestion that the data reported by the Candidate and agent within each

candidate return was wrong. ■ Back to content at footnote 6 Related content Report: Voting in 2017 Read our report about voting at the general election in 2017 Testing the EU referendum question Find out about our testing of the EU referendum question Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run Results and turnout at the 2017 UK general election View the results and turnout at the 2017 general election

6. Making sure electoral law is fair and effective | Electoral Commission Search

6. Making sure electoral law is fair and effective You are in the Corporate plan 2022/23 to 2026/27 section Home Our plans and priorities Corporate plan 2022/23 to 2026/27 On this page Supporting effective consideration and implementation of legislation in the UK, Scottish and Welsh parliaments Focus on Wales and on England Engaging with governments' current electoral law reform agendas, while continuing to make the case for further reform Continuing to provide expert advice on the practicability and impact of any changes which could be made to improve the electoral system First published: 25 April 2022 Last updated: 25 April 2022 Summary Our electoral system is underpinned by a legal framework which establishes how elections are delivered. It sets out who is allowed to vote and the various ways they can cast their vote. It sets out who can stand for elections, who can campaign, and how much they can spend. And it sets out how electoral administrators should deliver elections, including counting and declaring the results. Given its cross cutting impact, we want to work with parliamentarians and governments to improve electoral law so that it is fit for purpose, reduces complexity, inefficiencies and risk, and enables innovation. We will work with others to reform electoral law by: supporting effective consideration and implementation of legislation in the UK, Scottish and Welsh parliaments engaging with governments' current electoral law reform agendas, while continuing to make the case for further reform continuing to provide expert advice on the practicability and impact of any changes which could be made to improve the electoral system Supporting effective consideration and implementation of legislation in the UK, Scottish and Welsh parliaments We will continue to scrutinise new electoral legislation and provide expert briefings to governments and parliaments on legislative proposals. We will focus on providing an evidence-based analysis of any proposed changes to electoral law, to support informed consideration of any changes. We will also work to support effective implementation of any new legislation, ensuring that voters, electoral administrators and campaigners understand what it means for them in each case. Focus on Wales and England Focus on Wales: Electoral reform We will work closely with the Welsh Government and the Senedd as they develop legislation for Welsh elections. This may include reform ahead of the next local government elections in May 2022, a wider local government elections Bill and reform of Senedd elections ahead of the 2026 polls. We will provide advice on the practical implementation of proposals which reflect the views of the electoral community. Through our role in designing forms and our public awareness activity, we will also play a key role in implementing any changes, such as making the postal voting system more accessible. We also expect to play a key role in evaluating and publishing a report on the piloting of any reform measures, which may include early voting centres, mobile polling stations and voting in educational establishments. Focus on England: Developing capacity to support implementation of change We will continue to work with partners across the electoral community to develop and implement solutions to support local authorities to increase the capacity and resilience of their electoral services functions. This will not only help to manage the existing known risks to the delivery of well-run elections, but will also provide a firm foundation for the effective implementation of changes to electoral law. A key focus will be the development of a toolkit to support local authorities with designing and reviewing their electoral services functions, ensuring they have the skills, resources and processes that they need. Engaging with governments' current electoral law reform agendas, while continuing to make the case for further reform There is an urgent need for governments to simplify and modernise electoral law. It

is increasingly complex, which is not just a technical or legal problem. There are real costs and consequences for voters, campaigners and electoral administrators, as well as for the regulators and enforcement bodies which struggle to uphold and enforce the law. The UK's Law Commissions have produced a blueprint for simplified and modernised electoral law, which is supported by us, parliamentary select committees, electoral administrators, electoral lawyers and academics. We will continue to make the case for the implementation of this electoral law reform, while supporting parliamentarians and governments with reform when it happens. Continuing to provide expert advice on the practicability and impact of any changes which could be made to improve the electoral system. We want to maintain high levels of public confidence in the electoral process, including perceptions of the legitimacy of the results. We will continue to research public attitudes to understand how the electoral system could be improved to meet voters' needs. We will also continue to conduct research on the delivery of and participation in elections and referendums, and use this research to identify reforms to electoral law and process that would improve them. We will continue to support governments to successfully implement changes to electoral law, and will provide evidence-based recommendations, expertise and practical advice. Technological advances in digital campaigning bring new challenges, and we know that lack of transparency is already a concern for voters. Results from our 2021 public opinion tracking survey show that 37% of people disagree that they can find out who has produced the political information they see online. And, 40% are concerned about how or why online political adverts are targeted at them. We will therefore continue support to governments to implement our recommendations on digital campaigning, while encouraging further improvements.

Navigation 5. Supporting local electoral services delivery and resilience Section 5 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan 7. A modern and sustainable electoral system Section 7 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan

Confidence assessment: findings and recommendations | Electoral Commission Search

Confidence assessment: findings and recommendations You are in the May 2019 voter identification pilot schemes section Home Our research Voter identification pilots May 2019 voter identification pilot schemes First published: 23 July 2019 Last updated: 23 July 2019 Intro In May 2019, 10 pilot schemes trialled ways of implementing identification of voters at polling stations. This is an assessment of the confidence in each type of identification. There are some technical recommendations to improve the strength, integrity and usability of this voter ID model, which would benefit the security of the process for operation at a larger scale. Background Richard Dykes was asked by the Electoral Commission to undertake an independent assessment of the security provided by each of the different types of identification used at the May 2019 pilot schemes to feed into its evaluation. The Commission was interested in: The level of security provided by each ID document for each model The extent the issuing process can provide identity assurance The extent the checking process can provide identity assurance Recommendations on the issuing and checking processes to improve assurance Background The May 2019 pilot schemes Although voters at polling stations in Great Britain do not currently need to show ID to vote, the UK Government is exploring ways in which voters in Great Britain could be required to show a form of ID before they vote at polling stations in future. The Electoral Commission is responsible for evaluating the Government's second tranche of voter identification (ID) pilot schemes, trialling voter identification measures in ten local authorities for the May 2019 local elections. The evaluation of the pilot schemes cannot judge whether the requirement to show identification prevented fraud occurring at these elections. This security assessment seeks to address that gap by objectively considering how secure each identification type used is as a form of voter identification. This report provides a comparative assessment of the level of confidence in voter identity provided by each form of identification document. Aims of this report This voter ID assessment report explores the following aspects regarding the pilots, by: Identifying relevant common standards for identity verification, particularly as applied in relation to public service provision in the UK. Establishing a framework to review different types of ID being used in the pilots, in order to provide an assessment of the level of security provided by each of the documents used in the pilot, as a form of voter identification. Applying those standards where appropriate, to assess the degree to which the issuing process for each of the documents deemed acceptable in the 2019 pilot schemes can provide assurance about the identity of the holder. Similarly, assessing the degree to which the checking process for each of the documents deemed acceptable in the 2019 pilot schemes can provide assurance about the identity of the holder. Where feasible (taking into account the extent to which Returning Officers or Electoral Registration Officers have control over the issuing process) making recommendations about possible enhancements to the issuing process that could improve the level of assurance provided by each of the document types specifically issued as part of the 2019 pilot schemes. Making recommendations about possible enhancements to the checking process that could improve the level of assurance provided by each of the acceptable documents in the 2019 pilot schemes, including any simple additional guidelines or checks for polling station staff about what they should look for when checking ID. Framework for assuring voter identification Before the voter ID methods trialled in the pilots can be assessed, this framework establishes, contextualises and justifies the relevant factors and criteria that will be considered in this assessment. Note that processes related to anonymous, postal and proxy voting have been excluded from

the scope of this assessment, as have factors regarding eligibility to vote, by reference to nationality, address catchment or multiple residential addresses.

Framework for assuring voter identification Common standards and guidance for identity verification The UK Government has established various sets of identity related standards, containing regulations or guidance, to support the providers of public or financial services. These sources of guidance should be applied, where appropriate and beneficial for gaining sufficient confidence in the identity of their service consumers, in order to mitigate identity related risks sufficiently to transact or share personal information:

- GPG 44 - Cabinet Office GDS Good Practice Guide (GPG) 44 (currently v2.0, Oct 2014) – Authentication and credentials for use with HMG online services
- GPG 45 - Cabinet Office GDS Good Practice Guide (GPG) 45 (currently v4.1, Apr 2019) – Identity proofing and verification of an individual
- MLR 2017 - Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing and Transfer of Funds (Information on the Payer) Regulations 2017
- NDFU 2016 - Home Office NDFU Guidance on examining identity documents 2016

Many other forms of departmental, local or business sector guidance also exist which may also have some relevance to the context of voter identity, however most of these are themselves derived to some degree from one or more of the authoritative sources listed above. For example DWP have adapted such guidance to produce their current Common Standards for Identity Verification and Authentication (2017), used to support the verification of benefits claimants' identity in all channels, not just online. Similarly the MLR 2017 regulations are implemented by all banks, solicitors and estate agents to help prevent fraud and money laundering by their customers. The UK Government supports the representation of public service and business interests in the standardisation of identity practices across the EU and internationally, for example through contribution to the development and review of EU eIDAS regulations and BSI PAS 499. As such, taking guidance from the authoritative UK Government sources should be regarded as being the most appropriate way to remain aligned to EU and international standards.

Personation and related risks to electoral integrity The GPG guidance reflects distinct levels of confidence in each of the elements of identity verification and authentication, in order to address the specific need to mitigate a range of risks from low impact (non-financial) to the highest levels of fraud or national security. Likewise MLR 2017 is also primarily aimed at mitigating the risks of high value fraud. In order to make a practical assessment of the confidence in voter ID to be gained from the trialled identification approaches, or indeed any protection measures, it is important to understand the key risks to electoral integrity that may be identity related and the impact those risks could have on electoral outcome, including any potential negative impacts of the additional identity measures. The following is a non-exhaustive and qualitative review of the more relevant risks, which may also occur in combination to achieve a compromise of electoral integrity:

- Electoral identity fraud is not identified, resulting in an incorrect election outcome;
- The public do not have confidence in the integrity of results of UK elections, due to perceived threats to, or perceived weaknesses in, the UK electoral system;
- An ineligible individual registers to vote, in order to pervert the outcome of a future election;
- An individual registers a false or stolen identity as an elector, in order to pervert the outcome of a future election;
- An organised registration of multiple false, ineligible or eligible-but-unknowing individuals, in order to pervert the outcome of a future election;
- An individual is registered without their knowledge to an incorrect address, resulting in capture of the named individuals subsequent polling card, to make a personated vote;
- One or more polling cards are illegally obtained

from an address, in order to setup false voter attendance and fraudulent votes cast at polling stations; Identity mules are organised to present a set of personated identities and vote in a number of polling stations (one identity/polling card for one vote each per polling station), in order to pervert the outcome of an election; While some of these risks have occurred historically, to compromise the integrity of elections in Northern Ireland (for which NI voter ID measures were later applied), there have not been significant numbers of identified instances of personated attended voting in polling stations in Great Britain, beyond small numbers of individuals operating in isolation. The impact of isolated individuals compromising a single vote is mostly minimal, however an organised exploit to one or more voting areas could potentially throw an election, especially in a marginal area. Key principles to consider in implementing voter identification The following statements of principle are derived from both previous reviews of electoral integrity and identity assurance guidance; these should help in keeping a balanced and pragmatic view of the value of specific pilot measures for securing voter ID in the context of the overall electoral process: An identity is a combination of characteristics that identifies a person; a single characteristic is usually not enough to uniquely identify a person; Evidence of the full name, their date of birth and some personal address history is generally required to support unique identification of an individual; this may require more than one independent source of evidence that correlate to the same full name; Some meaningful degree of validation or verification of evidence is advisable to resist personation, forgery or counterfeit; Confidence in personal identity may be built up in steps at separate times, however there should be a proportionate measure to ensure the identity is in the control of only the same person at each step (i.e. from registration through to voter ID checking); The strength of any security process should be consistent across the primary journey as well as all exception handling processes; Document checking in polling stations is constrained to simple manual or technology-assisted processes requiring only minimal training and non-specialist devices, if any. Standard factors for assuring personal identification Three identity assurance processes in particular are often confused with each other, or are not otherwise differentiated adequately in use: validation, verification and authentication [of identity]. Validation and verification are both defined below, whereas authentication only relates to the need for a subsequent verification some time later than the first, where a secure token (credential) is used to ensure the same person is present on the subsequent occasion(s), as an alternative to re-proofing that identity each time. The guidance in the two GDS GPGs addresses the following aspects of identity assurance: Identity checking – “is the person who they say they are?”, Strength – the documentary or other/electronic evidence is hard to forge or counterfeit; Validity – the identity exists and the evidence is genuine and valid; Activity – evidence the identity has behaved normally in the real world over time; Fraud – no records showing that the identity is related to known fraud or high risks; Verification – that the identity belongs to the person who is claiming it; Authentication credentials – “is the person the same individual as previously?”, Quality – the documentary or electronic token is strong, and hard to crack or duplicate; Issuance – ensure the token is securely delivered intact only to the correct person; Integrity – resilient to compromises such as disclosure, replay or personation; Monitoring – recognise normal good behaviour and suspicion of misuse or theft; Checking – test the token is genuine and valid, and under the control of the owner. Like the MLR and NDFU guidance, the GPG guidance also then covers operating aspects of how to assess evidence as acceptable for the level of confidence

required in a service context. This is most pertinent to either issuing or checking identity documents or tokens. Assessment of voter identification pilots Voter identification methods trialled by the pilots In 2019 the UK Government legislated to allow pilots to take place in 10 local authorities. Authorities had a choice of three pilot types: Poll card model (or one form of photo ID) Standard poll card (used in NW Leicestershire) Technology enabled poll card (used in Mid Sussex & Watford) Mixed model (used in Braintree, Broxtowe, Craven, Derby & North Kesteven) One form of photographic ID or two forms of non-photographic ID At least one document should include a residential address Photographic model (used in Pendle & Woking) One form of photo ID only In these 2019 pilots, a consistent list of ID documents deemed acceptable was provided; this full list of accepted ID can be found at Annex A, reproduced from the Government's report on equality considerations for these pilots. In all cases, local authorities were required to offer a free locally issued ID, although local processes and designs differed. Application of standard factors to assure voter identification To bring the identity standards into the real world of the processes related to elections, it is appropriate to understand these identity assurance factors and their relevance in the context of the experience of voters engaging with the electoral processes, which may be summarised for the voter identity journey (rolling in any exception processes) as: Individual electoral registration by a voter; Validation of voter registration by the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO); Optional identity verification for issuance of a local electoral ID certificate; Issuance of a standard or technology enabled voter polling card; Voter identity checking at a polling station on behalf of the Returning Officer (RO) or Presiding Officer (PO). The standard identity assurance factors relevant to the methods trialled by the voter ID pilots may be illustrated (in general terms only here, and at differing degrees of assurance) by drawing from this voter identity journey in the following examples: Identity checking Strength – the documentary or evidence is hard to forge or counterfeit Initial voter registration only requires a declaration of a unique real world identity (full name, date of birth, some form of address) plus either a National Insurance Number (NINo, the DWP & HMRC personal record reference) and/or recent address history; Subsequent separate proofing for the pilots requires presentation of either acceptable photo ID or officially issued documents evidencing the claimed identity (many of which have no tamper-resistant security features). Validity – the identity exists and the evidence is genuine and valid At registration the NINo is checked against a DWP or HMRC data source; For some pilots, a voter may present (at a polling station) two apparently original and acceptable documents, both consistently evidencing the full name, and at least one of them showing their residential address, that must match an entry on the electoral roll; Otherwise for the pilots a voter may be required to present a polling card which they have received in the post or as a replacement in person, on which the personal details exactly match a record on the electoral roll; Activity – evidence the identity has behaved normally in the real world over time In the standards only and identity lacking Photo ID needs to be checked for evidence of activity at low assurance. Here the appropriate option is to show two or more documents evidencing the identity, which should both in combination meet the requirements of MLR 2017; Fraud – no records showing that the identity is related to known fraud or high risks There was no evident checking of voter identity or bank cards presented against a counter-fraud or identity theft black-list; Verification – that the identity belongs to the person who is claiming it There is a basic verification of the person claiming the identity at initial registration, by posting a confirmation to their registered

address; Voters are asked, as a counter-fraud measure, to verbally declare from memory their full name and registered address; polling cards and/or voter ID are not checked until after an eligible electoral roll record has been found matching the voter's declaration; A voter's address is in effect verified where both (i) the polling card is posted to that address, and (ii) that polling card is required to be presented at a polling station, where it is checked for physical authenticity (e.g. QR barcode) and/or validated against the electoral roll; A voter may present a photo ID that has a good likeness, matching the full name and potentially (not mandated) the address on the electoral roll, and the document appears to be authentic to the non-specialist polling staff checking it. Authentication credentials There are two instances in which the electoral authorities check identity and then issue a document themselves to a voter, for subsequent presentation at a polling station, effectively as a credential to link those events, are: In all cases, issuing an individual polling card by post, or a replacement in person; For some pilots, issuing a local electoral ID certificate, some with a photo. For this assessment, it is important to note that these two documents are therefore not in themselves original evidence of identity in the overall electoral process, but merely a token indicating a previous identity check by the electoral authorities. Quality A QR barcode makes successful forgery or counterfeit of a polling card more difficult, as knowledge of the coding mechanism of a valid electoral record would be required. Issuance Polling cards are generally posted to the registered address, to limit the opportunity for one getting into the hands of anyone with no access to that address; note this only adds any benefit if the polling card is actually required to be shown at polling time.

Integrity A local electoral ID certificate with a genuinely attached or printed photo likeness provides strong evidence that it was issued to the same person later showing it. Monitoring While difficult at polling time, statistical data gathered by election monitors and polling staff may later show unusual or unexpected trends in voter behaviour in particular areas, such as much higher use of one particular form of identification at polling than in other areas, thus alerting to the possibility of some external influence on that community. Checking Security features of any physical document, including type of paper or printing method, and inclusion of a testable QR barcode or a photo to check likeness. Evaluation of strength of acceptable ID documents by issuance The standards have no exhaustive list of which documentary types have what strength, however they do provide a clear scoring criteria in GPG 45 and a broad hierarchy in MLR 2017. Of those identification documents acceptable to the pilots, their value in terms just of issuance strength may be summarised as follows (See Annex A for the detailed list): List 1 High Strength (score 3+, MLR primary photo ID) These are all officially issued photo ID with security features that uniquely identify the individual and provide a unique reference to the record held by the issuer. The photo likeness binds the document to the holder, and their real world identity was first verified by the issuer. These are the passport, driver licence photocard, NI electoral ID card, biometric immigration documents, EEA photo ID cards and an MOD ID card. Medium Strength (score 2) While not as strong as the primary photo ID, the same basic criteria each still apply but to a lesser degree. Given that specialist document checking cannot be applied in a polling station, these identification documents should be just as appropriate in this context. This class of documents included a PASS age card, the various travel or parking permit photo cards and any local electoral ID certificate. GPG 45 & MLR 2017 both include a photo ID firearms certificate in this category rather than as a List 2 item in the pilots. List 2 Medium Strength (score 2, MLR primary non-photo ID, generally with date of

birth) Some officially produced documents are issued with unique references and physical security features in the paper or printing, and after robust verification or certified witnessing, although they lack a photo likeness. These carry more weight than other paper evidence as they can be validated against a data source and they are harder to forge or counterfeit. This group includes the official registration certificates for birth, adoption, marriage and partnerships plus a firearms certificate. Low Strength (score 1, MLR secondary evidence of address) These are generally documents that evidence routine living and financial activity of the individual named at their residential address, that can be uniquely referenced (e.g. by account number) with the issuing institution, and which should be required to be produced in original form on the issuers own printed headed document paper, rather than home printed from an electronic form (unless there is a QR barcode or similar validation printed). This group includes almost all other items on the pilot List 2, except for Bank Cards, Cheque Books and a National Insurance Number Card. It is worth noting that neither GPG 45 nor MLR 2017 would suggest that evidence is adequate when only two items at Low Strength are presented, however one medium strength official document (even if the address may not be current), when supported by a second item showing a recent and still current address should be acceptable. There are groups in the population who will be unable to meet this requirement due to a lack of original documents in their possession (and often without a bank account); these will generally be individuals who would also be relying on some support from benefits and charity. For the electoral context, if a letter of benefits award is offered, it could be treated as a primary non-photo document, if supported by additional secondary evidence of address (which may be transient). Bank Cards, Cheque Books and National Insurance Number Card While bank cards, cheque books and national insurance number cards are included as acceptable in List 2 for the pilots, they should be regarded as too weak a form of identification when offered in a context where they cannot be validated or verified at the time, as they do not provide a printed unique person identity alongside the numerical identifier on the card; i.e. they lack both date of birth and address information, and often no forenames. Note that while banks can verify bank cards electronically using a PIN checker and an online verification of the resulting code; this isn't available to polling stations. A counter argument could be made for bank cards that still carry a signature strip on their reverse (no longer universal) as well as a full name. This was not trialled in the pilots, however if the voter could replicate their card signature in the presence of polling staff, this would give some confidence in their ownership of the card and thus the name on it. This is however not a recommended approach due to complexity and likely exceptions. Although the National Insurance Number of the voter is the preferred validation identifier used to validate an individual's real identity following a standard electoral registration application, this identifier is not available on the electoral roll to staff in polling stations. The card cannot therefore be validated to an adequate degree to relate back to the original voter registration, and is therefore of no real value as identification at polling. Polling Cards – both standard and technology enabled In standard electoral procedures, voters are currently not required to present their polling card in order to be permitted to vote; they may simply declare their personal details which are checked against the copy of the electoral roll at the polling station. The standard polling card is generally issued by post to each elector at their registered address on the roll a few weeks ahead of polling day. It is usually a printed card bearing the full name and address (but not date of birth) of the elector, and by being posted has in effect

verified the address of its holder by polling day, unless it is a replacement collected in person using some other local procedure (if any) for identity verification. There are three contexts in which the pilots trialled further use of the standard polling card: Standard - as an optional List 2 item of secondary address evidence. Where the poll card has been posted and received by the voter, this postal verification provides a reasonable link between identity at registration and at the polling station. For most voters there will have been a validation of personal details against their National Insurance record with HMRC/DWP, and then a postal verification. As with any other secondary address evidence, any similar person (i.e. by apparent age & sex) with access to that address, and therefore access to the poll card, could attempt to personate the real person. Standard - On its own as an authentication token (in place of photo ID) In this use case only the polling card is required to be produced in order to cast a vote in the name of the associated identity on the electoral roll. In this case the real identity is validated by National Insurance record at registration, and the address verified by post (if so delivered). This is a weaker use case when the card is used on its own and not used in conjunction with another List 2 document. This is however still of some real practical value, if only at a low level, and certainly better value than providing no physical evidence at polling. Technology Enabled – on its own as an authentication token (in place of photo ID) Two pilot areas trialled use of a polling card enabled with a printed QR barcode on its reverse. Tablets with the Modern Democracy QR barcode reading and identity validation app were provided to polling stations. In issuance terms, the technology enabled polling cards follow the same processes as the standard cards. The QR barcode provides a stronger defence against attempts to forge or counterfeit a card, as the codification of the QR barcode is designed to enable the personal details on the card to be validated simply, and checked automatically against the register. There is still no verification of the person's real identity by this method; no different in this respect to any other non-photographic evidence. This does provide strong enforcement of one record only having one vote...though this has not been identified as a significant electoral integrity risk, as the one vote could still potentially be personated (e.g. in multiple occupancy dwellings). Local electoral ID certificate – with or without a photo likeness All pilots were required to have the capability to provide a form of local electoral ID certificate, and such a certificate required a photo likeness where the trial method required presentation of photo ID. The essential requirement for the capability to issue such a certificate locally is to provide a fall-back method to support those voters unable through circumstances to present standard identification documents of an acceptable type. There is less uniformity in the approaches taken and formats used for issuing a local electoral ID certificate, although generally templates to support trialling a photo ID model included a photo likeness. Some (if not all) local electoral authorities asked potential voters to offer a suitable and trusted person to demonstrate their own identity and then attest to the identity of the applicant for the certificate. They may take and/or incorporate a suitable photo likeness in the certificate issued then by post or (more likely) in person. Some authorities then incorporated a replacement polling card in the reverse of the certificate; in any case each authority (regardless of pilot group) would regard the local electoral ID certificate as the only evidence of identity that would then be required at polling. Where a local electoral ID certificate is issued without a photo likeness, the voter is thus able to meet the identity checking requirement, following the prior attestation, in circumstances where the original polling card would have been

insufficient on its own, i.e. the mixed and photo ID only pilots. This process would be superfluous in the pilots that accepted only a polling card, and was never used in such cases. As the local resources available to an electoral authority may be unable to produce and issue a document with advanced security features (such as holograms, relief printing effects or watermarks), the ID certificate with no photo likeness is a weak token to link the attested identity to the voter presenting it at a polling station, however it is certainly no worse than the standard polling card identity model. Adding a photo likeness when issued does at least provide a visual verification at the polling station that the same person is present, even though the document itself may have no meaningful security features. In practice very few local ID certificates were produced for the pilots, as most of those who actually applied already possessed adequate evidence in the form of other documents. For example Woking had 37 local certificates issued and produced to polling stations, being only 0.02% of the voters identified before voting; this is however a fairly affluent area which may not reflect the needs of more challenging areas. Evaluation of checking of identity for voting All the pilot areas have issued training materials that appear consistent with the pre-pilot common guidance on both the acceptable list of identification documents and on the procedures for voter eligibility and identity checking in polling stations. In the absence of any direct evidence, for this assessment it is assumed that all pre-polling procedures are followed as per the guidance in the five part Electoral Commission Guidance for Electoral Registration Officers. The confidence gained in the identity of a voter at polling time has been built up over all the steps by which there is interaction between that voter and the electoral authorities, so long as there is an adequate link or 'bind' between a series of separate steps over time. For this reason the evaluation of ID checking will consider the end-to-end journeys. As the methods in each polling station appear to all be consistent with the pilot method selected for trialling in each pilot area, it is only necessary to consider each of the distinct identification tests used:

Standard polling card presented Technology enabled polling card presented One form of photographic ID presented Two forms of non-photographic ID presented Local electoral ID certificate presented Standard polling card presented All electors who have previously made a successful and validated individual electoral registration will, a few weeks ahead of the election date, receive a standard polling card at their registered address. In identity terms the original polling card on its own has low evidential strength, however in process terms there has also been a basic validation of that identity against Government data, and verification of the postal address. A replacement polling card is normally marked as such and may have been issued in person; it wasn't clarified whether an ID check may be required for in person collection; In pilots where a polling card was accepted on its own, the polling station staff take the polling card and require the voter to state their name and address without reference to the card, and the stated identity is then checked against the electoral register before the polling card is then checked for a match. The voter's name and address are then called out before ballot papers are issued. These measures were applied to mitigate vote fraud, and they would certainly make organised use of identity mules harder to be convincing. On balance this method provides some validation of a real world identity with verification of address and tested knowledge of the persons claimed personal details, plus a link through from registration to voting. The user experience of this process is really no more challenging than the general process, adding only the need to save and bring their polling card to vote. This approach therefore does effectively provide a reasonable

but low degree of confidence (in terms of the verification standards) in the integrity of the resulting vote, unlike the current optional process, which does not require a poll card to be presented. Technology enabled polling card presented To the voter the process here will seem identical to the standard polling card method. An investment in technology is however required to support issuance of the polling card with a QR code, as well as the electronic scan of that code and an automated check against the electoral register in the polling station. The security benefit is a stronger authentication bind between the register record and the card presented at polling; i.e. defence against counterfeit polling cards related to existing register entries. There is no historic evidence that this form of personation attack has been attempted, and given that the real standard polling card may also be presented, the duplication would be detected to enable investigation. The technology may even reduce identity confidence, as the voter's declared identity is not manually compared with the electoral roll. This method would appear to actually offer little or no benefit to electoral integrity for the increased cost and complexity of automating the process. One form of photographic ID presented The early part of this overall process is no different to the standard polling card process, and indeed this option is offered as an alternative to the polling card paths in those pilot areas. The only difference in the checking process is that the identity check following the register eligibility check may be satisfied with a single item of acceptable medium or strong photo ID. This does however require the polling staff to have some training in recognition and basic physical inspection to determine if (to the inexpert eye) the documents are genuine and haven't been tampered with. There is no data available to determine how effective these checks were in practice, as there was no sheep dip process to sample any of the voters and their evidence. This approach is however relatively hard to attack in a bulk manner, and is therefore likely very effective as a deterrent against organised attack, even if a few dodgy documents do get accepted undetected in small numbers. There is also no strong correlation required between either date of birth or address of the voter between the photo id and the electoral register, however as the personal verification is stronger, this can be ignored safely here. From the pilots, it was apparent that a good proportion of voters do routinely carry their driving licence photocard or bus pass, and probably welcome the opportunity to vote despite forgetting to pick up their polling card. This makes this method worthwhile as an option to the mandatory presentation of a standard polling card. Two forms of non-photographic ID presented In process terms the mixed model checking process is of course the same as the other manual evidence checking methods. In principle this method provides greater confidence in the current address of the voter for correlation with the electoral register, as it goes beyond requiring just the polling card (although the polling card is an option for one piece of evidence). The process is more demanding for polling staff to check given the much wider range of potential evidence that may be produced, and the practical difficulty in differentiating genuine from home printed statements, for example. In MLR terms, the objective of this specific method is to enable correlation of a more recent/current address with official identity evidence that lacks such an address. GPG 45 has no profile that would accept a low proofing with only two weak items of evidence. In the electoral context the voter's official identity has been validated at registration, and the polling card provides a verification of current address – both with much more simplicity than the 'two documents' method here, and with frankly little different confidence in identity. Data from the Craven pilot shows that the vast majority of voters taking this option produced their polling card

supported by a bank card from their wallet; the bank card was produced as much as 10 times more often than a bank statement or utility bill. In the real world the bank card offered no proofing value in a polling station context, and the statements or bills (which are increasingly emailed to customers these days) offer little if anything in confidence in addition to a polling card. If two statements or bills are offered together stating a full name, assuming they really are both genuinely posted to the individual at the same address (not required in the pilot rules), then they should give as much confidence in voter identity as would a polling card, as all should have been obtained by post at the address. This was however a very little used option taken in the pilot at Craven for which data is available. Given the training and checking complexity, and the high chance of ineligible documents with no real proofing value being accepted, this method provides very low assurance for the effort involved. Local electoral ID certificate presented As previously stated, where the identity checking requirement is for documents issued by parties other than the local electoral authorities, then it is essential that a local electoral ID certificate or its equivalent may be provided to eligible voters who due to circumstances are otherwise unable to meet the requirement. The attestation process is probably the only appropriate identity verification method possible to enable this approach, however it should be recognised this is still only a relatively weak assurance of identity. In practical terms any of the pilots that would accept a polling card on its own would not have a need to produce a local certificate option. Individuals who also have difficulty with having their identity validated at electoral registration already have fall back methods available to them under the Guidance for Electoral Registration Officers, including attestation.

Overall Findings and Recommendations

Overall comparative assessment of confidence in voter identity

While each of the identity checking methods trialled in the pilots have strengths and some disadvantages, there is a clear baseline or benchmark with the standard polling card method, which has a low but meaningful level of assurance that can be linked to preserve a consistent level of confidence in identity throughout, from initial electoral registration to checking at a polling station. The various linked validations and verifications may not be hard to compromise in small numbers, however they should thwart and enable detection of organised or bulk attempts at compromise. At minimal cost over traditional procedures, it also provides a user journey that is accessible to nearly all voters, and straightforward opportunities for exception handling where extra support is required by those in need. The extra assurance of the QR coding of the polling card may give an impression of a positive security measure and a way to embrace the digital opportunities out there, however from a meaningful assurance perspective this is addressing a risk that is not significant and potentially enabling other exploits, as well as being costly. This does not offer a genuine assurance improvement. Although not yet trialled, capturing a digital photo as part of electoral registration (much as with bus passes) to enable a photo printed polling card may give a simpler way to provide a more positive and verifiable bind with the person throughout the journey, and still not require expensive technology in polling stations. Where voters happen to have a driving licence photocard, passport or bus pass, in particular, these enable effective identity verification with even just an inexpert physical inspection in polling stations, and may be more convenient than remembering a polling card for some. It should also deter or detect organised bulk compromise attempts. The main weakness of this approach is that a significant proportion of voters in some areas will not already have one of these List 1 documents; a method is only as good as its weakest

component, and here solving the needs of those without photo ID is the actual key to any confidence in voting integrity. This method should therefore be offered as an option for those who do find it convenient. Basic training to recognise and check just the common or popular List 1 photo ID is neither expensive nor time consuming, as has been trialled. While the two document option appears at first glance to offer a higher assurance than the polling card method for those with no photo ID, in reality the approach taken was compromised by the use of bank cards in this context, and it will be increasingly hard for polling station staff without better training and special equipment to tell apart original and home print documents in this category. As there is no meaningful bind with the electoral registration process, this approach adds nothing of value to the polling card method, and should be discontinued. Where it was trialled the actual assurance was in 90% of cases based only on presentation of the polling card as one of the two items. Finally the local electoral identity certificate was rarely used, however this must be offered in some form if photo ID is required and a polling card is not offered as the alternative. If this ID certificate is intended to be used as a single document as an alternative to a photo ID, these should really only be produced to incorporate a photo likeness. In reality if the polling card method is always to be an acceptable baseline, then the need for creating a separate local photo ID becomes redundant. A photo on the polling card would also effectively replace the need for a separate certificate process. Recommendations to enhance confidence in voter identity Consideration for electoral integrity should be taken across the complete voter user journey from individual electoral registration through to polling stations, rather than just focusing on the polling related processes; The polling card may be much as per the current standard, subject to it or a marked replacement being delivered by post to the registered address, where there is sufficient time to do so before the election date; If a late replacement polling card must be issued in person, then a meaningful identity check must be carried out and recorded at issue, based on photo ID or presentation of information that can be validated from official data sources or attestation, as is available to support electoral registration; If feasible, there should be a unique reference number marked on all polling cards, that would be different on any replacement polling card later issued; this would enable revocation of a replaced polling card in a way that enables validation of revocation status at polling time (without technology) from the electoral roll copies provided to polling stations; If feasible, the polling card should be designed to incorporate one or more security features that could be readily and manually verified by polling station staff, to enhance resistance to forgery and counterfeit fraud; Home Office NDFU should be consulted; Consideration should be given to enhance the integrity and verification of polling cards by capturing a photo likeness as part of the individual electoral registration process, for printing (in black and white if necessary) on polling cards as standard; The verbal declaration of full name and address by voters, from memory without reference to their polling card or identification documents, should be incorporated as a standard counter-fraud measure in all polling stations, regardless of future methods applied (this is an example of good practice trialled in most of the pilots in May 2019); Consideration should be given to include the date of birth, collected at individual electoral registration, in the electoral register copy used by polling stations; date of birth should then be included in the voter's verbal declaration, and validated against the electoral roll, as well as used to improve identification when the photo ID presented has no address (e.g. passports); List 1 should be retained as the formal list of acceptable photo ID documents,

however a photo ID firearms certificate should be added; List 2 should be discontinued; if List 2 is retained in some form, the list should not include bank payment cards, cheque books or the old National Insurance Number Card, as these cannot be validated in any useful form in a polling station; List 2 items from non-Government sources should as a minimum include a full name and the current address; Outside Northern Ireland, if the polling card is accepted as a form of ID, the local electoral ID certificate should be discontinued as it would become redundant; Guidance to polling station staff should include monitoring indicators (such as numbers of each identification document presented, failures of any verification steps, etc) and stress the importance of alerting the Returning Officer early, if any suspicious patterns or behaviours are noticed that could indicate a potential breach of electoral integrity; If new digital or technology-based innovations in electoral processes are considered, then the process and technology applied should be properly risk assessed and assured to ensure there is only a resulting improvement to overall electoral integrity; The automated Individual Electoral Registration process currently relies on identity validation with HMRC/DWP to check the National Insurance Number records, or access to local authority data; consideration should be given to widening or changing the choice of authoritative networked whitelist (valid identities) and blacklist (associated with known ID fraud) data sources that could be checked by using relevant personal identifiers (or by matching personal identifying information); Cabinet Office GDS should be consulted on best future practice for this (e.g. the Gov.UK Verify digital document checking service); Consideration should be given to whether the automated Individual Electoral Registration process may also in future benefit from integration with one of more networked identity providers, as may be available and officially approved, as an external source of identity validation or verification; e.g. the full Gov.UK Verify service or its future equivalent; Once feedback from polling stations who conducted List 1 document checks have been collated, a review of best practice and a revision of future guidance should be considered; Home Office NDFU guidance should also be consulted as previously; The findings and recommendations here should also be impacted against the anonymous, postal and proxy voting processes that were not considered in this assessment, as a consistent application of assurance measures is needed to maintain overall electoral integrity; attackers will always go after the weakest perceived component.

Annex Annex A - Forms of accepted ID (Pre-Pilot Equality Considerations)

List 1 - (Photo ID, Mixed ID Model, Poll Card)

Where List 1 applies, an elector needs to bring one form of ID from List 1 to verify their identity in order to be issued a ballot paper.

The following forms of ID will be accepted:

- (a) a passport issued by a Commonwealth country or a country within the European Economic Area;
- (b) a photocard driving licence (including a provisional licence) issued in the United Kingdom or by a Crown Dependency or by a Member State of the European Union;
- (c) an electoral identity card issued under section 13C (Electoral identity card: Northern Ireland) of the Representation of the People Act 1983;
- (d) a biometric immigration document issued in the United Kingdom in accordance with regulations made under section 5 of the UK Borders Act 2007([1]);
- (e) an identity card issued in the European Economic Area which bears a photograph of the voter;
- (f) a PASS scheme card (national proof of age standards scheme);
- (g) a Ministry of Defence Identity Card;
- (h) a concessionary travel pass funded by HM Government;
- (i) an Oyster 60+ pass;
- (j) a photocard parking permit issued as part of the Blue Badge scheme.

List 2 - (Mixed ID Model)

Where List 2 applies, an elector needs to bring two forms of ID from List 2 to verify their identity in order to be issued a ballot paper. At least one form of ID must contain

the elector's registered address. (a) a valid bank or building society debit card or credit card; (b) a mortgage statement dated within 12 months of the date of the poll; (c) a bank or building society statement, or a letter from the bank or building society confirming the opening of an account, dated within 3 months of the date of the poll; (d) a bank or building society cheque book or building society pass book; (e) a credit card statement dated within 3 months of the date of the poll; (f) a council tax demand letter or statement dated within 12 months of the date of the poll; (g) a utility bill dated within 3 months of the date of the poll; (h) a Form P45 or Form P60 issued within 12 months of the date of the poll; (i) a poll card for the election; (j) a birth certificate; (k) a marriage certificate or civil partnership certificate; (l) an adoption certificate; (m) a firearms certificate granted under the Firearms Act 1968([1]); (n) the record of a decision on bail made in respect of the voter in accordance with section 5(1) of the Bail Act 1976([2]); (o) a driving licence (including a provisional licence) which is not in the form of a photocard; (p) a statement of benefits or entitlement to benefits, such as a statement of child benefit within the meaning of section 141 of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992([3]), or a letter confirming that the voter is entitled to housing benefit, within the meaning of section 130 of that Act; (q) a student loan statement issued by the Student Loan Company dated within 12 months of the date of the poll; (r) a National Insurance Number card or letter issued by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. Related content Register to vote All you need to register to vote is 5 minutes and your National Insurance number. Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Party registration decisions View our decisions on political party names, descriptions and emblems Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run

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election You are in the Scottish Parliamentary elections section Home Scottish Parliamentary elections On this page Download Summary First published: 5 July 2019 Last updated: 16 April 2021 Download You can download the full dataset and results as an XLS full dataset and results as a CSV (zip file) You can also download our full report , written by David Denver. Summary The number of constituency candidates declined to 313 – the smallest number in a Scottish Parliament election to date. The four major parties – Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrats and SNP contested all 73 constituencies and there were just 21 other candidates. Of these eight were Independents, six represented the Trade Union and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), and three the Green party, leaving four others. Eight parties contested all eight regional list elections – the four major parties plus the Greens, UKIP, RISE (Respect, Independence, Internationalism and Environmentalism) and Solidarity. The SNP won 59 of the 73 constituency seats with 46.5% of the votes. The Conservatives won seven (22.0% of votes), Liberal Democrats four (7.9%) and Labour three (22.6%). In the list voting, the SNP had 41.7% of votes, the Conservatives 22.9%, Labour 19.1%, Greens 6.6% and Liberal Democrats 5.2%. UKIP led the ‘others’ with 1.9%. This earned the Conservatives 24 list seats, Labour 21, Greens six, SNP four and Liberal Democrats one. Overall, the SNP fell short of a majority in the Parliament winning 63 of the 129 seats – a decline of six compared with 2011. The Conservatives with 31 seats became the second largest party – up from 15 in 2011. Turnout at 55.8% for the constituency contests and 55.9% for the list voting was significantly higher than in 2011 (50.5% and 50.4% respectively). As in 2011, rejected ballots constituted a minuscule proportion of votes cast. The figure was 0.41% in constituency contests and 0.17% in the list elections. The comparable figures in 2011 were 0.42% and 0.34%. Across Scotland, 726,555 postal ballots were issued amounting to 17.7% of the electorate. This is the largest proportion to date. Almost 77 per cent of postal ballots issued were returned. Of these, just over 3 per cent were excluded from the counts because of failures relating to personal identifiers or noninclusion of either a ballot or statement in the return envelope. In the 63 constituencies for which data are available, new electors added to the register between December and March amounted to 3.8% of the electorate while those added between March and April constituted 2.2%. The total varied from less than 2% in two constituencies to more than 10% in four. Across 58 constituencies, electors aged 16-17 accounted for 2% of the electorate, the figures ranging narrowly from 1.1% to 2.7%. Related content Report: How the 2016 Scottish Parliament election was run View the results and turnout at the 2016 Scottish Parliament election Report on the Scottish Parliament election on 6 May 2021 Read our report about how the 2021 Scottish Parliament election was run Report: How the 2011 Scottish Parliament election was run Read our report about how the 2011 Scottish Parliament election was run Results and turnout at the 2011 Scottish Parliament election View the results and turnout at the 2011 Scottish Parliament election

Appendix 6 of the Code of Conduct for Electoral Commissioners: Nolan Principles of Public Life | Electoral Commission Search Appendix 6 of the Code of Conduct for Electoral Commissioners: Nolan Principles of Public Life You are in the Code of Conduct for Electoral Commissioners section Home Commissioners Code of Conduct for Electoral Commissioners On this page Selflessness Integrity Objectivity Accountability Openness Honesty Leadership First published: 24 January 2023 Last updated: 18 June 2023 Introduction The 'Nolan Principles' code of practice has been written with regard to the seven principles of public life identified by the Nolan Committee in their First Report on Standards in Public Life in May 1995 and subsequently endorsed by the Government. Selflessness Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. Integrity Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to an outside individual or organisation that might influence them in the performance of their official duties. Objectivity In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merits. Accountability Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office. Openness Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands. Honesty Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest. Leadership Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

These are the views we set out to parliamentarians before the Elections Act became law. We last updated these views in early 2022. Close alert Preventing candidate intimidation You are in the Elections Act section Home Elections Act On this page Changes proposed by the government Our view Further reading First published: 5 July 2021 Last updated: 5 July 2021 Last updated These are the views we set out to parliamentarians before the Elections Act became law. We last updated these views in early 2022. Changes proposed by the government The UK Government's Elections Act introduces a new penalty for anyone found guilty of intimidating candidates, campaigners or elected representatives. Anyone found guilty of this behaviour could be banned from standing for elected office for five years. This is in addition to punishments already in place for those guilty of existing intimidation offences, such as common assault, harassment, and the use of threatening language. Our view There has been increasing concern at recent elections about intimidating and threatening behaviour towards candidates and campaigners. Following the 2019 UK general election, more than half of the candidates we spoke to said they were concerned about standing for election because of the risk of intimidation, threats and abuse. Three quarters of respondents said that they had experienced this behaviour. It is vital that action is taken against those who abuse, threaten or intimidate candidates and campaigners. This behaviour cannot be allowed to discourage people from standing for election or campaigning. Banning someone from standing for elected office, as well as imposing criminal sanctions, such as a prison sentence or fine, will strengthen the deterrent against this intimidating behaviour. Further reading Further reading The Government's Written Ministerial Statement: Strengthening transparency and fairness in elections, 2021 Our response to the UK Government policy consultation: Protecting the Debate Our survey of candidates following the 2019 UK Parliamentary general election Related content Elections Act about the UK Government's Elections Act and what it means for voting and campaigning About the Elections Act about the Elections Bill, including the measures it contains and which elections it applies to. Introducing digital imprints about the proposed changes to digital imprints on election material. Changes to notional spending Read about the proposals to clarify the rules that relate to notional spending for candidates and agents.

Campaign spending at the Scottish referendum | Electoral Commission Search
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Scottish Independence Referendum Act, registered campaigners were required to
complete campaign spending returns if they spent more than £10,000 on their campaign.
If they spent £10,000 or less they were required to submit nil campaign expenditure
returns Forty-two organisations and individuals registered with as campaigners at the
referendum. Altogether, the forty-two campaigners reported spending £6,664,950 on
campaigning at the referendum. Five registered campaigners reported spending of more
than £250,000 campaigning in the regulated period, from 30 May 2014 until 18
September 2014, spending a total of £5,230,642. s spending more than £250,000 were
required to submit an independently audited return to the Commission by 18 March
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Guidance for observers of local elections in Northern Ireland | Electoral Commission Search Guidance for observers of local elections in Northern Ireland You are in the Guidance and feedback for observing elections section Home Observing elections and referendums Guidance and feedback for observing elections On this page What elections are taking place? Postal voting Postal vote opening procedure Duty to maintain secrecy Observing at polling stations Observing the verification and count First published: 14 April 2023 Last updated: 4 May 2023 May 2023 May 2023 This guidance is for electoral observers who have been accredited by the Electoral Commission. It includes information on what elections are taking place, who does what at these elections and what to expect at the electoral processes you are entitled to observe. about becoming an accredited observer What elections are taking place? On Thursday 18 May 2023, 462 councillors will be elected across the 11 councils in Northern Ireland. In each council election councillors are elected to represent a District Electoral Area (DEA). This guidance is for accredited observers in Northern Ireland. There is separate guidance available for observers in England, Scotland, and Wales. What can I observe? As an accredited observer you are entitled to attend: the issue and receipt of postal ballot papers the poll the verification and counting of the votes We have published a Code of Practice for electoral observers. You must comply with the standards of behaviour set out in this Code. You do not need to tell electoral officials that you want to observe proceedings; by law you have a right to attend as detailed above. However, if you do tell them, they may be able to provide you with some relevant local and practical information, for example a list of polling stations or adaptations made to venues for accessibility purposes. You can still make unannounced visits or change your plans if you want to. Who can vote in these elections? A person can vote in these elections if they are: included on the electoral register at least 18 years of age on the day of election a British, Irish, qualifying Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of the European Union What voting method will be used? The Single Transferable Vote (STV) system will be used for these elections. The instructions on the ballot paper will tell voters to rank the candidates in order of preference. Mark a '1' next to their first choice, '2' next to their second, '3' by their third, and so on. They can vote for as few or as many candidates as they like – it's entirely their choice. Who does what at the local council elections? The Returning Officer The Returning Officer for all elections in Northern Ireland is the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO). The CEO is also the Registration Officer for the whole of Northern Ireland and is responsible for maintaining the register of electors and the absent voters list. You can contact them as follows: Chief Electoral Officer 3rd Floor St Anne's House 15 Church Street Belfast BT1 1ER Tel: 028 9044 6680 Email: info@eoni.org.uk The Electoral Office for Northern Ireland (EONI) is the collective name for the staff who assist the Chief Electoral Officer in the performance of their statutory duties. Deputy Returning Officers At local council elections in Northern Ireland the Chief Executive of each council act as Deputy Returning Officer (DRO). Their responsibilities include: receiving candidate nominations publishing the statement of persons nominated and notice of poll managing the verification and count of ballot papers receiving returns and declarations of election expenses Find the contact details for all DROs The Electoral Commission . Our contact details are: The Electoral Commission Ground Floor 4 Cromac Place The Gasworks Belfast BT7 2JB 0333 103 1928 Email: infonorthernireland@electoralcommission.org.uk Postal voting Voters in Northern Ireland can apply for a postal vote if they are unable to make it to their polling station in person on polling day. They must provide a valid reason as to why they

cannot attend, for example because of illness, disability, holiday or work arrangements. The EONI starts to send postal voting packs to postal voters around two weeks before polling day. Completed postal ballot papers must be returned by 10pm on polling day. You are entitled to attend both the issuing of postal voting packs and postal vote opening sessions. The notice of issue and opening of postal votes times can be found on EONI's website. What happens at a postal vote issuing session? At the issuing session, postal voting packs will be put together. The packs will include:

Envelope A – this is the envelope that the elector returns their ballot paper in. It is marked with the letter 'A' and the words 'ballot paper envelope'

Envelope B – this is the envelope that the elector will use to return the ballot paper envelope and the postal voting statement. It is marked with the letter 'B' and the address of the EONI

The postal voting statement – this contains the elector's name, the number of the ballot paper issued to them, instructions on how to vote by post and space for the elector to sign and provide their date of birth

The ballot paper

Postal voting packs will then be delivered to electors by post.

What happens at a postal vote opening session? Postal voters must complete and return a postal voting statement which includes their signature and date of birth, as well as their ballot paper. An appointed representative of the Chief Electoral Officer will decide whether or not the date of birth and signature provided by electors on their postal voting statements matches the signature and date of birth previously provided. If they do not match, the postal vote will be rejected. Staff will explain the postal vote opening process to you. They may issue you with information on the procedures to be followed during the opening session, including instructions on what you can and cannot do at the session. You should comply with any instructions that the Chief Electoral Officer or staff have given.

Ballot papers will be kept face down throughout a postal vote opening session. Anyone attending an opening session must not attempt to see how individual ballot papers have been marked.

Postal vote opening procedure

Stage 1 Step 1: Open the postal voters' ballot box.

Step 2: Count and record the number of covering envelopes (Envelopes 'B')

Step 3: Open the covering envelopes (envelopes 'B') and remove the postal voting statement and ballot paper envelope (envelope 'A')

Step 4: Mark all returned postal vote statements on the postal/postal proxy list to show it is returned

If not all parts of the postal vote have been returned:

Step 5: Mark the envelope 'provisionally rejected', attach contents and add to the rejected votes packet.

Add to the lists as appropriate:

- the list of ballot papers received without a valid (or any) postal voting statement
- the list of ballot paper numbers of postal voting statements received without a ballot paper.

See Stage 4.

Stage 2 Step 1: Verify the personal identifiers on the returned postal voting statements

Step 2: Separate the ballot paper envelopes from the postal voting statements and keep both in order

Step 3: Determine those postal voting statements that are missing a date of birth and/or signature or where either/both do not match those held on the identifier record. Adjudicate those and reject where either are not included or you are not satisfied that the statement is duly completed.

Invalid postal voting statements are rejected. The statements, ballot paper and envelopes are marked 'rejected' and placed in the receptacle for rejected votes

Postal voters who have been granted a waiver only need to complete their date of birth

Step 4: Check the number on the postal voting statement matches the number on the ballot paper envelope (envelope "A"). After matching, package up the postal voting statements and seal the packet.

If the numbers do not match:

Step 5: Open the envelope. If the ballot paper matches the statement, it is valid and should go in the postal ballot box. Non-matching ones should be provisionally rejected.

Stage 3 Step

1: Open the ballot paper envelopes (envelopes 'A') If the ballot paper is inside the envelope: Step 2: Remove the ballot paper(s), ensuring they are kept face down at all times Step 3: Check the number on the ballot paper envelope (envelope 'A') against the number on the back of the ballot paper Step 4: Keep the ballot papers face down at all times. Don't look or allow others to look at the votes marked on the ballot papers. Step 5: Place ballot papers in the postal ballot box or appropriate receptacle and proceed to Stage 5. If the ballot paper number does not match: Step 2: Attach the ballot paper to the envelope Step 3: Mark it as 'provisionally rejected' and put it in the receptacle for rejected votes Step 4: Add to the both the list of ballot papers received without a valid postal statement and the list of ballot paper numbers of postal voting statements received without a ballot paper If there is no ballot paper inside the envelope: Step 2: Mark 'provisionally rejected' and put in the receptacle for rejected ballot paper envelopes. Step 3: Add to the list of ballot paper numbers of postal voting statements received without a ballot paper. Stage 4 Step 1: To match up separated documents, check the two reject lists against all ballot papers/postal voting statements that have been returned separately from their corresponding postal voting statement/ballot paper and, if possible, match them up The two lists must be taken to the final opening of postal votes to carry out any final matching Step 2: Record any successful match on the relevant lists Step 3: Place the ballot papers that are no longer to be treated as provisionally rejected in the postal ballot box or appropriate receptacle and place the accompanying postal voting statements in the appropriate receptacle. Stage 5 Step 1: Count and record the total number of ballot papers, keeping the ballot papers face down at all times Actual votes are not counted at this stage Step 2: Place the ballot papers in the postal ballot box, which much be sealed at the end of each opening session and stored securely Step 3: Complete postal vote ballot paper account Duty to maintain secrecy The Returning Officer or their representative will give you a copy of the statutory Requirement of Secrecy. Anyone attending a postal vote opening must comply with this. Ballot papers will be kept face down throughout a postal vote opening session. Anyone attending an opening session must not: attempt to see how individual ballot papers have been marked attempt to look at identifying marks or numbers on ballot papers disclose how any particular ballot paper has been marked pass on any such information gained from the session Anyone found guilty of breaching these requirements can face an unlimited fine, or may be imprisoned for up to six months. Observing at polling stations You are entitled to observe inside polling stations. You can find a list of polling stations on the EONI website . When are polling stations open? Polling stations will be open between 7am and 10pm on Thursday 18 May 2023. You are permitted to arrive shortly before this to observe the sealing of the ballot box(es) prior to the poll opening. What will the inside of the polling station look like? The layout within each polling station may differ, but it may look similar to the images below: Who can vote at polling stations? Any person on the polling station's electoral register can vote at the polling station in a local election, unless: they are a registered postal voter they are a registered proxy voter, and their proxy has already voted for them or has applied to vote on their behalf by post they are not 18 years of age or older on polling day they are registered as an overseas elector Electors receive a poll card before the election telling them where they can vote. Who is allowed to be in the polling station? The following people are entitled by law to be present in a polling station: voters persons under the age of 18 who accompany voters companions of disabled voters candidates and their election agents polling agents the Returning Officer, the DRO and their staff the Presiding Officer and

clerks constables on duty Electoral Commission representatives observers accredited by the Electoral Commission What do polling agents do? Candidates can appoint polling agents to be present at any polling station. Only one polling agent for each candidate may be present at the same time. The main role of a polling agent is to detect personation (when an individual votes as someone else – whether that person is living or dead or is a fictitious person). Other duties that the polling agents may undertake include: checking that the ballot box is empty at 7am being present when the Presiding Officer marks a ballot paper on behalf of a voter being present at the close of poll to observe the sealing up of the ballot box and other packages attaching their own seal to the ballot box or any packet in addition to the official seal What happens in a polling station? Polling station staff will: ask voters for their name and address, and make sure they are eligible to vote ask voters for photographic ID mark a straight line against the voter's entry on the register of electors call out the number and name of the elector write the elector number on a list next to the number of the ballot paper to be issued ensure the ballot paper includes the official mark (e.g. a barcode or watermark) fold the ballot paper and then hand it to the voter unfolded so that they can see all of the options on the ballot paper Voters will need to produce one of the following documents in order to prove their identity: a UK, Irish or EEA Driving Licence (photographic part, provisional accepted) a UK, Irish or EU Passport (including an Irish Passport Card) an Electoral Identity Card a Translink Senior SmartPass a Translink 60+ SmartPass a Translink War Disabled SmartPass a Translink Blind Person's SmartPass a Translink half fare SmartPass. a Biometric Immigration Document These documents are listed in legislation and no other forms of identity can be accepted. The identification document does not need to be current, but the photograph must be of a good enough likeness to allow polling station staff to confirm the identity of the holder. What assistance is available for voters with disabilities? Through our work with civil society organisations and charities we have identified a range of equipment that can help to overcome the known barriers faced by disabled people. The following equipment should, as a minimum, be provided in all polling stations to support disabled voters: chairs/seating – this provides a place to rest for voters who cannot stand for long periods and a seat for voters who would like to take some time to think before entering the polling booth magnifiers – these can provide support for voters who are visually impaired to vote independently by increasing the size of the text on a document tactile voting device – tactile voting devices provide support for voters who are visually impaired to mark their vote on the ballot paper in the correct place, provided it is placed on the ballot paper correctly. They have been found to provide assistance in completing the ballot paper once visually impaired voters know the position on the ballot paper of the candidate for whom they wish to vote. They do not allow blind voters to vote independently unless they also have accessible information about the order of the candidates on the ballot paper polling booth at wheelchair level – helps to ensure that voters who use a wheelchair are able access a lower writing surface to ensure they can cast their vote in secret in a booth that is accessible badges identifying polling station staff – these help voters more easily identify who is a member of staff in the polling station and can therefore be approached for assistance. pencil grip – these can help voters with dexterity impairments to more easily hold and use a pencil independently ramps (for buildings with steps) – these support access to a polling station for voters who use a wheelchair or have difficulty using steps temporary alerters or temporary doorbells for any doors that are required to remain shut during the day (for example, fire

doors) – these provide a way for voters to let polling station staff know that they need assistance to open the door so they can access the polling station. These do not need to be permanently fixed or installed in a building used as a polling station but can be temporarily placed at an accessible level on a table or chair next to any doors that must remain closed appropriate lighting – some polling station venues have good lighting but others may need additional lighting at the desk; to ensure that voters can clearly see the faces of staff, and in the polling booths; to support voters with visual impairments to be able to read and complete the ballot paper.

parking spaces reserved for disabled voters (where parking is available at the venue) – this ensures that disabled voters can park as close as possible to the polling station a large print version of the ballot papers (for reference purposes only)

Voters with sight loss may use apps on their mobile phones or carry pocket-sized assistive equipment, such as video magnifiers to help them read documents. These could be used in conjunction with the template. The Returning Officer may also have provided magnifying glasses to support voting without assistance. If a voter is unable to mark a ballot paper themselves because they have a disability, the Presiding Officer or a companion can mark it for them. The voter must tell the polling station staff that this is how they want to vote and the reason why. If a companion marks the ballot paper for a voter, they will be asked to fill in a form. A companion cannot assist more than two electors to vote at an election. Electors can contact the Returning Officer to explain any specific access needs that they have. As a result, there may be extra equipment in certain polling stations where the Returning Officer has allocated specific equipment to meet those access needs. The Chief Electoral Officer will be providing a helpline that will allow blind and partially-sighted people to hear the list of candidates in their DEA in the order they appear on the ballot paper. What happens after polls close? Polls close at 10:00pm. Any voters waiting in a queue at their polling station at 10pm will be allowed to vote, even if they haven't been issued with a ballot paper yet. Once all voters who have been issued with a ballot paper have voted, the Presiding Officer must seal the ballot box. Candidates, agents and polling agents can also add their own seal if they want to. The Presiding Officer must then complete a number of official forms: the ballot paper account (this states how many ballot papers were issued) the list of voters with disabilities assisted by companions the list of votes marked by the Presiding Officer the statement of the number of voters whose votes were marked by the Presiding Officer the list of tendered votes The Presiding Officer must take the following to the count venue or a designated point for collection without delay: the ballot box(es) official forms election stationery all other materials

Duty to maintain secrecy in the polling station Anyone attending a polling station has a duty to maintain the secrecy of the ballot. In particular, the following information must not be disclosed: the name or electoral number of who has or has not voted the number or other unique identifying mark on the ballot paper

Anyone attending a polling station must not try to determine how a voter has voted or who they are about to vote for. A polling agent can mark off on their copy of the register of electors those voters who have applied for ballot papers. If the polling agent leaves the polling station during the hours of polling, they must leave the marked copy of the register in the polling station to ensure that secrecy requirements are not breached. Observing the verification and count You are entitled to attend the verification and count. You are only permitted to observe the process.

You are not allowed to enter the restricted area where staff count the votes. The DRO has the right to limit the number of observers who may be present at any one time

during the verification and count. The verification and counting of votes will start at 8.00am on Friday 19 May. The location of the count for each council area is available on EONI's website www.eoni.org.uk/Elections/Media-Centre. The DRO will also be able to provide you with a Count Information Pack which will outline the arrangements for the count. Who can attend the count? The following people are entitled by law to attend the verification and count: the Returning Officer, DRO and their staff candidates, plus one guest per candidate election agents counting agents Electoral Commission representatives observers accredited by the Electoral Commission any other person permitted by the Returning Officer or DRO The DRO may allow representatives of the media to attend the verification and count. They must not interfere with the process or compromise the secrecy of the vote. What do counting agents do? Counting agents have a number of important roles to play at the count: they observe the counting process and make sure that it is accurate they can draw to the attention of count staff any doubtful ballot papers if they disagree with a decision by the DRO to reject a ballot paper, they can ask the DRO to mark on the ballot paper "rejection objected to" if a count is suspended for any reason, counting agents can add their seals when the DRO seals the ballot boxes and envelopes What is verification? After polling stations close at 10pm the ballot boxes will be delivered to the count venue. These boxes will be opened at 8am on Friday 19 May. Postal ballot papers will also be brought to the count venue in sealed boxes to be opened.

Verification has two main purposes: to make sure and show that all ballot papers issued at polling stations and all returned postal ballot papers have been brought to the count to provide the figure that should match the result of the count The number of ballot papers in each box will be compared with the number on the ballot paper account. If the number of ballot papers in each box matches the ballot paper account the verification of that box is complete. If the numbers do not match, the ballot papers will be recounted and the documentation checked again. The process will continue until the DRO is satisfied as to the actual number of ballot papers to be included in the count. The number of ballot papers in each box will be recorded on the verification statement. When will the count take place? The counting of ballot papers will begin once the verification stage has been completed. How are the votes counted? After verification is complete, the DRO must mix the ballot papers before sorting and counting the votes. Count staff will then sort the ballot papers into piles for each candidate according to the first preference marked. The number of votes for each candidate will be counted and the total number of valid votes calculated. A formula will then be applied to calculate a quota: Where the total number of votes for a candidate at any stage of the count is equal to or exceeds the quota that candidate shall be deemed to be elected. The next stages of the count will involve either the transfer of the surplus vote from a candidate deemed to be elected or the exclusion of one or more candidates with the least votes. The ballot papers should be visible at all times to any candidates, agents and observers present. Any doubtful ballot papers should be placed aside for adjudication. What are doubtful ballot papers? A doubtful ballot paper is a ballot paper that has not been completed in accordance with the instructions. During the count, these ballot papers will be placed aside. The DRO will adjudicate these ballot papers regularly throughout the count to determine whether the intention of the voter clearly appears on the ballot paper. An announcement will be made that an adjudication on doubtful ballot papers is about to be made. The DRO will decide whether each doubtful ballot paper is valid in the presence of candidates, agents and observers. You can attend the adjudication but it will not be delayed if you are not present. The DRO will inform those present

whether or not each doubtful ballot paper is valid and the reason for their decision. The DROs decision is final and can only be challenged by an election petition. If a candidate or agent does not agree with any decision to reject a ballot paper as invalid, they can tell the DRO and the paper will be stamped “rejection objected to”. Any doubtful ballot papers that are declared as valid must be counted and included in the total number of votes cast for the appropriate candidate. A ballot paper will not be counted if it: is unmarked does not contain the official mark contains any mark or writing that can identify the voter does not indicate the voter’s intention with certainty has no first preference has the same preference vote given to more than one candidate The DRO must mark the word “rejected” on any ballot paper that is rejected and must draw up a statement showing the number of ballot papers rejected for these reasons. What happens after the votes are counted? After staff have finished counting the votes at each stage of the count, the DRO will share the provisional result with the candidates and their agents. They may ask the DRO to recount the votes for that stage although the DRO can refuse to do so if they think the request is unreasonable. Once a stage of the count has been completed there are can be no requests for recounts of this stage later on in the count process. Once the number of seats to be filled in the DEA have been filled the DRO will declare the candidates elected. The results will be published on the council and EONI websites. Duty to maintain secrecy Anyone attending the count has a duty to maintain the secrecy of the count. In particular, anyone attending must not: ascertain or attempt to ascertain number or other unique identifying mark on the back of any ballot paper communicate any information obtained at the count as to the candidate for whom any vote is given on any particular ballot paper Submitting feedback We welcome feedback from your electoral observations and on your experiences of the Electoral Commission’s observer scheme which you can submit using our feedback form. If you want to submit feedback on the May 2023 local elections in Northern Ireland, the deadline for this feedback to be considered is Friday 9 June 2023. Feedback may be shared with the Chief Electoral Officer and relevant DROs to help improve the running of elections and the observer scheme. You may find it helpful to print a copy of the feedback form in advance to take with you when observing. If you would like to send feedback in a different format, please email observers@electoralcommission.org.uk

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Update application: Submit additional names You are in the Accredited Organisations: submission of additional names section Home Observing elections and referendums Accredited Organisations: submission of additional names First published: 9 March 2021 Last updated: 2 November 2021 Update observers for an accredited organisation Update observers for an accredited organisation (new) Organisation details Organisation name Contact email for the organisation Accreditation details How do you want your observers to receive their observer badges? By post to the organisation address By post to a different address Alternative address: First line Alternative address: Town or city Alternative address: County Alternative address: Postcode Alternative address: Country New observer details: Observer one Is the observer over the age of 16? Yes No You can't apply to be an electoral observer if you're under 16. First name Last name Confirm that the observer has: Read and agrees to the Code of Practice Read and understood the requirements of secrecy Not been convicted of an electoral offence in the last five years Read, understood and agrees to our Privacy Policy Click here to read the Code of Practice Click here to read our Privacy Policy Would you like to add another observer? Yes No Observer details: Observer two Is the observer over the age of 16? Yes No First name Last name Confirm that the observer has: Read and agree to the Code of Practice Read and understood the requirements of secrecy Not been convicted of an electoral offence in the last five years Read, understood and agrees to our Privacy Policy Click here to read the Code of Practice Click here to read our Privacy Policy Would you like to add another observer? Yes No Observer details: Observer three Is the observer over the age of 16? Yes No First name Last name Confirm that the observer has: Read and agree to the Code of Practice Read and understood the requirements of secrecy Not been convicted of an electoral offence in the last five years Read, understood and agrees to our Privacy Policy Click here to read the Code of Practice Click here to read our Privacy Policy Would you like to add another observer? Yes No Observer details: Observer four Is the observer over the age of 16? Yes No First name Last name Confirm that the observer has: Read and agree to the Code of Practice Read and understood the requirements of secrecy Not been convicted of an electoral offence in the last five years Read, understood and agrees to our Privacy Policy Click here to read the Code of Practice Click here to read our Privacy Policy Would you like to add another observer? Yes No Observer details: Observer five Is the observer over the age of 16? Yes No First name Last name Confirm that the observer has: Read and agree to the Code of Practice Read and understood the requirements of secrecy Not been convicted of an electoral offence in the last five years Read, understood and agrees to our Privacy Policy Click here to read the Code of Practice Click here to read our Privacy Policy Would you like to add another observer? Yes No Observer details: Observer six Is the observer over the age of 16? Yes No First name Last name Confirm that the observer has: Read and agree to the Code of Practice Read and understood the requirements of secrecy Not been convicted of an electoral offence in the last five years Read, understood and agrees to our Privacy Policy Click here to read the Code of Practice Click here to read our Privacy Policy Would you like to add another observer? Yes No Observer details: Observer seven Is the observer over the age of 16? Yes No First name Last name Confirm that the observer has: Read and agree to the Code of Practice Read and understood the requirements of secrecy Not been convicted of an electoral offence in the last five years Read, understood and agrees to our Privacy Policy Click here to read the Code of Practice Click here to read our Privacy Policy Would you like to add another observer? Yes No Observer details: Observer eight Is the observer over the

age of 16? Yes No First name Last name Confirm that the observer has: Read and agree to the Code of Practice Read and understood the requirements of secrecy Not been convicted of an electoral offence in the last five years Read, understood and agrees to our Privacy Policy Click here to read the Code of Practice Click here to read our Privacy Policy Would you like to add another observer? Yes No Observer details: Observer nine Is the observer over the age of 16? Yes No First name Last name Confirm that the observer has: Read and agree to the Code of Practice Read and understood the requirements of secrecy Not been convicted of an electoral offence in the last five years Read, understood and agrees to our Privacy Policy Click here to read the Code of Practice Click here to read our Privacy Policy Would you like to add another observer? Yes No Observer details: Observer ten Is the observer over the age of 16? Yes No First name Last name Confirm that the observer has: Read and agree to the Code of Practice Read and understood the requirements of secrecy Not been convicted of an electoral offence in the last five years Read, understood and agrees to our Privacy Policy Click here to read the Code of Practice Click here to read our Privacy Policy Declaration Confirm that: The information you have provided is accurate and true You have permission from the observers to submit information on their behalf Leave this field blank

Board minutes: 17 February 2023 | Electoral Commission Search
Board minutes: 17 February 2023 You are in the Electoral Commission Board section Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Who was at the meeting Welcomes and introduction to the Speaker of the House of Commons, Rt Hon Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP Apologies Declarations of interests Minutes Commission Board action tracker Chief Executive's update Forward Plan of Board business 2022/23 and 2023/24 Strategy and Policy Statement (SPS) Key messages for the annual report Annual review of risk First published: 19 April 2023 Last updated: 20 April 2023 Commission Board minutes 17 February 2023 Friday 17 February 2023 Location: In person Date of next scheduled Board meeting: Wednesday, 22 March 2023 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Pullinger Chair Rob Vincent Alex Attwood Sarah Chambers Stephen Gilbert Roseanna Cunningham Chris Ruane Katy Radford Elan Closs Stephens In attendance: Shaun McNally Chief Executive Kieran Rix Director, Finance and Corporate Services Craig Westwood Director, Communications, Policy and Research Ailsa Irvine Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Louise Edwards Director, Regulation Binnie Goh General Counsel Sal Naseem Independent Adviser to the Commission Board on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Matt Pledger Senior Adviser, Governance Zena Khan Senior Adviser, Governance Rt Hon Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP Mr Speaker, House of Commons [item 2] Councillor Peter Wilson Deputy Executive Leader Chorley Council [item 2] Orla Hennessy Media Relations & Public Information Manager [item 11] Welcomes and introduction to the Speaker of the House of Commons, Rt Hon Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP The Chair of the Board welcomed Mr Speaker to the meeting. Mr Speaker reciprocated in welcoming the Board to Chorley and stated that the work of the Commission was much appreciated. Mr Speaker outlined key aspects of the electoral reform agenda across the UK and areas where he was undertaking engagement, including internationally. He highlighted the UK Youth Parliament and the need to support wider youth engagement in democracy. Mr Speaker noted the importance of his committee's relationship with the Commission, and a desire to engage on a broader range of subjects than on financial and performance issues. The Board welcomed engagement with the Speakers Committee. Apologies The Board received apologies from Commissioner Sue Bruce. Declarations of interests The Board noted the following updated entries of declarations of interests since the January 2023 Board meeting: Commissioner Alex Attwood: Member of the Electoral Commission for Ireland ("An Coimisiún Toghchain") Commissioner John Pullinger: Chair: High Level Steering Group, Better Lives 2030 Conference Zambia, April 2023 Commissioner Stephen Gilbert: Member of the Industry and Regulation Select Committee of the House of Lords Independent Adviser to the Commission Board on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Sal Naseem: Member of Spectrum Speakers General Counsel Binnie Goh: Trustee of Vibrance, a Social Care charity Minutes (EC 176/23) Resolved: That the Board agreed the minutes of the Board meeting 17 January 2023, subject to minor amendments. Matters arising: The Board noted that the Commission had yet to receive a response to its letter, sent to the Security Minister, regarding foreign donations to political parties. Commission Board action tracker (EC 177/23) The Board noted that the Chief Executive would be chairing the Equality Diversity and Inclusion, (EDI), Project Group and the first meeting was scheduled for March 2023. The Group would initially meet every six weeks. The scope of the Project Group would be determined at the first meeting and will align to the People Strategy. The Board noted the actions from the Belfast Board event, and that the high level summary notes of the actions were to be circulated to Board members and attendees. Resolved: That the Board noted the progress against actions requested by the Board which included the action tracker of the Belfast Board event. Chief

Executive's update (EC 178/23) The Chief Executive reported to the Board that a budget underspend was forecast. To improve forecasting, the Board noted that mandatory training was being implemented for all budget holders, and work to improve recruitment rates was underway. The Board noted that for financial year 2024/25 estimates would be formulated on a zero-based review. The Board noted that there was a historic trend in the Commission for budget underspends and welcomed the actions being taken by the Chief Executive to improve financial management. The Chief Executive reported that procurement was underway to replace the current board support platform. Commissioners were invited to advise the Director, Regulation if they wished to engage and test the shortlisted software. The Board noted work being undertaken on implementation of the Elections Act, staff sickness absence, voter accessibility and performance standards. The Director, Communications, Policy and Research updated the Board on progress with the campaign, including the advertising used and the partnership activity with civic society organisations and local authorities. The Director, Communications, Policy and Research also noted discussions with UK Government about the campaign. Members of the Board suggested that updates on other Elections Act 2022 provisions, specifically postal and proxy vote changes, and overseas voting, feature at a future meeting.

Resolved: That the Board noted the Chief Executive's update on operations and matters arising and, the quarterly performance report for quarter three. Forward Plan of Board business 2022/23 and 2023/24 (EC 179/23)

The Board noted that some of the dates for the Audit and Risk Committee 2023/24 would be revised.

Resolved: That the Board noted the Forward Plan of Board business 2022/23 and 2023/24 Strategy and Policy Statement (SPS) (EC 180/23)

The Director, Communications, Policy and Research introduced the report, stating that the Commission's ongoing concerns about the SPS will continue to be voiced. This would be undertaken in parallel with planning proportionate preparations for accountability under the SPS. The Board noted that the UK Government had delayed its expected timetable for moving to the next stage of engagement on the SPS, and no timescale had been confirmed. The Board welcomed the report and agreed the direction proposed in the report to enable work to progress.

Resolved: That the Board noted an update on preparing for Commission accountability under the SPS. Key messages for the annual report (EC 181/23)

The Director, Finance and Corporate Services introduced the report and requested the Board consider the suggestions outlined. The Board noted that the timing for release of the final report would be post May 2023 elections. The Board overall was satisfied with the key messages that were conveyed in the paper and provided the following additional guidance.

Resolved: That the Board would like to ensure that the Annual Report is clear on the outputs of the Commission's activities.

Resolved: That the Board would like to see strong forward focused messages from both the Chair and Chief Executive in the Annual Report.

Resolved: That the Board would like the Annual Report to demonstrate that the Commission has a robust focus on EDI which incorporates all activities.

Resolved: That the Board agreed that the Annual Report should reference the work done on implementation of the Elections Act, including management and mitigation of risk.

Resolved: That the Board requested that the Annual Report should draw out the Commission's activities across all nations of the UK.

Annual review of risk (EC 182/23)

The Director, Finance and Corporate Services introduced the report to the Board and requested guidance as to whether the risks were acceptable to the Board. The Board noted that the analysis had been simplified to enable a range of audiences to engage and that the review of risk was ongoing. The Board noted that the report was subject to consultation with the Chair of Audit and Risk Committee, (ARC), and the Independent Adviser to the ARC.

Resolved:

That the Board agreed the draft risk appetite statement and noted progress towards implementing the new strategic risks and completing the risk improvement plan.

Voting in 2017 You are in the UK general elections section Home UK general elections First published: 1 October 2017 Last updated: 1 October 2017 Summary A core area of the Electoral Commission's work is to promote public confidence in the democratic process. In order to understand public attitudes, following each set of elections we survey a nationally representative sample of the population in those areas where polls have been held. This report summarises and analyses the results of the post-election surveys conducted in 2017 and provides an overview of public attitudes to elections and voting. Key findings The elections in 2017 saw increased turnout compared to the last equivalent poll – most notably at the Northern Ireland Assembly and Scottish council elections. In addition, the level of engagement among younger age groups at the UK general election appears to have improved since 2015 – our research suggests a greater turnout and an increased level of awareness among younger people of both the election itself and of the parties and candidates standing at the poll. Nevertheless, we also found strong evidence of a continuing lack of engagement, particularly among young people, with the local elections. While turnout at these polls was up it remains relatively low. We asked people in England with local government elections if they felt they had enough information to make an informed choice on who to vote for – one third of all respondents, including nearly half of 18-34 year olds, disagreed. More work must be done to ensure that all voters have access to information about these elections and who they can vote for, and that they use that access. Positively, we have again found that most people believe elections in the UK to be well run – with confidence even higher among those who vote – and that the vast majority of voters are satisfied with the process for casting their ballot. However, there is no room for complacency in this area and our research highlighted areas where we believe further work is needed. While most people continue to be satisfied with the system of registering to vote there is also support for improvement, with two thirds supporting the idea of automatically registering electors when they are issued with a National Insurance number. We have recently published our assessment of the system of electoral registration and highlighted several areas for improvement. Finally, the perception of electoral fraud continues to be an issue at UK elections. While the vast majority believe voting in general to be safe, there remains a level of concern, albeit based more on media coverage than direct experience. We have previously set out our recommendation for the introduction of an ID requirement for voters at polling stations in Great Britain, reflecting that which is already in operation in Northern Ireland. The UK Government has recently announced plans to pilot the requirement for ID at a number of local elections in May 2018, and the Commission will conduct and publish a full, independent evaluation of those pilots by summer 2018. Download our full report Voting in 2017: Understanding public attitudes towards elections and voting Related content Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run Results and turnout at the 2017 UK general election View the results and turnout at the 2017 general election Report: Political finance regulation at the June 2017 UK general election Read our report about political finance regulation at the 2017 general election Report: Electoral registration at the June 2017 UK general election Read our report about electoral registration at the 2017 general election

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Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Our approach to public awareness campaigns First published: 18 June 2020 Last updated: 21 June 2021

Meeting overview Date: Wednesday 22 January 2020 Location: Boothroyd Room, 3 Bunhill Row, London Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Holmes, Chair Alasdair Morgan Alastair Ross Anna Carragher Sarah Chambers Elan Closs Stephens Rob Vincent Stephen Gilbert Joan Walley Craig Westwood, Director, Communications, Policy and Research Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Guidance and Administration David Bailey, Head of Strategic Planning and Performance David Meek, Senior Adviser, Governance Tim Crowley, Head of Digital Communications and Learning Emma Hartley, Head of Campaigns and Corporate Identity Ben Hancock, Campaigns and Corporate Communications Manager Elaine Spooner, Senior Communications Officer, Campaigns Jess Cook, Senior Communications Officer, Campaigns and Corporate Communications Charles Courtier, Chairman, MSQ Partners Our approach to public awareness campaigns The Chair noted that this informal item was scheduled at the Board's request from a previous meeting. The Chair invited the Director of Communications, Policy, and Research and Charles Courtier, the Chairman of MSQ Partners, to address the Commissioners. The Director of Communications, Policy and Research informed the Commissioners that MSQ

Partners was the agency currently contracted to support our public awareness campaigns, particularly the campaign to encourage people to register to vote. Charles Courtier advised the Commissioners of the four strategic parameters that shape public awareness campaigns: objective, audience, engagement, and incentive / reward. He discussed how these parameters related to the Commission, including the spectrum of possible objectives, with public awareness at one end and behavioural change at the other. The Commission was closer to the latter. As far as audience selection was concerned, between going broad or narrow, the Commission was in the middle, but was particularly interested in affecting the behaviour of a small part of the audience.

On the spectrum of emotional versus rational appeal, the Commission was closer to the rational end, but did use emotive language. In terms of 'carrot versus stick', the Commission was clearly closer to the carrot end of the spectrum, but specific rewards were obviously lacking. In discussion, the Commissioners expressed an interest in exploring more emotive advertising messaging which might increase impact and outcomes

The Commissioners had a discussion about demonstrating direct impact and the difficulty in separating out the success of the Commission's activity from that of

others with the same objective. Some of the latter did of course use the materials we provided. Work with partners was an important part of our activity. The Commissioners

heard of the ways that we were able to track the number of people applying to

register to vote as a result of exposure to our campaign, but there were limitations

in determining cause and effect. Some innovations available through digital

advertising, that could more closely track the success of digital campaigns, were not

possible under current gov.uk website restrictions. It was noted that there were

noticeable increases in the number of people accessing the website following the

broadcast of campaign advertising on television, for example during the UK

Parliamentary General Election leaders' debate. We were also able to track the number

of people that accessed the registration website by typing in the web page address directly, which indicated that they had seen the advertising where the address was

promoted. We were not in a position to gather information on the journey of someone registering online, for example how many times they had seen our campaign, whether they had seen digital and television advertising, and whether they had also seen advertising from other campaigns promoting registration. The Commissioners discussed the targeting of groups of potential voters who were known to be less likely to be registered, such as young people, those from Black and Minority Ethnic groups and recent home movers, and the balance of resource this was currently allocated within the overall campaign. The current and recent approach had been to direct our campaigns widely, so that they appealed to all voters, supported by other targeted activity through partnerships and online. The Commissioners heard that the public awareness campaigns supporting the May 2020 local election would include both campaigns that were widely aimed and campaigns that were targeted at underrepresented groups. The Commissioners expressed an appetite for increasing the proportion of resources allocated to the targeted aspect of such campaigns, ahead of future polls. The Commissioners discussed the challenge of targeting potential voters who were disengaged from politics and not persuaded of the importance of voting. The Director of Communications, Policy and Research noted that advertising was unlikely to be a value for money route to get people engaged with politics. This would be better addressed through education work, which the Commissioners had previously discussed, and also by parties and other campaigners whose role was to explain the merits of their policy positions. The Commissioners heard about work we were engaged on with partner organisations to address the educational aspects.

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Size of the electoral registers Effectiveness of the canvass Background Overview This
report looks at how the 2022 canvass in Great Britain was run and considers how the
electoral registers have been affected by the canvass reforms introduced in 2020.

Summary In 2020, new processes were introduced to make the annual canvass more
efficient. These processes involve comparing the electoral registers with other
public datasets so that Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) can identify
households where residents' details are most likely to have changed. EROs can then
target their resources at these households (by assigning them to different 'routes'
for follow up contacts). The 2022 canvass was the third using this approach. This
analysis sets out our latest insight into the impact that the canvass reforms are
having on the quality of the electoral registers. However, we cannot draw firm
conclusions on the basis of this analysis alone. In September 2023, we will publish
the findings from our next study into the accuracy and completeness of the registers.
This research involves interviewing several thousand households across the UK and
comparing their current details with their entries on the electoral register. It will
allow us to produce reliable estimates of the quality of the registers and thereby to
robustly evaluate the impact that the canvass reforms have had. The results of our
previous studies are available here. In the meantime, our analysis of data relating
to the 2022 canvass provides a snapshot of performance in a specific year. The data
suggests that the new processes may not be sufficient to ensure that the registers
keep pace with population movement and we can see clear patterns emerging: Some
households continue to be allocated to the 'wrong' route due to imperfections in the
data matching process and/or the lag between matching and canvassing. Almost a fifth
of responses from households allocated to Route 1 (where the data matching process
suggested there had been no change in household composition) reported significant
changes to electors' details. The response rate among Route 2 households suggests
that necessary changes to electors' details may not be reflected on the registers.
One third of Route 2 households (~2.4 million) did not respond to the canvass despite
the fact that the data matching process suggested there had been a change in
household composition. The number of registered attainers (i.e. those who will soon
reach voting age) continues to fall, possibly as a consequence of the reduction in
contact that EROs now make with Route 1 households. The decline in the number of
registered attainers began after the introduction of individual electoral
registration (IER) in 2014. It continued in 2022, although the number fell at a much
lower rate than in 2021 (-0.23% vs. -28.70%). While we know that new registration
applications are most readily driven by large scale electoral events, it is
nevertheless important that the canvass and other year-round registration activity
supports accurate and complete registers. This can help to reduce the large volumes
of registration applications received immediately in advance of major polls, when
EROs' staff capacity is already stretched. To help ensure that all eligible voters
can have their say at elections, the electoral registration system in Great Britain
should be further modernised. This modernisation should involve making better use of
public data, including data from other government services, so that registration is
as easy as possible for voters. Over 2023, we will continue to use the ERO
performance standards framework to build on the work we have carried out with EROs in
the past two years. We will support EROs to further develop and use key performance
indicators to help them better understand and report on the impact of their activity.

We will also once again ask EROs to complete a survey during the 2023 canvass, to help us build a picture of how the canvass is progressing, as well as supporting our engagement with individual EROs and their teams.

Size of the electoral registers
Table 1 below shows the percentage change in the number of entries on the parliamentary registers in each nation of Great Britain between 2021 and 2022. Table

1. Change in the number of parliamentary entries 2021-22 Area 2021 2022 % change

England	38,889,429	38,834,540	-0.1%	Scotland	4,028,717	4,012,887	-0.4%	Wales
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2,307,877	2,310,148	0.1%	Great Britain	45,226,023	45,157,575	-0.2%	In the West
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Midlands, the East of England, the South East, Scotland and Wales the number of local government register entries increased slightly between 2021 and 2022 (see Table 2).

In the other regions, the number of local government entries fell slightly. Table 2.

Change in the number of local government entries 2021-22 Area 2021 2022 %change

England	40,882,721	40,857,874	-0.1%	North East	1,946,010	1,943,955	-0.1%	North West
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5,421,090	5,419,776	0.0%	Yorkshire and the Humber	4,009,237	3,986,561	-0.6%	East
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3,554,099	3,553,180	0.0%	West Midlands	4,253,449	4,257,399	0.1%	East of
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England	4,633,193	4,636,054	0.1%	London	6,021,139	6,000,191	-0.3%	South East
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6,775,409	6,796,943	0.3%	South West	4,269,095	4,263,815	-0.1%	Scotland	4,245,217
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4,250,579	0.1%	Wales	2,348,576	2,362,964	0.6%	Great Britain	47,476,514	47,471,417
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0.0% Variations in levels of registration can be driven by changes in the size of the eligible population or by policy changes, such as extensions to the franchise.

Changes can also be driven by reforms to the canvassing approaches used by EROs, as well as national and local voter registration campaigns. Our analysis below explores what the available data tells us about the effectiveness of the canvass.

Attainers People who will reach voting age and become eligible to vote during the lifetime of the register are known as attainers. Attainers can be included on the electoral

registers. The number of attainers has been falling for several years. The number of attainers on the parliamentary registers in Great Britain fell by -0.23% between 2021

and 2022 (see Table 3 below). This marked a dramatic reduction in the rate of decline relative to 2020 and 2021. The introduction of individual registration in 2014 meant

that attainers had to make their own application to register (rather than being added through a single household form) and this change coincided with a decline in numbers.

The number of registered attainers in Great Britain has fallen every year since 2017,

albeit by varying degrees (see Figure 1). In 2020 and 2021, the overall decrease

across Great Britain as a whole was driven by large drops in the number of registered

attainers in England (-25.9% and -40.6%, respectively). This trend was broken in

2022, when the number of attainers rose slightly (1.17%). Similarly, whereas Scotland

saw a modest increase in registered attainers in both 2020 (0.9%) and 2021 (6.1%),

this number fell in 2022 (-4.52%). In Wales, the number of registered attainers

increased significantly in 2020 (11.6%) and 2021 (34.2%) and this upward trend

continued in 2022, but the increase was much smaller (0.74%). The reformed annual

canvass may be exacerbating the decline seen from 2014 onwards, as the need to add an

attainer to the register will not be identified through the data matching process.

For example, many households in Route 1 will have potential attainers but now receive

fewer communications from EROs to encourage them to become registered. The different

pattern in Scotland and Wales is likely to be connected to the extension of the

devolved elections' franchise to 16 and 17 year olds (and associated increased

registration activity). This seems to be offsetting a systematic problem with the

registration of attainers evident in England. Our next accuracy and completeness

research will give us an updated assessment of the registration rate for attainers,

which was 25% in our 2018 study. Our engagement with EROs indicates that they

recognise that their attainer numbers are falling, despite efforts to engage widely with education institutions and use education data to support this work. South Norfolk and Peterborough have had some success engaging with schools around school elections, to help build relationships with them. North Hertfordshire also carried out targeted work to promote registration in schools during UK Parliament Week. However, overall, a lack of staff capacity to support this work and issues with the accuracy of education data were common reasons given for not being able to do more in this area. Despite numbers stabilising somewhat in 2022, attainer registration is unlikely to significantly increase through the existing registration and canvass processes alone. This is an area where a more automated registration process could be beneficial. Data from the education sector could help EROs identify and target attainers and other young people. Also, data from the Department for Work and Pensions could potentially be used by EROs to register young people to vote automatically when they are allocated their National Insurance number ahead of their 16th birthday. Table 3. Number of attainers on the parliamentary registers in Great Britain 2013-22 Year England Scotland Wales Great Britain Attainers % change

Attainers % change	Attainers % change	Attainers % change	2022	113,266	1.17%	39,025
-4.52%	19,517	0.74%	171,808	-0.23%	2021	111,958 -40.60%
172,203	-28.70%	2020	188,472	-25.90%	38,518	0.90%
254,384	-1.40%	38,171	-7.60%	12,942	0.00%	305,497 -2.10%
-4.80%	12,948	1.20%	312,182	-4.00%	2017	269,092 -5.40%
325,243	-4.30%	2016	284,522	19.00%	41,561	67.40%
239,019	-6.20%	24,827	-36.30%	12,339	-12.30%	276,185 -10.30%
38,963	-38.60%	14,065	-24.40%	307,864	-33.30%	2013
461,350	NA	Other register statistics	16 and 17 year olds (Scotland and Wales)	In	379,284	NA
Scotland and Wales,	16 and 17 year-olds can vote in Scottish Parliament, Senedd and local council elections.	This change was introduced in 2015 in Scotland and 2020 in Wales.	In Scotland, 76,955 16 and 17 year-olds were registered on the local government registers at the conclusion of the 2022 canvass (see Table 4).	This represents a -1.3% decrease on 2021. Taken with NRS population estimates, this indicates that roughly two thirds of 16 and 17 year-olds in Scotland are included on the local government registers.	1.60%	339,734 23.00%
1 EROs across Scotland continue to engage with 16 and 17 year-olds using a variety of methods including direct mailing, phone/text communications, contact with schools and universities, issuing press releases, social media activity, distributing newsletters, and local advertising, as well as local activity with partner organisations.	Case study – Lothian Valuation Joint Board	Lothian Valuation Joint Board – covering the City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian and West Lothian Council areas – uses a combination of approaches to encourage 16 and 17 year-olds to register, including direct emails, attending events and data mining.	In the days after they sent a targeted email, there was a spike in registration applications. Across four events attended, they reported directly registering 357 students and engaging with a great deal more.	Data mining school lists and subsequent follow up activities were attributable to a 6.6% increase in registered school pupils over the age of 16 (equal to approximately 1,075 applications), and an overall increase of 18.9% for school pupils over the age of 14 (approximately 5,754 applications).	48,962	2015
Table 4. Number of 16 and 17 year-olds on the local government registers in Scotland 2015-22 Year	16 and 17 year-olds	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
2020	2021	2022	2022	2022	2022	2022
In Wales, 36,722 16 and 17 year-olds were on the local government registers on 1 December 2022. This represents a 10.5% increase on 2021, meaning the rate of growth	73,777	73,272	77,958	76,955		

in the number of registered 16 and 17 year-olds has slowed since the previous canvass, which saw a 115.1% increase relative to 2020. Taken with the ONS mid-year population estimates for 2021, our canvass data suggests that just over half of 16 and 17 year-olds in Wales are currently included on the local government registers. 2 Across Wales, EROs carried out a range of activity to encourage registration amongst 16 and 17 year-olds. Using grant funding from Welsh Government, many authorities appointed temporary public engagement officers and there appears to have been an increase in the range of engagement that was undertaken in those areas. The strongly held opinion of the local authorities that we talked to was that this resource should continue to be made available to ensure that the foundations already laid are built upon and this important work can continue. In addition to more standard engagement activities such as direct mailing, phone/text communications, contact with schools, press releases, newsletters and social media, some authorities undertook additional activities such as: creating website banners and TikTok videos to share with schools working with youth councils and youth partnership groups sending 16th birthday cards advertising in bus shelters pop-up sessions in schools teacher training sessions using Electoral Commission resources Case study – Torfaen County Borough Council Alongside developing an advertising campaign targeted at 16-17 year olds, Torfaen Council undertook several activities to engage with young people in the area. This included recording several videos with school pupils on how to vote and what the local council does, working with schools to promote registration via pupil post and parent portals, and running assemblies and mock elections. This activity was led by the Engagement and Electoral Participation Officer. Torfaen saw a 9% increase in registration amongst 16-17 year olds. Overseas electors A UK citizen living abroad who has been registered to vote in the UK in the past 15 years can apply to be an overseas voter. These registrations currently need to be renewed annually. The total number of overseas electors on the 2022 registers in Great Britain was 79,665 (Table 5). Table 5. Number of overseas electors on the parliamentary registers in Great Britain 2015-22

Area	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	England	Scotland	Wales	UK
England	97,572	241,097	205,687	113,833	185,513	170,196	94,908	73,407	7,729	15,230	12,790	6,679
Great Britain	108,241	263,894	225,472	124,190	204,069	184,982	104,665	79,665				

This is a decrease of -23.9% since the publication of the registers in 2021. It marks a continuation in the decline of registered overseas electors that has been ongoing since 2019. This decline is likely a consequence of the fact that there has not been an election in which overseas electors can vote since the 2019 UK parliamentary general election. The Elections Act 2022 extends the number of overseas citizens who will be eligible to register and vote, and also changes the requirement to renew registration annually to every three years. The extension of eligibility could result in a high volume of applications close to the next UK parliamentary general election, which EROs will need to be prepared to manage. We will carry out targeted support and engagement activities with EROs ahead of the next UK parliamentary general election.

Anonymous electors The number of anonymous electoral register entries on the parliamentary registers in Great Britain decreased from 3,097 in 2021 to 2,842 in 2022 (Table 6). Anonymous registration is available for people meeting certain requirements, whose safety, or the safety of someone in the same household, is at risk. People registered anonymously appear on the electoral register without their name and address. Table 6. Number of anonymous electors on the parliamentary registers in Great Britain 2015-22

Area	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
England	2,151	2,194	2,440	2,550	3,214	3,064	2,788	2,539
Scotland	111	117	116	130	194			

196 187 191 Wales 74 74 85 108 138 114 122 112 Great Britain 2,336 2,385 2,641 2,788
3,546 3,374 3,097 2,842 Effectiveness of the canvass Route allocations At the beginning of the canvass, all registers are matched against Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) data. The results are used by EROs to allocate properties to 'routes' which determine how many times they will contact a household to attempt to get a response (see Background section below for more detail). EROs can also carry out further matching using local data, such as council tax records. The majority of EROs carried out local data matching and, as in 2021, council tax records were the most popular datasets used. The local data matching step had a significant impact on the number of households allocated to each route, as shown in Table 7. As in 2021, when asked whether their approach to local data matching was the same as or different to last year's, a majority (87%) of those EROs who responded said that their approach was the same. For those that decided to take a different approach, the responses suggest that this predominantly involved using a wider range of data sources. In a small handful of cases, EROs used fewer datasets in 2022 relative to 2021. These EROs cited concerns around the quality of local data, the challenge of matching registers to council tax data where the latter does not contain unique property reference numbers (UPRNs), difficulty using the data matching function within their electoral management software (EMS) system, and resource shortages as reasons for using fewer datasets this year. Other changes that EROs made to the data matching process in 2022 included allowing more time to complete the data matching step and making better use of EMS systems to reduce the level of manual matching. In some cases, EROs opted to skip the local data matching step. For example, the London Borough of Barnet chose not to conduct local data matching so as to limit the number of properties allocated to Route 1. They cited some concerns over the accuracy of local data but also noted that this approach did lead to higher costs as a higher proportion of properties needed to be more frequently contacted via the Route 2 process. Across the board, those local authorities who did not conduct local data matching allocated fewer properties to Route 1 (68% vs 76%), and more properties to Route 2 (31% vs 23%).
Table 7. Number of properties allocated to each route after national and local data matching Route No. properties allocated after DWP match No. properties allocated after local data match % change 1 19,875,665 22,186,204 11.62% 2 9,406,384 7,341,172 -21.96% 3 NA 305,128 NA The percentage of properties allocated to Route 2 was 24.6% (see Table 8). This is in line with the expectations set out in the statement of policy for canvass reform published by the UK, Scottish and Welsh governments in 2019, which predicted that approximately one quarter of properties would need to be allocated to Route 2 nationally. 3 The percentage of households allocated to Routes 1, 2 and 3 continues to be fairly consistent across Great Britain, with the exception of London (Table 8). As in previous years, the proportion of households allocated to Route 1 was lower (66.2%) in London than in other regions, while the proportion allocated to Route 2 was higher (32.8%). This reflects the higher rate of population movement in London: as the rate of change in household composition is higher in London, fewer properties are successfully matched against existing DWP and local data. Table 8. Percentage of properties allocated to each route by nation and region Area Route 1 Route 2 Route 3 England 74.3% 24.7% 1.0% North East 80.9% 18.9% 0.2% North West 74.4% 24.9% 0.7% Yorkshire and the Humber 74.3% 24.7% 1.1% East Midlands 76.6% 21.6% 1.9% West Midlands 74.2% 24.2% 1.6% East of England 77.0% 22.3% 0.7% London 66.2% 32.8% 1.0% South East 75.1% 24.1% 0.8% South West 76.7% 22.4% 0.9% Scotland 73.9% 24.8% 1.3% Wales 76.5% 22.4% 1.1% Great Britain 74.4% 24.6% 1.0% The changes to the annual canvass were designed to allow EROs to direct their resources

at households whose composition was most likely to have changed. The effectiveness of the new canvass, based on this targeting of activity, will therefore be strongly determined by two things: the accuracy of the data matching and the level of response achieved. We can draw some conclusions about both from an analysis of household response rates within the two allocated routes. Household response rates per route As expected, the response rate is significantly higher among Route 2 households, where changes are expected, than Route 1 households, where they are not (67.1% vs 22.9%) (see Table 9). In 2019, before the canvass process was reformed, 23.8 million household responses were received during the canvass. In 2022, only 10 million responses were received, which is higher than the level of responses received in 2020 and 2021 (~9 million). This drop in the number of household responses since the implementation of canvass reform can be partly explained by the lower response rate among Route 1 households, which comprise the vast majority of all households but which are not required to respond unless a change to the register is needed. However, as in 2021, almost a third of Route 2 households did not respond. These are households where the data suggests a change to the register may be needed. It is important for the accuracy and completeness of the registers that the response rate for Route 2 households is as high as possible. Several EROs suggested that funding pressures made it difficult to achieve a higher Route 2 response rate, in part because these pressures made it harder to recruit canvassers. Others were unable to run public awareness campaigns or were impacted by the increase in the cost of postage. A growing number of EROs are using e-communications and telephone canvassing as this represents better value for money. However, this does present some limitations as telephone data is not always complete and some respondents are wary of e-communications from the ERO and mistake them for spam. It continues to be a challenge to reach communities who have historically been reluctant to engage with canvassers. Densely populated urban areas with high rates of population movement appear to be the most challenging areas. Some EROs are choosing to target their door-knocking efforts only in these locations. However, data from previous years demonstrates that even that is not universally successful. Some EROs are using different methods in specific areas. For example, the team in Chelmsford have supported their canvassers in building relationships with their gated communities and caravan sites. This has involved the communications team developing resources to support canvassers in those areas. Their initial experience suggests this approach is working well. We will focus our analysis of the Route 2 data over the coming years to further develop our understanding of the challenges faced by EROs and to support the identification of actions to help mitigate against the risks to the accuracy and completeness of their electoral registers. We will also undertake work with smaller groups of EROs to facilitate the sharing of good practice between those facing similar challenges. Variations in response rate As in 2020 and 2021, the response rate among Route 2 households varied significantly in 2022. For the third year, Scotland reported the lowest response rate among Route 2 properties (50.7%) (see Table 10). It may be that the year-round registration activity in Scotland, supported by elections in May 2021 and 2022, will have mitigated any negative impact of this lower response rate on the registers. The results of our next accuracy and completeness study should allow us to draw clearer conclusions.

	Route 1	Route 2
England	23.7%	69.0%
North East	10.9%	65.6%
North West	17.3%	61.7%
Yorkshire and the Humber	19.5%	
East Midlands	24.7%	76.0%
West Midlands	23.2%	70.3%
East of England	25.2%	73.9%
London	22.3%	64.3%
South East	31.9%	73.2%
South West	29.4%	75.4%
Scotland	17.0%	50.7%

Wales 21.2% 66.1% Great Britain 22.9% 67.1% Table 10. Route 2 response rates 2020-22 Area 2020 2021 2022 England 67.4% 70.1% 69.0% North East 59.3% 62.7% 65.6% North West 61.8% 63.2% 61.7% Yorkshire and the Humber 70.5% 67.3% 65.6% East Midlands 72.5% 75.6% 76.0% West Midlands 69.3% 71.2% 70.3% East of England 72.3% 75.8% 73.9% London 59.7% 65.9% 64.3% South East 71.5% 74.2% 73.2% South West 72.4% 75.4% 75.4% Scotland 50.0% 50.7% 50.7% Wales 63.6% 65.4% 66.1% Great Britain 65.5% 68.1% 67.1% Major and minor changes per route The nature of the responses received can also give an indication of the efficacy of the reformed canvass process. Responding households can record a major change (e.g. reporting that a potential new elector is resident), a minor change (e.g. amending the name of an existing elector) or no change (i.e. confirming the existing details of household members). Understanding the distribution of these changes can tell us about the accuracy of the data matching process. Of the 10 million responses received across all routes, 2.8 million households reported a major change. Table 11 describes how these major changes were distributed across the three routes. The pattern is broadly in line with 2020 and 2021. Table 11.

Distribution of major changes across routes

Route	Number of households reporting a major change	% of households reporting a major change
Route 1	933,813	32.8%
Route 2	1,860,570	65.4%
Route 3	52,096	1.8%
Total	2,846,479	100.0%

Approximately two thirds of major changes were reported by Route 2 households – i.e., those identified during the data matching step as the households most likely to report changes to residents' registration details. However, as in both 2020 and 2021, nearly a third (32.8%) of the major changes reported relate to Route 1 households, where the DWP and/or local data had indicated no change should be needed. As in the previous two years, of the 22.2 million households allocated to Route 1, the percentage reporting a major change (4.2%) is small. However, as Figure 3 below shows, almost a fifth of those Route 1 households who responded to the canvass reported a major change. Importantly for the quality of the registers, it is also unlikely that all the Route 1 households that needed to report a major change have done so – particularly as they would have received limited contact from the ERO. We do not have comparative data on the number of major changes reported by households during the canvasses preceding the reforms. It is therefore not clear to what extent the 2020-22 canvasses are out of line with historic figures. However, it is clear that either the data matching process does not accurately identify all properties where changes will be needed and/or there is an impact from the lag time between the matching and the canvassing taking place.

Additions and deletions

Canvassing households does not directly result in new registrations. When a household reports that a potential new elector is resident, that individual still needs to submit an application to be added to the register. Where a household reports that electors need to be removed from the registers, a second piece of evidence (e.g. locally held data) is needed before the ERO can confirm the deletion. Entries need to be added to, and deleted from, the registers for several reasons including migration, home movement and deaths. The level of these additions and deletions provides insight into whether registration activity is keeping pace with population change. As population mobility varies across the country, so does the scale of the challenge faced by EROs. As in 2020 and 2021, the distribution of additions and deletions across the routes is largely as expected, with Route 2 households accounting for the highest proportion of changes (see Table 12). However, approximately 40% of both additions and deletions came from households whose composition was presumed to be unchanged following the data matching. Again, this suggests either a degree of inaccuracy in the allocation of households to routes or an impact from population movement between matching and canvassing. Table 12.

Percentage of additions and deletions per route Additions / Deletions Route 1 Route 2 Route 3 Additions 39.91% 56.50% 3.60% Deletions 39.02% 57.36% 3.62% This data suggests that at least some population change is not being picked up on the registers. We cannot draw clear conclusions on the overall impact from this data alone – partly because of the variable impact of electoral events outside the canvass. However, our accuracy and completeness research will provide evidence on whether the quality of the registers has declined since 2018, before the introduction of the reformed canvass. Table 13 below shows the levels of additions and deletions in recent years (for the full year, not just the canvass period). In 2020, 2021 and 2022, additions and deletions have been slightly lower than in some previous years (e.g. 2013 and 2015). However, it is usual to see more change – and higher additions, in particular – in years with significant UK-wide electoral events, such as UK general elections and the EU referendum). Table 13. Annual percentage of additions and deletions 2010-22

Year	Additions	Deletions
2010	13%	12%
2013	15%	15%
2015	15%	15%
2016	15%	13%
2017	13%	13%
2018	11%	12%
2019	13%	10%
2020	10%	10%
2021	11%	11%
2022	10%	10%

As Table 14 sets out, we also expect to see a higher proportion of changes being picked up during the canvass period, compared to the rest of the year, in years without UK-wide elections (e.g. 2018). This trend continued in 2022. Table 14.

Percentage of additions during and outside of canvass period 2015-22

Year	Additions	Deletions	During canvass	Outside canvass
2015	40%	60%	58%	43%
2016	38%	64%	54%	47%
2017	39%	61%	56%	44%
2018	68%	32%	68%	32%
2019	62%	38%	61%	39%
2020	56%	44%	64%	36%
2021	61%	39%	61%	39%
2022	61%	39%	65%	35%

The 2022 data on the proportion of additions and deletions recorded during the canvass period also supports this point (see Table 15). The proportion of additions during the canvass was lowest in Wales (51.6%), followed by Scotland (52.4%) and then by England (62.2%). The proportion of deletions during the canvass was lowest in Scotland (58.9%), followed by Wales (61.4%), and then by England (66.2%). The fact that the proportion of both additions and deletions during the canvass were highest in England aligns with the fact that turnout in England at the May 2022 elections was lower than in both Scotland and Wales. Table 15. Additions and deletions during full year and canvass period, per nation

Area	Additions	Deletions	Full year	Canvass period % during canvass period	England	Scotland	Wales	Great Britain	
England	4,184,944	2,602,740	62.2%	4,233,640	2,802,569	66.2%	397,080	208,263	52.4%
Scotland	234,824	226,355	58.9%	116,703	51.6%	218,729	134,293	61.4%	399,007
Wales	4,808,379	2,927,706	60.9%	3,171,686	4,851,376	65.4%	218,729	134,293	61.4%
Great Britain	4,808,379	2,927,706	60.9%	3,171,686	4,851,376	65.4%	218,729	134,293	61.4%

Further reform of the annual canvass An effective canvass process is an important tool to provide for a high-quality register at all times and to minimise the need for significant updates ahead of major polls. However, evidence from our analysis of canvass data in recent years suggests that the reformed canvass process is still not fully picking up ongoing population movement. This means that EROs will continue to face the challenge of processing large numbers of registration applications in the period immediately before major electoral events, from new electors or people who have changed address that were not picked up by the canvass. This continues to increase risks to the resilience of electoral administration teams in the pre-election period, when they are under significant resource pressures and have critical election deadlines to meet. We have highlighted significant concerns in successive reports on electoral registration that the registration system, including the annual canvass, is unlikely to be sustainable in the longer term. We continue to recommend that governments should further reform electoral registration so that registering and updating address details is as easy as possible for people who aren't correctly registered to vote,

and managing electoral registration is more efficient for EROs. We have highlighted how these reforms could be delivered in practice , including: Introducing more automated or automatic electoral registration options through other public service transactions that people already frequently use, for example applications for passports or changes to driving licence address details, or when new National Insurance numbers are issued to people turning 16. Giving EROs access to data from a wide range of public service organisations so that they can identify new electors who are not correctly registered. There is some evidence that canvass reform has addressed one aspect of sustainability, by reducing the resource consumed by unnecessarily chasing households where there has been no change. However, our analysis has highlighted some signs that it has not had a positive impact on the other key aspect, the system's ability to pick up population changes away from major electoral events. The results from our next accuracy and completeness study, in autumn 2023, will allow us to assess the overall impact on the registers of the reformed canvass in Great Britain.

Background Electoral registers

There is no national electoral register for the United Kingdom. Separate electoral registers are compiled and maintained by each Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) across Great Britain, and one register for Northern Ireland is compiled and maintained by the Chief Electoral Officer. Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) are required to maintain two electoral registers: Parliamentary register – used for UK Parliamentary elections Local government register – used for Scottish Parliamentary, Senedd, Northern Ireland Assembly, local government and Police and Crime Commissioner elections

The electoral register is a property-based database, with register entries linked to a property. This means that the quality of its information is affected by ongoing population change and EROs need to add and delete records for home-movers, electors who have died and newly eligible electors. New registers are published annually and reviewed most months. In Great Britain, there is a process of auditing the register annually before a revised version is published, which is known as the annual canvass. Each ERO is required by law to conduct an annual canvass of all properties in their area to confirm their electoral register entries and to identify electors who have moved or were not previously registered.

The reformed canvass

The 2022 canvass was the third to take place under a new model which incorporates data matching between the electoral registers and a combination of national and local data at the outset of the process. This data matching informs the ERO which properties are likely to have an unchanged household composition to enable them to target their canvass activity accordingly. The ERO will then follow one of three routes for each property:

- Route 1: Properties are placed into Route 1 if the entries of registered electors match with other data, such as that held by the DWP, and the composition of the household is therefore assumed to be unchanged. The ERO will contact Route 1 households to invite them to provide information on any changes which have occurred. Where there are no changes to report, the household is not required to respond.
- Route 2: Properties are placed into Route 2 if any of the entries of registered electors do not match with other data, such as that held by the DWP, and the composition of the household is therefore assumed to have changed such that the electoral register needs to be updated. These households are required to respond to requests for information regardless of whether or not they do in fact need to report a change.
- Route 3: This route is available for those properties where the ERO thinks they can most effectively and efficiently obtain information on residents through a 'single responsible person' acting on behalf of all residents. Care homes and student halls of residence are examples of typical Route 3 properties. Should the ERO be unable to

successfully obtain information about the property from the ‘single responsible person’, the property is placed into Route 2. Engagement with EROs The Commission has the statutory power to set and monitor performance standards for EROs in Great Britain and has been doing so since 2008. In June 2021 we launched a new set of ERO standards. In December 2022 we updated these to reflect the changes being introduced by the Elections Act. We expect to consider further updates as electoral reform proposals from Welsh Government and Scottish Government are progressed. We will continue to use the performance standards framework over the course of this year to build on the work we carried out with EROs in 2022, supporting them to establish more formalised key performance indicators (KPIs) in order to help them better understand, and report on, the impact of their activity. This year we have seen a significant increase in the number of EROs that report having KPIs in place, from 45% in 2021 to 70% in 2022. In the coming year we will shift our emphasis to the content and quality of the KPIs that have been set and how these are being used to inform decision making locally. We are also working with a number of local authorities to develop tools and resources to help EROs make effective use of their data to identify areas where improvements could be made. The data we have gathered to date will help to inform and shape the engagement we carry out with individual EROs, with the aim of developing a deeper understanding of the impact of particular practices and approaches, which in turn can help us to identify and share examples of good practice. In 2023/24, in addition to the specific engagement with EROs during the canvass period, which will be similar to 2022, we will also take a year-round approach to engagement with EROs. As well as focussing on KPIs, this will also involve data collection and engagement around the Elections Act changes which impact on the role of EROs, including administering the Voter Authority Certificate process. Download the electoral registration data 2020-2022 Electoral Registration and Annual Canvass Data 2020-22 1. NRS (2022) Mid-2021 Population Estimates Scotland ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. ONS (2022) Estimates of the population for the UK, England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, Table MYE2 - Persons ■ Back to content at footnote 2 3. HM Government, Scottish Government and Welsh Government (2019) Reform of the Annual Canvass: Statement of Policy ■ Back to content at footnote 3 Page history First published: 30 March 2023 Last updated: 30 March 2023 Related content Our research about our research, which helps inform our work and our policies 2019 report: Accuracy and completeness of the 2018 electoral registers in Great Britain Read our report on the accuracy and completeness of the 2018 electoral registers in Great Britain 2019 electoral fraud data about electoral fraud in 2019 and view the data Public attitudes Read our reports about public attitudes towards voting

Report: Electoral registration at the June 2017 UK general election | Electoral Commission Search Report: Electoral registration at the June 2017 UK general election You are in the UK general elections section Home UK general elections On this page Key data Key issues Key areas for further improvement Download our full report First published: 19 June 2019 Last updated: 13 August 2019 What the report includes A UK Parliamentary general election was held on 8 June 2017. This is the first of the Electoral Commission's statutory reports on the election, and it focuses on the registration of voters, which is at the heart of a sound and efficient electoral system. It sets out our analysis of key data about electoral registration applications and the electoral registers, and identifies issues and recommendations for further improving and modernising the system, which we believe to be urgently needed. Within the UK, the developing devolution settlement means that the Scottish and Welsh Governments have powers to develop policy and legislation for electoral registration for local government elections and Scottish Parliament and National Assembly for Wales elections respectively. We will continue to work closely with all of the UK's governments to help support the development of new approaches to improve the accuracy and completeness of electoral registers. Key data An estimated 46.8 million people were registered to vote at the June 2017 UK Parliamentary general election, of which 68.8% actually voted. This was the largest electorate for a UK-wide poll, with approximately 500,000 more electors than at the 2015 election. More than 2.9 million applications to register to vote were made in Great Britain between the Prime Minister's announcement on 18 April (that she would ask Parliament to approve a general election) and the deadline for applications on 22 May. More than 96% of applications were made using the online service, including 612,000 which were submitted on the last day for applications. Between 18 April and 22 May, over two thirds (69%) of online applications were made by people aged under 34. Key issues The online registration service has significantly improved access to elections in Great Britain since it was introduced in June 2014, but it is not yet available for people in Northern Ireland. Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) have again highlighted the significant administrative and financial impact of processing duplicate applications submitted by people who are already registered to vote. Initial estimates by EROs of the proportion of duplicate applications have ranged from 30% of the total submitted in some areas to 70% in others. Although people may lawfully be registered to vote in more than one place in certain circumstances, it is troubling that some voters appear to have admitted voting more than once at the general election, which is an offence. Key areas for further improvement Online electoral registration should be extended to Northern Ireland as soon as possible. Urgent steps are needed to reduce both the scale and administrative impact of duplicate registration applications for EROs ahead of future polls. Tools to prevent double voting at general elections should be explored quickly. Funding for EROs needs to reflect better the scale of activity required to process electoral registration applications ahead of major polls. Electoral registration should be more joined-up with other public services, to make registering to vote even simpler for the public and more efficient for EROs. This should include integrating applications into other public service transactions, and better use of national data to identify new electors or home movers. Automatic registration methods should be explored further, drawing on other countries' experiences. Download our full report Electoral registration at the June 2017 UK general election Related content Results and turnout at the 2017 UK general election View the results and turnout at the 2017 general election Report: Voting in 2017 Read our report about voting at the general election in 2017 Report:

How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run Report: Political finance regulation at the June 2017 UK general election Read our report about political finance regulation at the 2017 general election

Scottish Parliament Political Parties Panel minutes: 21 January 2021 | Electoral Commission Search Scottish Parliament Political Parties

Panel minutes: 21 January 2021 You are in the Party panels section Home How we make decisions Party panels On this page Who was at the meeting Welcome and introductions Minutes of the last meeting Preparations for the Scottish Parliamentary Election 2021 Report on observations from Scottish Council by-elections EMB Convener directions Electoral registration, postal voting, proxy voting Electoral Commission guidance update Inclusion Scotland - Access to Elected Office Fund Scottish Government update Scotland Office/Cabinet Office update Scottish Boundary Commissions update EMB update Dates of next meeting First published: 20 April 2021 Last updated: 21 May 2021 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Matt Edmonds, Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party (Chair) Scott Martin, Scottish National Party Paul Moat, Scottish Liberal Democrats Fiona O'Donnell, Scottish Labour Party Isabel Drummond-Murray, Scottish Boundary Commissions Maria McCann, Scottish Government Iain Hockenhull, Scottish Government James Newman, Scottish Government Malcolm Burr, Convener Electoral Management Board for Scotland Chris Highcock, Electoral Management Board for Scotland Pete Wildman, Scottish Assessors Association (chair of Electoral Registration Committee) Eleanor Tankard, Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland Rachel Winham, Royal Mail Scott Forsyth, Royal Mail Ethan Young, Inclusion Scotland Dame Susan Bruce, Electoral Commissioner, Scotland Alasdair Morgan, Electoral Commissioner Andy O'Neill, Head of Electoral Commission, Scotland Sarah Mackie, Manager, Electoral Commission, Scotland Martin McKeown, Senior Adviser, Elections & s, Scotland Catherine Heggie, Partnerships and Information Officer, Scotland Lindsey Hamilton, Business Support Officer, Scotland (Minutes) Welcome and introductions Matt Edmonds (ME) welcomed those present and introductions were made.

Minutes of the last meeting The minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 November 2020 were approved. Preparations for the Scottish Parliamentary Election 2021 Scottish General Election (Coronavirus) Bill and other legislation relating to Scottish Parliamentary election 2021 Maria McCann (MMcC) said the Scottish General Election (Coronavirus) Bill had been passed unanimously on 23 December and now awaited Royal Assent. The First Minister had said they were committed to going ahead with the election on 6 May and saw no reason to change that position, but if a postponement were to be required, it would take the form of an emergency Bill and come back to MSPs to vote on. Rachel Winham (RW) asked how likely an all postal election would be. MMcC said it was extremely unlikely and only in the event of a postponement. MMcC said there was an agreed approach to the vaccination programme which prioritised those most vulnerable so those working in elections could not be vaccinated earlier than planned and it was possible that by May very significant numbers would have been vaccinated. Action: MMcC to circulate a link to Jason Leitch's Q&A's Report on observations from Scottish Council by-elections Martin McKeown (MMcK) said the key point to take from the Report was elections could be conducted safely with aspects of polling adapted to the public health condition. He said there would be a briefing on 5 February with all RO/EROs in Scotland to talk through the findings and also concerns about the polls going ahead. Fiona O'Donnell (FOD) asked if there was any correlation between by-elections held and turnout, but the by-elections had been held before moving to the tier system and there was no evidence of a great upturn in postal votes. EMB Convener directions Malcolm Burr (MB) said that directions had been issued to RO/EROs and a discussion on points arising took place. See directions Electoral registration, postal voting, proxy voting Pete Wildman (PW) said that by 1st December, postal vote applications were 16.6% and by

1st January 16.69%. During this period the electorate grew by 6,500. He advised that a Household Notification Letter (HNL) would be issued across Scotland starting week of 8 February confirming who was registered to vote at the property and who had a postal vote. It would provide instructions on how to register and apply for a postal vote. A TV advert airing during the first two weeks of February would raise awareness of postal voting. Any requests for a postal vote application form made to an ERO would be supplied with a business reply paid envelope. All postal vote applications needed to be returned to the EROs by 5pm on 6 April 2021. Scott Martin (SM) asked about the postal vote signature refresh, PW confirmed that was happening and if a registered postal voter did not reply to the request they would lose their postal vote, even if listed on the HNL. Electoral Commission guidance update MMcK confirmed core guidance for parties, candidates and agents had now been published and asked it be directed to those in the parties who required it. He said the website would make it clear that early contact should be made with the RRO and ROs to go over which aspects of the election would be different, e.g. nominations. Campaigning under Covid-19 - MMcK said the consultation with parties surrounding concerns on campaigning had closed and supplementary guidance to be issued would reflect the feedback received. Briefings for Parties -MMcK noted guidance on imprints had been circulated with some taking up the invitation to meet and discuss. He said he was happy to meet with all Parties to discuss any aspect of guidance. Code of Conduct for s -Sarah Mackie (SMA) reminded all of the voluntary code for campaigners, following receipt of complaints from the public. She said the Commission had not been provided with any evidence but in light of the earlier deadline for postal vote applications asked that candidates and campaigners be aware of the deadline and to direct forms to the relevant EROs so that postal vote applications could be received in time. She confirmed Scotland was the only country holding elections this year with an earlier postal voting deadline (for the Scottish Parliament election) but there were also a number of council by-elections taking place which carried the usual minus 11 days deadline. The Commission's postal voting forms were being updated to remove deadline references but with advice to check the deadline for the specific election applied for. Action: SMA to circulate the Commission's updated postal voting form as soon as possible. PW reminded all that requests for application forms to EROs were sent out with a letter explaining the deadline and the HNL made the deadline clear. FOD asked how to establish two days from parties gathering the forms. SMA advised that if in doubt, to leave the form in the voter's hands to forward to the relevant ERO. FOD asked if the Commission's recently published report on the by-elections had any questions on the value voters placed on receiving leaflets or a door knock visit. AON replied that the Commission's research did not cover that. Public Awareness - SMA briefed the Panel on a number of awareness activities to be undertaken leading to the Scottish Parliament election. The Chief Medical officer (CMO) was going to write in February to those who were shielding and the Commission would liaise with the CMO over the content of the letter. A virtual 'Welcome to your vote' week scheduled for the end of February would be held which replicated the work which would normally be done in schools. For qualifying foreign nationals there would be workshops with refugee groups. The main electoral registration campaign would commence on 9 March with TV, online and radio focussing on encouraging registration ahead of the deadline. The household booklet would go out on 22 March and would include information on what Parliament does, voting method options, how to vote and what to expect in the polling station under Covid restrictions. SM recalled parties had been consulted on the booklet in the past and asked if that would happen this time. SMA

indicated that, as previously, finalised text would be shared with parties for their information. Inclusion Scotland - Access to Elected Office Fund Ethan young (EY) spoke of the importance in having parties' record data on protected characteristics to help reduce barriers to those who run for public office. The data should include:- how many disabled people approved/not approved for candidate selection, who had/had not been selected as a candidate, how many elected and to which office The Parties' asked if EY could send a best practice guide including the information sought and which he agreed to do. Action: Ethan Young Scottish Government update Codes of Practice on spending - MMcC explained the Codes had not been introduced to the Scottish Parliament for the reasons given in the written update circulated earlier.

e-Counting 2022 - James Newman (JN) said an early trial of the system had taken place with a number of minor changes requested which would be developed prior to further testing. He committed to coming back to the group to canvass views either writing directly to the parties' or bringing to the next meeting. Action: James Newman.

Campaigning under Covid - MMcC said current regulations didn't permit door-to-door activity or public meetings and she would be interested to hear from parties on what they were able to do under current restrictions. All the parties agreed it was not possible to do traditional door step campaigning which would have a bigger impact closer to the election. Clarification was sought following a news item which had suggested leafleting was being practiced and asked if that was indeed possible.

Leafleting etc. was currently not allowed. It was confirmed it was possible to leave home to go and vote as was the submission of nomination papers which were a legal obligation, so permitted. The parties asked if consideration had been given to extra spending and MMcC confirmed it had been discussed by the cross-party group of MSPs during the Scottish General Election (Coronavirus) Bill development but had been decided against at that point. Scotland Office/Cabinet Office update Ellie Tankard (ET) reported the Parliamentary Constituencies Bill had received Royal Assent on 14 December 2020 and the 2023 Boundary review had been launched. The Draft Repeal Bill published in December had its review extended and the Joint Committee would now report by 31 March 2021. Scottish Boundary Commissions update Local Government Boundary Commission - Isabel Drummond-Murray (ID-M) said the public consultation on electoral arrangements in Argyll and Bute, North Ayrshire and Highland closed on 26 January and all responses would be considered before developing final recommendations and submitting these to Scottish Ministers in 2021. Boundary Commission for Scotland – ID-M noted legislative changes had already been covered. She confirmed the 2023 review had now formally commenced but would not report until June 2023. Consultation in Scotland would likely begin in the autumn, slightly behind the Boundary

Commission were likely to out to consultation in the summer. ID-M would be happy to set up a meeting to discuss the coming review with the parties. She suggested March and would circulate something via the Electoral Commission. Action: Isabel Drummond-Murray to arrange meeting with parties through EC Royal Mail update Rachel Winham (RW) said their preparations were well under way for the May 2021 election. She would forward the candidate mail update next Tuesday. With regards to a number of concerns over the current levels of service due to the pandemic, she indicated they faced the same issues as everyone else under Covid but gave assurance that election materials were a priority and would be delivered on time. Royal Mail appreciated parties wanted mail to hit door mats a day or two before delivery of postal votes and polling and said they would do the best for them. The helpline was open 24/7 and there was a contact for support. Action: Rachel Winham to provide contact details. EMB update Chris Highcock (CH) reiterated that the EMB direction letter had been issued and was

available on the EMB website. The Convener of the EMB was likely to update his advice to Scottish Ministers regarding the issue of day(s) of poll at the end of January and was currently considering additional directions in relation to daytime counting and numbers of voters per polling station. In relation to the May 2022 Scottish Local Government election e-counting project CH updated that work on the project was continuing and the EMB would update the Panel further at a later date. PW confirmed the electoral registers were published on 1 December 2020 except for Glasgow's which will be published on 1 February 2021. Second Interim Update available fixed 8 April agreed. Electoral Commission update AON indicated Police Scotland would attend the RO/ERO briefing on 5 February and be invited to attend the next SP PPP meeting.

Action: EC to invite Police Scotland. Dates of next meeting Thursday 4 March 2021 at 11am

You are in the Party panels section Home How we make decisions Party panels On this page Minutes, and actions of the meeting and matters arising (ECPPP 01/12/2015) May 2016 polls EU Referendum Strategic Review Commission update report Date of the next meeting Actions First published: 23 February 2016 Last updated: 2 September 2019 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Conservative Party: Andrew Stedman (AS) Labour: Margaret Lynch (ML) Mike Creighton (MC) Liberal Democrats: Darren Briddock (DB) Scottish National Party (Chair): Scott Martin (SM) Electoral Commission: Claire Bassett, Chief Executive (CB) Alex Robertson, Director of Communication (AR) Bob Posner, Director of Party and Election Finance (BP) Katy Thomas (KT), Planning and Performance Manager Karim Aziz, Deputy Head of Media and Public Affairs (KA) Minutes, and actions of the meeting and matters arising (ECPPP 01/12/2015) The minutes from 01/12/2015 were agreed. BP noted that the recently launched online consultation on new party registration applications had not generated a large number of responses from other political parties or members of the public. PPP members all said that it was a useful page on the website. DB suggested adding a link to PEF Online to the page as it was hard to find on the website. Action: Commission to look into whether it is practical / cost effective to put a link on PEF Online. It was noted that in any event all members of the PPP should be receiving (and if not can register to receive) email alerts when new party registration applications go onto the website. DB said that a new set of XML spreadsheets for parties to record spending would be available soon. Action: Commission to confirm dates that the spreadsheet would be available for parties to start using. Members of the PPP queried why they had to report the 'incurred date' for a transaction and not just the date that an invoice is paid. BP said that he thought the form reflected a legal requirement. Action: Commission to clarify what 'incurred date' means and clarify whether it is a requirement in the legislation. May 2016 polls DB asked what the Commission was doing to encourage expats to register to vote. AR confirmed that nothing for the May 16 polls as they're not eligible to take part, but a lot of work is being undertaken ahead of the EU Referendum including an online campaign and engaging with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and embassies. AR noted that the Commission worked closely with them to promote 'Overseas Voter Registration Day' on 4 February. MC noted the recent Law Commission report addressed areas of the law that are not certain. BP confirmed that so far, the Commission had not seen anything that would mean the Commission needs to change its guidance. BP drew the group's attention to section 1.9 of the Commission's update report and over-lapping regulated periods (elections in May 2016 and the EU Referendum in June) and informed the panel that the Commission would be issuing guidance about this in early March. AS mentioned that when using the Commission's guidance and tried to click to open an expert papers on 'valuing donations in kind' or 'sponsorship' they didn't appear to be there. Action: Commission to look into this. ML mentioned that in the Commission's Police and Crime Commissioner guidance, there are no names for the Police Area Returning Officers (PAROs) or direct email addresses for them. Action: Commission to provide list of PAROs and contact addresses. ML asked about the publication of the 1 December registers. AR informed the panel that the Commission would be publishing its analysis on 24 February. DB, AS and ML all commented that the additions and deletions to the registers after 1 December make it harder to undertake compliance checks. SM agreed with the points made. CB acknowledged that it's an imperfect situation. EU Referendum AR confirmed the dates for the designation application process at the EU Referendum

and the regulatory period, subject to parliamentary approval. DB asked if the ‘working together rules’ would be the same as at the Scottish Independence Referendum. BP confirmed that this would be the case and that there would also be pre-poll reporting. SM commented that when the Scottish National Party registered as a campaigner at the EU Referendum, a letter was sent to the ‘responsible person’ about their pre-poll reporting requirements. This does not apply to political parties as they are required to report donations over £7,500 on a quarterly basis. Action: Commission to look at amending registration letters that go to political parties so they do not reference pre-poll reporting at the EU Referendum. DB asked what the Electoral Commission will do if it appears that campaigners have ‘over stepped’ the mark. DB said he didn’t want a situation where debate is ‘stifled’. AR said that it’s important to learn the lessons from the Scottish Independence Referendum where the police took any allegations of a breach in the rules seriously. The panel and the Commission felt that it would be a good idea to publicise that campaigners had signed up to the Commission’s Code of Conduct. Action: Commission to consider whether it will ask designated lead campaigners to sign up to its Code of Conduct. Strategic Review CB informed the panel that the timing of the EU Referendum means that the strategic review will slow down now and ramp up over the summer. The panel then took part in a roundtable discussion about the review. The discussion focused around the development of a single, national register; greater powers for the Electoral Commission over Local Authorities; review of campaign rules in light of changes in the cost of and how social media is used and changes to wider campaigner rules. Commission update report MC asked to what extent the Commission had considered political parties’ ability to absorb cuts in Policy Development Grants (PDGs). BP referenced the short notice period it had to develop a formula for the reduction in PDGs and informed the panel that the Electoral Commission Board will want to consider again in future. MC noted that the Labour Party was opposed to the reduction in PDGs. BP confirmed that the Commission would look at the standardisation of accounts in the second half of this year. SM asked if it was just for parties over £250k or would it be for accounting units with income / expenditure over £250k too. BP confirmed it would likely be for both. DB said it would be helpful if the Commission could consult with the auditors that parties use. BP confirmed that the Commission would and that this would be a key part of the process. AS also said that the Commission should be mindful that a lot of accounting units have volunteers who are responsible for reporting requirements. Date of the next meeting The next PPP meeting will take place on Tuesday 5 July at 11am – Labour to chair. Actions Actions from February 2016 PPP meeting Action Owner Status EC to look into whether to put a link on PEF Online to page on website where people can review party registration requests BP Information provided 3 March EC to confirm date that XML spreadsheet to record spending would be available for parties BP Information provided 3 March EC to confirm what ‘incurred date’ for reporting spending means and whether it is a legislative requirement BP Information sent 21 March EC to look into whether there are expert papers on valuing donations in kind and sponsorship KA Sent 3 March EC to provide a list of PARO names and contact details KA Sent 3 March EC to look at amending the letters that go to political parties that register at EU Referendum so they don’t mention pre-poll reporting requirement BP Change to letters made 3 March, info sent 21 March EC to confirm that it will consider whether to ask designated lead campaigners to sign up to Code of Conduct and publicise it BP Information provided 3 March Related content Party registration decisions View our decisions on political party names, descriptions and emblems View current applications View the political party names,

descriptions and emblems which we are currently considering as part of our assessment process

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Changes to postal voting You are in the Elections Act section Home Elections Act On this page Changes for voters Our role in the change for voters Postal vote handling and secrecy Changes to postal vote handling and secrecy Our role in the changes to postal vote handling and secrecy First published: 5 July 2021 Last updated: 7 July 2023 Summary From October 2023, there will be a number of changes to postal voting for both voters and parties and campaigners. It will also be possible to apply for a postal vote online. This will apply to: local elections in England, Police and Crime Commissioner elections in England and Wales, and UK Parliament general elections, by-elections and recall petitions. Changes for voters The changes to postal voting include: A maximum period of three years on voters' application to hold a postal vote. Voters would need to re-apply at the end of that time. Allowing voters to apply online for a postal vote and requiring a voter's identity to be checked as part of the process. Both online and paper applications will require ID verification. Our role in the changes for voters We will provide updated guidance and support to electoral administrators to help them understand and deliver the changes. We will support local authorities to communicate these changes to voters who want to apply for a postal vote, including highlighting to them the option to apply online. We will also update the postal vote application forms. We will tell political parties and campaigners about the postal vote changes. Postal vote handling and secrecy From 1 December 2023, restrictions on the handling of postal votes by campaigners will apply. Changes to postal vote handling and secrecy A ban and new criminal offence will be in place to stop parties and campaigners handling completed postal votes and postal vote envelopes. Only voters, a family member or a designated carer will be able to hand in a postal vote. Voters will not be allowed to hand in more than five postal ballot packs (in addition to their own). Ministers will get new powers to make regulations to limit the number of postal ballot packs that someone can hand in on behalf of other voters, and would also require postal votes to be rejected if they are not handed in in accordance with the requirements. Our role in the changes to postal vote handling and secrecy We will update our guidance for electoral administrators and polling station staff to help them understand the changes. We will also provide updated guidance for political parties and campaigners to help them comply with the changes on handling postal votes, which formalise a key part of our existing code of conduct for parties and campaigners. Related content Elections Act about the UK Government's Elections Act and what it means for voting and campaigning About the Elections Act about the Elections Bill, including the measures it contains and which elections it applies to. Requirement to show ID at polling stations about the UK Government's voter ID proposal. Changes to proxy voting about the proposed changes to voting by proxy, where someone you trust votes on your behalf.

Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Who was at the meeting Apologies and welcome Declarations of interest Minutes Commission Board action tracker Forward Plan of Board business 2022/23 National Audit Office (NAO)

RSM's annual internal audit report Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) 2021/22 to the Commission Board Annual Report of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee 2021/22 to the Commission Board Pay remit 2022/23 Board effectiveness matters Chief Executive's update Update from the

Audit and Risk Committee Chair First published: 9 August 2022 Last updated: 22 August

2022 Meeting summary Date: Wednesday 22 June 2022 Time: 9:30am to 1:00pm Location: In person and by video conference Date of next scheduled meeting: Wednesday 20 July 2022

Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Pullinger, Chair Rob Vincent Sue

Bruce Alex Attwood Sarah Chambers Stephen Gilbert Alasdair Morgan Joan Walley Katy

Radford In attendance: Shaun McNally, Chief Executive Craig Westwood, Director,

Communications, Policy and Research Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate

Services Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Louise

Edwards, Director, Regulation Binnie Goh, General Counsel Zena Khan, Senior Adviser,

Governance Lilly Malik, Legal Officer [meeting support] Tracey Blackman, Head,

Finance and [items 6, 7, 8 and 9] Apologies and welcome Apologies were received from

Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services. The Chair welcomed all to the

meeting, in particular Paul Redfern, Independent Adviser to the Audit and Risk

Committee. Paul would continue to maintain relationships with Commissioners and on

occasion provide advice where applicable. Paul would be contributing to the end of

year reports. Declarations of interest Resolved: That the Board noted no new declared

interests. Minutes (EC 118/22) Resolved: That the minutes of the Board meeting on 18

May 2022 be agreed. Commission Board action tracker (EC 119/22) The Board noted that

the report on Bullying and Harassment which went to a meeting of the Remuneration and

Human Resources Committee last year, was circulated to Commissioners. It was noted

that the remaining actions were delayed due to clarification on what would be

covered, and in places the need to organise external speakers. These items will be

scheduled for board business this year. Resolved: That the Board noted the progress

against actions requested by the Board. Forward Plan of Board business 2022/23 (EC

120/22) The Board discussed how best to capture and progress any actions from the

deep dive sessions at the October meeting in Northern Ireland and the England region

meeting in February 2023. The potential for an annual discussion around the state of

the electoral system was discussed, potentially following the May elections. This

would enable the Board to take stock and aid forward planning. Resolved: That the

Board discussed and reviewed the Forward Plan of Board business for 2022/23, with

pending topical items for scheduling. National Audit Office (NAO) (EC 121/22) The

Board discussed the Audit completion report (including management letter) on the

2021/22 financial statements audit. The Board were advised that whilst there were

only minor issues still left to be resolved, the NAO could not provide assurance at

this stage, but at the same time, were not anticipating any significant changes. The

Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee advised that at their meeting earlier in the

week, they were satisfied with the reasonable assurance from NAO. Resolved: That the

Board was content with delegating the final approvals to the Accounting Officer and

the Commission Chair on the NAO completion report and approve any further disclosure

amendments unless they were significant in nature. RSM's annual internal audit report

(EC 122/22) The Board considered the annual internal audit opinion, prepared by

internal auditors RSM, on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's risk management, control and governance processes. The opinion would contribute to the organisation's annual governance reporting. The Audit and Risk Committee Chair advised the Board that despite the report providing reasonable assurance, the Committee was working with RSM to further enhance the internal audits for the coming year. The Board discussed and noted that at a previous meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee, an audit on PF Online procurement was deferred. Resolved: That the Board noted RSM's audit opinion. Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 (EC 123/22) The Board received the Commission's Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 following the Audit and Risk Committee's review of the Report and Accounts including the governance statement, at their meeting on 20 June. The Board noted that this was the first year in which the accounts also have to include specific reports on Scottish and Welsh devolved functions. The Board supported the inclusion of dedicated sections devoted to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Board discussed finalisation of the foreword for consistency and welcomed the overall approach on how the report was written, thanking staff colleagues for their work thus far. The Board noted that following discussions at the Audit and Risk Committee meeting, the Committee Chair recommended to the Board, delegated authority to both the Commission Chair and the Chief Executive: (i) that it adopted the accounts and, (ii) the accounting officer approved the governance statement and signed the accounts as appropriate Resolved: That the Board approved and adopted the Annual Report and Accounts for 2021/22, subject to final NAO approval, to be signed by the Accounting Officer and submitted to the Comptroller and Auditor General for certification. The audited Report and Accounts would then be laid before the House of Commons, House of Lords and Scottish and Welsh Parliaments in July. Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) 2021/22 to the Commission Board (EC 124/22) The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee introduced the report, summarising the work of the Committee during the year 2021/22. The Board noted the Committee's annual review of information assurance and further work planned to enhance cyber security and reduce risk. The Board noted that a risk appetite workshop would be scheduled this year for the Board to understand further risk management, and how this is linked to the Commission's objectives, helping with Board oversight whilst improving financial and budgetary controls. Resolved: That the Board noted the work of the Audit and Risk Committee during the year 2021/22. Annual Report of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee 2021/22 to the Commission Board (EC 125/22) The Chair of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee introduced the report, summarising the work of the Committee during the year 2021/22. The Board welcomed the update noting recent activities of the Committee on workforce and recruitment retention risks, ways of working post Covid, exit payments, pay remit and the staff survey results 2021. The Board noted that whilst finalisation of the revised people strategy was due to be presented at the next Committee meeting, the Board discussed how best the Committee can engage more with staff colleagues on HR issues and the culture of the organisation. The Board noted that Commissioners are welcome to attend either of the two Committees as observers to better understand and engage in their work. Resolved: That the Board noted the work of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee during the year 2021/22. Pay remit 2022/23 (EC 126/22) Having regard to the desirability of keeping pay broadly in line with the Civil Service and considering wider comparisons, the Board considered the appropriate approach for the annual pay award remit for the Commission in 2022/23. The Board discussed the need for flexibility in recruiting staff and how to do this. The Board favoured recruiting

from wider, diverse geographical areas, and more flexibility on remote working, but acknowledged that there would be the need for certain teams to attend the office more than two days a week. This also raised discussions on office space and how that relates to our approach to recruitment. Resolved: That the Board agreed the proposed pay remit for the 2022/23 pay award. Board effectiveness matters (Oral) The Board received an oral update from the General Counsel on work planned for the review of Board effectiveness. The Board noted that this work would be carried out internally rather than using an external organisation and that a survey would be circulated via a survey platform to capture the Board's performance, insights and ways of strengthening the work between the executive and Board members whilst highlighting areas for further development. It was noted that the survey would be anonymised and there would be extra text space for additional comments. The survey would be reported to the October Board meeting as part of the Board effectiveness review item.

Resolved: That the Board noted the oral update. Chief Executive's update (Oral) The Board received an oral update on operations and matters arising, in particular updates on digital transformation, Elections Act implementation, the Independent Adviser to the Commission Board on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and the Belfast Board away day in October. The Chief Executive advised the Board on work planned for the Commission's digital infrastructure, following the appointment of the new Head of Digital who started at the Commission this week. The Board noted that the Commission has been responding to the aging IT infrastructure and plans are in place to move services to Cloud based infrastructure. Further updates including any funding gaps would be reported to the Board in the coming months. The Board noted that the revised people strategy was in its final iterations and this would be received at the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee meeting in July, before wider circulation to the Board. It was noted that there was a renewed focus on learning and development in the strategy. Learning and development taster sessions have been programmed for two days in July and, a roll out of a leadership programme across the organisation. It was reported that we have engaged with external parties who have offered to run leadership workshops, providing colleagues with an opportunity to take part in masterclasses to develop their skills. The Board noted an update on the Elections Act and in particular recent discussions with the Minister related to implementation of the provisions. It was agreed that Elections Act implementation will be a topic for discussion at the next Board meeting in July. The Board noted arrangements for the Belfast Board away day in October were underway, with thanks to Commissioner Katy Radford for her input so far. It was noted that we are arranging a two day programme, with an option for staff colleagues and Commissioners to travel on the Sunday and have dinner. We are starting to programme and secure speakers and Katy Radford will circulate an email to share some thoughts for the programming. An update will be brought to the July Board meeting. The General Counsel updated the Board on the recruitment of the Independent Adviser to the Commission Board on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. The Board noted that the campaign is now closed with twenty six applications received. The longlisting took place this week, agreeing on nine applicants. The agency will hold interviews to produce a shortlist of candidates next month. The Board noted that the selection panel were impressed with the quality of applicants so far, from a wide range of backgrounds. The Board discussed the scope of the role and how this role would link in with work already scoped out with the EDI lead and the remit of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee. There was a desire to ensure that the Independent Adviser would have an effective role within the Board and Commission with discussions on expectations and value for money. Resolved:

That the Board noted the oral updates. Update from the Audit and Risk Committee Chair (Oral) The Board received an oral update on the work of the Committee at their meeting earlier in the week. The Board noted activities on the RSM internal audit on quality assurance and the progress report, as well as the internal audit annual opinion. Further work considered was on the National Audit Office report, Annual Report and Resource Accounts (including the governance statement) 2021/22, Annual Report of the Committee 2021/22 to the Commission Board and Committee effectiveness.

Resolved: That the Board noted the oral updates.

Results and turnout at the 2016 National Assembly for Wales election | Electoral Commission Search Results and turnout at the 2016 National Assembly for Wales election You are in the Senedd elections section Home Senedd elections First published: 9 August 2019 Last updated: 9 August 2019 Download You can download our full dataset as an XLS full dataset as a CSV You can also download our full report , written by Colin Rallings and Michael Thrasher (Elections Centre, Plymouth University, Drake Circus, Plymouth, PL4 8AA). Summary Simultaneous elections were held to choose 60 members of the National Assembly for Wales as well as four Police and Crime Commissioners. The number of constituency candidates at the Assembly elections was 248 -a record- compared to 176 in 2011 and 197 in 2007. Sixteen parties or groups were represented in the regional lists together with 2 individuals. Labour won a total of 29 out of 60 Assembly seats. The Conservatives took 11, Plaid Cymru 12; UKIP seven; and the Liberal Democrats a single seat. No other party or Independent candidate won a seat. In the PCC contests, there were 19 candidates across 4 police authority areas. Labour won two of the posts and Plaid Cymru two. Almost 2.25 million electors were eligible to vote at these elections: a decrease of more than 40,000 compared with 2011. The names of about 3.3% of those on the 'final' register were added between December 2015 and 13 March 2016, and a further 1.6% between 13 March and the deadline of 16 April. More than 1,020,000 votes were counted in both the NAW constituency and regional level polls, making the overall turnout 45.6% - almost four percentage points higher than in 2011. Slightly fewer votes were cast at the PCC contests where the turnout was 45.2%. The proportion of ballot papers rejected at the count was again very small at the NAW elections – 0.54% of constituency ballots and 0.64% of list ballots. However, 5.3% of first votes were rejected at the PCC contests in Wales compared with 3.1% in 2012. Across Wales, 395,878 postal ballots were issued, representing 17.6% of the electorate. This is the largest proportion to date at an Assembly election, but fractionally below the 17.7% at the 2015 general election. More than seven in 10 of postal ballot forms issued were returned (73.9%). Of these, 3.5% (constituency) and 4.0% (regional list) were rejected because of failures relating to personal identifiers or non-inclusion of either a ballot paper or statement in the envelope. Some 5% of postal vote forms at the PCC elections were rejected – almost half for a failure to enclose the relevant ballot paper. Related content Report: How the 2016 Scottish Parliament election was run View the results and turnout at the 2016 Scottish Parliament election Report on the May 2021 elections in Wales Read our report about how the 2021 elections in Wales were run Report: How the 2011 National Assembly for Wales elections were run Read our report about how the 2011 National Assembly for Wales elections were run Results and turnout at the 2011 National Assembly for Wales election View the results and turnout at the 2011 National Assembly for Wales election

Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run | Electoral Commission Search Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run You are in the UK general elections section Home UK general elections On this page Summary Download our full report First published: 14 June 2019 Last updated: 6 August 2019 Summary Nearly four in five (79%) people surveyed after the election reported they were either very or fairly confident the elections were well-run, and 89% of candidates were very or fairly satisfied with the administration of the election. The June 2017 UK Parliamentary general election was unexpectedly announced less than three weeks before polling day for the scheduled May 2017 local government elections. This presented significant challenges for Returning Officers (ROs) and their staff who were responsible for running the poll. They deserve great credit and thanks for ensuring that the May and June elections were well-run. Risks to well-run elections But this positive overall picture should not mask wider risks to the administration of well-run elections, which are becoming increasingly apparent. ROs and electoral administrators face reduced resources and a growing number of skilled professionals are leaving local authority elections teams. They are also increasingly reliant on a relatively small pool of specialist software and print management suppliers. Problems in some places meaning that some voters received inadequate service, and significant issues in Plymouth and Newcastle-under-Lyme illustrate that more action must be taken now to deal with the increasing challenges that ROs are facing in delivering well-run elections. We will continue to work with the UK's governments, Electoral Registration Officers and Returning Officers to collect and review evidence about the challenges to well-run elections and to identify changes which could help reduce these risks.

Recommendations We also want to see progress by the UK's governments towards implementing recommendations that we and others have made, including:

- Implementing the UK Law Commissions' proposals to simplify electoral law and Sir Eric Pickles' recommendations on electoral fraud.
- Improving the rules for nominating candidates, appointing emergency proxies and making it easier for overseas voters to cast a vote.
- Making electoral registration more joined-up with other public services to make it simpler for the public and more efficient for EROs, and reducing the risk of people voting in more than one constituency.

Download our full report The administration of the June 2017 UK general election Related content Results and turnout at the 2017 UK general election View the results and turnout at the 2017 general election Report: Political finance regulation at the June 2017 UK general election Read our report about political finance regulation at the 2017 general election Report: Electoral registration at the June 2017 UK general election Read our report about electoral registration at the 2017 general election Report: Voting in 2017 Read our report about voting at the general election in 2017

These recommendations need to be seen in the context of a wider electoral reform agenda which including proposals made by the Law Commissions of Scotland, England & Wales and Northern Ireland and the consultation on Scottish elections which the Scottish Government has indicated it will undertake via its Programme for Government.

Key findings Our research with voters and campaigners found high levels of confidence

that the council elections held on 4 May 2017 were well-run: Total electorate was

4,110,790 and a total of 1,889,657 votes were cast at the elections, representing a

turnout of 46.9% - the highest level of turnout for a set of stand-alone ordinary

council elections since 1977. More than eight in ten respondents (82%) said they were

confident that the polls were well run, up from 75% at the 2012 council elections.

Nearly nine in ten people (88%) said they were very or fairly satisfied with the process of registering to vote and 78% expressed satisfaction with the procedure for voting. Nearly all those voters who responded to our survey (94%) said that they found it easy to fill in their ballot paper. The level of rejected ballots was 1.95%, slightly up from 1.74% in 2012. The vast majority (95%) of candidates and agents who responded to our survey said that they were satisfied with the overall administration of the election.

Recommendations: Voter participation Recommendation 1 We recommend that the Scottish Government consult on and bring forward legislation extending the emergency proxy provisions so that those who have unforeseen caring responsibilities would also be eligible to apply for an emergency proxy. Recommendation 2 The Commission will review its own voter information materials with a view to expanding the provision of material which helps voters to understand the voting system and the effect of their vote. We also recommend that: Parties review their campaigning strategies and the messaging that is given to voters on the doorstep to ensure that it does not contribute to any misunderstanding of the voting system. ROs and the EMB review the provision of training for polling station staff and the written instructions in polling stations and postal voting stationery, to ensure that information is consistent and as accessible as possible for voters. Should this review highlight any changes necessary for prescribed forms then this will require action from the Scottish Government. For future elections ROs should also assess each ward to identify those at risk of higher ballot rejection rates (whether as a

consequence of multiple candidates standing for a particular party or higher rates of deprivation within the ward) The Commission and the EMB should work with ROs to identify strategies which militate against higher rejection rates in these wards. The Commission will review its work with the media to help improve voter understanding of the electoral system. Further work should be undertaken by all relevant stakeholders, including the Commission, local authorities and education bodies to identify opportunities for targeting information on the voting system at first time voters via schools, colleges, universities and through social media platforms. Recommendation 3 Given that there are no scheduled elections in which 16 and 17 year olds in Scotland can vote in until the 2021 Scottish Parliament election; consideration needs to be given to how to engage young people who will reach the age of electoral majority in the next four years. In order to do this the Commission will work with educational partners and councils to identify opportunities for supporting ongoing political literacy in schools and encouraging young people to register when they attain the age to do so. Recommendations: Electoral administration framework Recommendation 4 The Scottish and UK Governments must now legislate to provide the EMB with statutory powers for Scottish and UK Parliament elections. The legal status and funding of the EMB also needs to be reviewed to allow it to undertake the management roles it was initially envisaged it would undertake, including overseeing the procurement and delivery of the e-counting project for council elections. Recommendation 5

Transparency in the count centre is important and helps the RO achieve an accurate result which is accepted by those present. We recommend that the EMB lead a review, in consultation with political parties and other stakeholders, of the transparency of the e-count processes within the count centre, including the use and content of information screens to ensure the highest levels of transparency and confidence in the count. Recommendation 6 In the event that e-counting continues to be used for future council elections, ROs must take full control and responsibility for the planning and delivery of the e-counting solution ahead of future council elections.

This work should be led by the EMB and needs to begin at least three years ahead of the next scheduled elections in 2022. The EMB will need to be adequately resourced to take this forward. Recommendation 7 The provision of a Scotland-wide results service requires planning, resources and practice to ensure smooth running; we recommend that ahead of the next set of all-out council elections further work is carried out to ensure that this service can be delivered accurately and in good time to meet legitimate public expectations. Recommendations: Regulation of campaigning

Recommendation 8 We suggest that any changes to the rules relating to the use of the register should be considered alongside a review of the regulation of political parties as set out in recommendation 9. Recommendation 9 The Scottish Government should review and modernise the regulation of campaigning at council elections in time for any changes to be implemented for the next elections in 2022. The review should consider and respond to the Electoral Commission's recommendations following the 2012 Scottish council elections as well as the issues highlighted in this report including: Introducing donation controls for candidates at council elections Giving the Commission a statutory role to provide guidance for candidates and agents at council elections Specifying a list of activities that count against candidates' spending limits at council elections Clarifying whether candidates employed by 'arms-length' bodies delivering council services would need to resign from their employment in order to be a councillor at the relevant council Requiring ROs to publish candidates' spending returns online as well as through existing methods of public inspection Reviewing the rules on the publication of candidates' home addresses The

Scottish Government should consult the political parties that contested the 2017 elections, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, the Commission and any other interested stakeholders on these issues as part of this review. Download our full report The administration of the Scottish council elections held on 4 May 2017

1. The wards that were uncontested were; Shetland South (Shetland Islands), Stromness and South Isles (Orkney Islands), and South Kintyre (Argyll & Bute). ■ Back to content at footnote 1 Related content Report on the May 2022 Scottish council elections Read our report on the May 2022 Scottish council elections. Report: Voting in 2017 Read our report about voting at the general election in 2017 Results and turnout at the 2017 Scottish local council elections View the results and turnout at the 2017 Scottish local elections Local councils Find out about local councils and how to vote in local council elections.

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On this page Running the petition Signing the petition Campaigning First published:
10 October 2019 Last updated: 10 October 2019 Running the petition Notification of
petition Tuesday 5 March Petition open Tuesday 19 March-Wednesday 1 May Number of
signing places (maximum of 10) 10 Extended hours (outside 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday)
Open from 7am on Tuesdays; closed 10pm on Thursdays Count Took place immediately
after signing places closed at 5pm Signing the petition For a recall petition to
result in an MP being recalled, over 10% of people eligible to sign must do so within
the six-week signing period. We can see from petition data that the majority of those
who signed did so within the first two weeks of the petition opening. How many people
were eligible to sign 69,673 How many signatures needed to recall MP 6,967 Number who
signed 19,261 - this was 28% of people eligible to sign Spoilt signing papers 62 We
can also see from this data how people chose to sign the petition. How people chose
to sign the petition Campaigning People or organisations wishing to campaign for or
against the recall petition and intending to spend over £500 were required to notify
the PO that they wished to be a registered campaigner. There were five registered
campaigners in Peterborough. Only three of these have submitted donation and spending
returns. Spending and donation returns

Investigation: Vote Leave Ltd, Mr Darren Grimes, BeLeave and Veterans for Britain | Electoral Commission Search Investigation: Vote Leave Ltd, Mr Darren Grimes, BeLeave and Veterans for Britain You are in the Investigations section Home Investigations On this page Summary Offences and penalties

Investigation findings Offences committed Legal and regulatory framework First published: 17 July 2018 Last updated: 7 May 2020 Overview This investigation mainly concerned five payments made in June 2016 to a Canadian data analytics firm called Aggregate IQ. The payments were for services provided to campaigners in the EU Referendum. Three of the payments, totalling £675,315.18, were reported by Mr Grimes as donations from Vote Leave, and as spending by him on services from Aggregate IQ. Another payment of £50,000 from Mr Anthony Clake was reported by Mr Grimes as a donation from Mr Clake, and as spending by Mr Grimes on services from Aggregate IQ. The final payment of £100,000 was reported by Veterans for Britain as a donation from Vote Leave and as spending on services from Aggregate IQ. There were four persons under investigation: Mr Halsall in his capacity as the responsible person of Vote Leave, Vote Leave itself, Mr Grimes and Mr Banks. No other person was under investigation by us.

Update - 7 May 2020 The Commission has now paid a further and final sum of £235,000 in respect of Mr Grimes' legal costs and this litigation is now concluded.

Update – 14 August 2019 Vote Leave Limited and Darren Grimes both appealed against the sanctions set out in the following report. Veterans for Britain paid their fine of £250. Vote Leave subsequently paid their fines totalling £61,000 in March 2019 and withdrew their appeal. Darren Grimes was successful in his appeal. The judgement, given on 19 July 2019, withdrew the £20,000 sanction imposed by the Commission. The Central London County Court found that Darren Grimes had properly notified the Commission that BeLeave would be a campaigner in the EU referendum, meaning that BeLeave had not breached the spending limit for an unregistered campaigner. The Court also found that Darren Grimes' inclusion of BeLeave's spending in what the Commission had regarded as his own return did not mean he had submitted an inaccurate spending return.

Summary of findings This investigation mainly concerned five payments made in June 2016 to a Canadian data analytics firm called Aggregate IQ. The payments were for services provided to campaigners in the EU Referendum. Three of the payments, totalling £675,315.18, were reported by Mr Grimes as donations from Vote Leave, and as spending by him on services from Aggregate IQ. Another payment of £50,000 from Mr Anthony Clake was reported by Mr Grimes as a donation from Mr Clake, and as spending by Mr Grimes on services from Aggregate IQ. The final payment of £100,000 was reported by Veterans for Britain as a donation from Vote Leave and as spending on services from Aggregate IQ. There were four persons under investigation: Mr Halsall in his capacity as the responsible person of Vote Leave, Vote Leave itself, Mr Grimes and Mr Banks. No other person was under investigation by us.

Joint spending by Vote Leave and BeLeave Joint spending by Vote Leave and BeLeave We are satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that all Mr Grimes' and BeLeave's spending on referendum campaigning was incurred under a common plan with Vote Leave. This spending, including the £675,315.18 for services from Aggregate IQ reported by Mr Grimes, should have been treated as incurred by Vote Leave. To comply with PPERA, Vote Leave should have made a declaration of the amounts of joint spending in its referendum spending return. As the declarations were not made, Mr Halsall failed, without reasonable excuse, to deliver a complete campaign spending return, committing an offence under section 122(4)(b) PPERA. Vote Leave's spending limit Vote Leave's spending limit As referendum spending by Mr Grimes and BeLeave was joint with Vote Leave, the 'common plan' provisions in the EURA meant the spending

was treated as if incurred by Vote Leave. Vote Leave's referendum spending was therefore £7,449,079. Its statutory spending limit was £7m. We are satisfied that Mr Halsall knew, or should reasonably have known, that this spending would exceed the spending limit. We are satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that Vote Leave exceeded the spending limit for a designated lead campaigner and Mr Halsall committed an offence under section 118(2)(c)(i). Vote Leave also committed an offence under section 118(2)(c)(ii). Other issues with Vote Leave's spending return Other issues with Vote Leave's spending return We are satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that Vote Leave's spending return was not a complete statement of all its referendum payments. It was inaccurate in respect of 43 items of spending, totalling £236,501.44. Mr Halsall provided no reasonable excuse for these inaccuracies, which are an offence under section 122(4)(b) PPERA. We also found that eight payments of over £200 in Vote Leave's return did not have an invoice or receipt with them, as required by PPERA. These payments came to £12,849.99. Mr Halsall did not have a reasonable excuse for these omissions, and committed a further offence under section 122(4)(b). BeLeave's spending return BeLeave's spending return BeLeave was never registered with us as a campaigner in the EU Referendum. Unregistered campaigners could only legally spend up to £10,000 on referendum campaigning. But Mr Grimes, acting on BeLeave's behalf, incurred spending of over £675,000. All this spending took place after BeLeave met the criteria for registering as a campaigner. This spending was joint spending with Vote Leave. Under the common plan provisions in EURA, it had to be treated as campaign spending incurred by Vote Leave. But it was still spending by BeLeave, and counted against its spending limit, even though only Vote Leave were required to report it. We are satisfied that Mr Grimes knew, or should reasonably have known, that BeLeave was not a permitted participant. We are satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that Mr Grimes incurred referendum spending in excess of £10,000 on behalf of a body that was not a permitted participant, and that he knew, or should reasonably have known, he was doing this. Mr Grimes committed an offence under section 117(3) PPERA. BeLeave also committed an offence under section 117(4) Mr Grimes' spending return Mr Grimes' spending return After the referendum, Mr Grimes delivered a spending return in his capacity as an individual campaigner. Although he put the name 'Darren Grimes/BeLeave' on it, it wasn't a return for two campaigners; it was a return for him as an individual campaigner. He included payments of £675,315.18 of BeLeave's spending. This was substantially inaccurate reporting that has resulted in a lack of transparency about whose spending this was. We are satisfied, beyond reasonable doubt, that Mr Grimes failed to deliver a referendum spending return to us that complied with PPERA. He thereby committed an offence under section 122(4)(b) PPERA. Veterans for Britain Veterans for Britain Veterans for Britain's spending return included a donation of £100,000, reported as a cash donation received and accepted on 20 May 2016. In fact, this donation was a payment by Vote Leave to Aggregate IQ for services provided to Veterans for Britain in the final days of the EU Referendum campaign. It was paid by Vote Leave on 29 June 2016. We are satisfied that the responsible person for Veterans for Britain, Mr Banks, without reasonable excuse, delivered a spending return that contained an inaccurate donation report. He committed an offence under section 122(4)(b) PPERA. That donation was for services provided by Aggregate IQ, who were also providing services to Vote Leave at the same time. The evidence we have seen does not support the concern that the services were provided to Veterans for Britain as joint working with Vote Leave. Vote Leave investigation notice Vote Leave investigation notice Where we are conducting an investigation we can issue an 'investigation notice' requiring any person to give us

information, explanation or documents to progress the investigation. We can impose a reasonable deadline. We issued an investigation notice to Vote Leave during this investigation. We set out a discrete list of documents directly related to the investigation. We gave a reasonable deadline. Vote Leave did not respond to the notice until after the deadline had passed and that response did not comply with the notice in any way. Vote Leave did not give any indication that it was unable to comply with the notice. We are therefore satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that Vote Leave failed, without reasonable excuse, to comply with an investigation notice issued under Schedule 19B paragraph 3 PPERA on 21 February 2018. Vote Leave thereby committed an offence under Schedule 19B paragraph 13(1). Offences and penalties Mr David Halsall and Vote Leave We have determined that Mr David Alan Halsall, the responsible person for Vote Leave, committed an offence under section 8 122(4)(b). He delivered a referendum spending return for Vote Leave that failed, without reasonable excuse, to be a complete statement of payments worth £236,501.44. He failed to declare common plan spending of £676,015.87. We have fined Vote Leave £20,000 for this offence. Mr Halsall committed a further offence under section 122(4)(b) PPERA by failing, without reasonable excuse, to include required invoices and receipts for eight payments. We have fined Vote Leave £1,000 for this offence. Mr Halsall and Vote Leave both committed offences under section 118(2)(c) PPERA. Mr Halsall incurred spending of £449,079.34 which he knew, or ought reasonably to have known, was in excess of the statutory spending limit for Vote Leave. We have fined Vote Leave £20,000 for this. Vote Leave committed a further offence during this investigation, under Schedule 19B paragraph 13(1) PPERA. Vote Leave failed, without reasonable excuse, to comply with an investigation notice issued by us under Schedule 19B paragraph 3. We have fined Vote Leave £20,000 for this offence. Mr Darren Grimes and BeLeave We have determined that Mr Darren Grimes committed an offence under section 117(3) PPERA, and BeLeave committed an offence under section 117(4). Mr Grimes incurred spending on behalf of BeLeave which he knew, or ought reasonably to have known, exceeded by £666,015.87 the statutory limit for a non-registered campaigner. We have fined Mr Grimes £20,000 for this. Mr Grimes also committed an offence under section 122(4)(b) PPERA in that he failed, without reasonable excuse, to deliver a referendum spending return as an individual registered campaigner that was a complete statement of all his referendum spending. In light of its decision to impose a fine on Mr Grimes for his offence under section 117(3) PPERA, we decided not to impose a further fine on Mr Grimes for this offence. Mr David Banks and Veterans for Britain We have determined that Mr David Banks, the responsible person for Veterans for Britain, committed an offence under section 122(4)(b) PPERA. He failed, without reasonable excuse, to deliver a referendum spending return that included an accurate report of relevant donations. We have fined Mr Banks £250 for this offence. The decision to investigate This investigation mainly concerned five payments made to a Canadian data analytics firm called Aggregate IQ in June 2016. The payments were for campaign services for the EU Referendum. Three of the payments, totalling £625,315.18, were made by Vote Leave to Aggregate IQ between 13 and 21 June 2016. They were reported by Mr Grimes as donations from Vote Leave. Another payment, of £50,000, was made by Mr Anthony Clake to Aggregate IQ on 17 June 2016. Mr Grimes reported it as a donation from Mr Clake. Mr Grimes reported total spending on services from Aggregate IQ of £675,315.18. This spending was funded by these payments. The final payment was of £100,000 and made by Vote Leave to Aggregate IQ on 29 June 2016. Veterans for Britain reported it as a donation from Vote Leave, but with an incorrect date of 20 May 2016. They also reported spending it on services

from Aggregate IQ. Vote Leave, Mr Grimes and Veterans for Britain were all subject to regulatory action by us during 2017. We carried out assessments into Vote Leave and Mr Grimes in February and March 2017. An assessment is a process of getting and examining evidence so we can decide whether to open an investigation. We only investigate if we have reasonable grounds to suspect an offence or contravention of PPERA has happened, and if it is in the public interest for us to act. In these assessments, we looked at whether to investigate allegations that Vote Leave had broken its spending limit for the EU Referendum, by channelling money to Aggregate IQ via BeLeave. Based on the evidence we saw at the time, we decided not to investigate. During 2017 we conducted an investigation into Vote Leave because its referendum spending return appeared to be incomplete. We had reached initial conclusions, and then we opened this new investigation. We then combined all the issues into this one investigation. We started investigating Veterans for Britain in August 2017. It reported a donation of £100,000 from Vote Leave in its spending return after the referendum. It said the donation was accepted on 20 May 2016. But it was not in the pre-poll donation report, delivered during the campaign, for the period covering 20 May 2016. Throughout 2017 we received a number of requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 that were about Vote Leave and Mr Grimes. Claims also emerged in the media that Vote Leave and Mr Grimes had been working under a 'common plan'. If true, these claims would mean that Vote Leave had failed to declare joint spending, and Mr Grimes had misreported the spending. We asked the journalist concerned for sight of the evidence to substantiate the claims, in order to assist us in looking at the claims. This evidence was not provided to us. Then, during September and October 2017, we found out that Veterans for Britain had told us the wrong details for its donation from Vote Leave. Rather than being given on 20 May 2016, that donation was given on 20 June 2016 and paid on 29 June 2016. This coincided with the dates of the payments Mr Grimes reported as donations from Vote Leave. Therefore, by late October 2017 we knew that Vote Leave had made payments to Aggregate IQ in the ten days before the referendum on 23 June 2016, apparently on behalf of two separate campaigners. Given this new information suggested a pattern of action by Vote Leave, we decided to review our assessment decision not to investigate. Having done so, in November 2017 we opened an investigation. What we investigated What we investigated We investigated the following matters, some of which only arose during the investigation: Whether Mr Halsall, Vote Leave's responsible person, without reasonable excuse delivered a referendum spending return that failed to include declarations of common plan spending with Mr Grimes, BeLeave and/or Veterans for Britain (offence under section 122(4)(b) PPERA) Whether Vote Leave spent more than its legal spending limit for referendum campaigning, and Mr Halsall knew or ought reasonably to have known this when incurring spending over that limit under the common plan provisions (offences under section 118(3)(c) PPERA) Whether Mr Halsall without reasonable excuse delivered a spending return that was not complete in other ways such as missing payments and invoices or receipts (offences under section 122(4)(b) PPERA). Whether Mr Grimes authorised spending to be incurred by or on behalf of BeLeave when he knew or ought reasonably to have known that the spending would be more than the £10,000 legal limit for an unregistered campaigner (offences under section 117(3) and 117(4) PPERA) Whether Mr Grimes without reasonable excuse delivered an incomplete referendum spending return (offence under section 122(4)(b) PPERA) Whether Mr Banks, the responsible person for Veterans for Britain, without reasonable excuse delivered a spending return that failed to report accurately a relevant donation (offence under section 122(4)(b) PPERA) Whether Mr

Banks without reasonable excuse delivered a spending return that inaccurately reported joint spending with Vote Leave (offence under section 122(4)(b) PPERA) Whether Vote Leave failed without reasonable excuse to comply with an investigation notice issued by the Commission under Schedule 19B PPERA (offence under Schedule 19B paragraph 13 PPERA) The people under investigation by us were therefore Mr Halsall, Vote Leave, Mr Grimes and Mr Banks. The relevant legal and regulatory regime for referendum campaign finance is set out in Annex A to this report. The investigation in detail Vote Leave We contacted Vote Leave on 20 November 2017. We explained that we had opened an investigation and set out its scope. We invited Vote Leave to give us any relevant explanation or documents. We asked Vote Leave to attend an interview and asked for representatives of Vote Leave who would be well placed to discuss the matters under investigation. During December and January, Vote Leave expressed an intention to cooperate. It gave some explanation of its position on the suspected offences. It also asked procedural questions about the proposed interview and objected to the investigation being opened. We responded to these questions with further detail on the opening of the investigation and the interview process. We offered interview dates for representatives of Vote Leave, but Vote Leave did not respond to our suggested dates. In January 2018 Vote Leave's lawyers sent a Pre-Action Protocol Letter indicating that it intended to judicially review the opening of the investigation. We gave them more detail about our decision to investigate. Vote Leave did not start legal proceedings. During February 2018 we made two further offers of interview dates. Vote Leave began to repeat procedural questions we had already answered. It still did not agree an interview date and said it had not decided whether an interview was appropriate. By mid-February we were concerned that Vote Leave had not given us the information we needed about the matters under investigation, nor agreed to put up representatives for interview. We issued Vote Leave with a formal investigation notice requiring it to produce certain documents. Vote Leave did not reply by the deadline we gave, or produce the documents. Instead, shortly after the deadline Vote Leave sent a letter objecting to the fact we were investigating them, raising concerns about the scope of the notice, and saying that it had collected the documents it considered relevant at its lawyer's office. It said that we could inspect them there. After explaining that we required complete disclosure, we asked Vote Leave again to produce the documents. We then had a number of exchanges with Vote Leave where it repeated its assertion that we had no power to open the investigation. It ignored our repeated clarification on this point. Still no documents were disclosed. After weeks of correspondence Vote Leave then made its offer of inspection of the documents contingent on us meeting it to discuss why the investigation should be closed. We did not consider such appropriate or helpful. We sent authorised officers to Vote Leave's lawyers to take copies of the documents they held. Vote Leave had no reasonable excuse for failing to comply with this investigation notice. We have fined them £20,000 for this. Upon inspection, we found that Vote Leave had not given us everything we had asked for. Shortly afterwards, it gave us some further documents after making the wrong ones available to our authorised officers. In March 2018 Vote Leave told us that it was holding an internal investigation after allegations about its work with Mr Grimes and BeLeave were raised in the media. It said that the internal investigation would look at the media allegations. We explained that would be separate from our investigation but we would expect anything relevant to be told to us. After telling us, in early April, that a forensic IT team was working for them, Vote Leave did not provide any further information about its internal investigation. Mr Grimes We contacted Mr Grimes on 20

November 2017 and told him about the investigation. He gave us some further information about the events under investigation and agreed to be interviewed. The interview took place in January 2018. In February 2018 we asked Mr Grimes some follow up questions. During March and April we asked him for more detail about the involvement of Vote Leave in his and BeLeave's activities. We also asked for copies of the adverts Aggregate IQ placed for BeLeave, and for details of the reports he received from Aggregate IQ on their use. Mr Grimes replied to our questions. Veterans for Britain We contacted Mr Banks, the responsible person for Veterans for Britain, on 20 November 2017. We told him about the investigation and asked him for information about the donation from Vote Leave. Mr Banks replied to our letter with the information we asked for. He also agreed to be interviewed. We interviewed Mr Banks in January 2018. He gave us a full and detailed account of the donation and the services Veterans for Britain got from Aggregate IQ. As we had already asked Mr Banks about his reporting of the Vote Leave donation, we didn't need any more information from him about this. Other individuals During the investigation we received information from three individuals, Mr Christopher Wylie, Mr Mark Gettleson and Mr Shahmir Sanni. They provided documentary and other evidence about Vote Leave and BeLeave. We met with them to discuss what they had given us. In compliance with notices under Schedule 19B paragraph 3 PPERA, they provided further information and explanation about their evidence. These individuals also provided information to the media, which was widely reported. We issued Mr Anthony Clake with a notice under Schedule 19B paragraph 3 PPERA requiring him to disclose information and documents about a donation he made to BeLeave. Mr Clake complied with our notice. We issued Mr Dominic Cummings with a notice under Schedule 19B paragraph 3 PPERA requiring him to disclose information and documents about Vote Leave and BeLeave. This followed posts Mr Cummings published on his blog referencing the allegations of joint working between the two campaigners. Mr Cummings complied with our notice. We were approached by Facebook during the investigation with some information about how Aggregate IQ used its services during the EU Referendum campaign. After the media reporting of allegations made by Mr Wylie, Mr Gettleson and Mr Sanni, we were approached by the lawyer for three Vote Leave officials, its Operations Director, Head of Outreach and National Organiser. We were told that the all three individuals willing to speak to us (This sentence was revised on 19 July 2018 to clarify that all three individuals were willing to speak to us). We responded that in the first instance we would wish any evidence to be sent to us. Determination of offences In June 2018 we were satisfied that we had sufficient evidence to make initial determinations on the offences under investigation. As required by PPERA, we issued formal notices to Vote Leave, Mr Grimes and Veterans for Britain, explaining our initial decisions and proposing penalties. These notices were accompanied by copies of the evidence on which we had relied, so that the recipients had the opportunity to see and respond to it. We invited representations within the statutory 28 day period. Vote Leave requested an extension to this period. After carefully considering the request we were satisfied that they had not given a persuasive reason why 28 days was insufficient. We therefore did not extend the deadline. During the 28 day period we were contacted again by the legal representatives for Vote Leave's Operations Director, Head of Outreach and National Organisation. We were told that these individuals now had evidence to give us. None was sent, but the legal representatives did send a letter and some documents commenting on the notices we had issued to Vote Leave. We were also contacted by legal representatives for Mr Halsall, acting for him in his personal capacity rather than as the responsible person for Vote Leave. We

received a letter from them commenting on the notices we had issued to Vote Leave. By 3 July 2018 we had received representations from Vote Leave, Mr Grimes and Veterans for Britain. These were considered carefully before we made final determinations on offences and penalties. We also considered the letters we had received from the legal representatives for the Operations Director, the Head of Outreach, and the National Organiser of Vote Leave, and Mr Halsall. We issued our final determinations to Vote Leave, Mr Grimes and Veterans for Britain on 17 July 2018. What our investigation found Joint spending by Vote Leave and BeLeave We are satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that all Mr Grimes' and BeLeave's spending on referendum campaigning was incurred under a common plan with Vote Leave. This spending, including the £675,315.18 for services from Aggregate IQ reported by Mr Grimes, should have been treated as incurred by Vote Leave. To comply with PPERA, Vote Leave should have made a declaration of the amounts of joint spending in its referendum spending return. As the declarations were not made, the responsible person for Vote Leave Mr Halsall failed, without reasonable excuse, to deliver a complete campaign spending return, committing an offence under section 122(4)(b) PPERA. 'BeLeave' was initially a name used by Mr Grimes in his activities in support of the UK leaving the EU. From early 2016, Vote Leave gave Mr Grimes infrastructure and resource support to carry out his BeLeave activity. In May 2016, when Vote Leave was engaged in an unsuccessful attempt to get funding for Mr Grimes's BeLeave activity, Vote Leave drafted a constitution for BeLeave. When the individuals who became the BeLeave Board agreed this constitution, they effectively created an unincorporated association that could have been registered as a referendum campaigner. All of BeLeave's funding came directly from Vote Leave, or was arranged by Vote Leave. Vote Leave had significant influence over how that money was spent by BeLeave, to the extent that Vote Leave made a commitment to a different BeLeave donor to about how his money would be used. We are satisfied that spending by Mr Grimes (which only came to £21.51) on campaign activity prior to BeLeave being established was under the significant influence of Vote Leave. We are also satisfied that BeLeave's creation, strategy, funding and activities throughout the time it existed as an unincorporated association in May and June 2016 were all under the significant influence of Vote Leave. Evidence Evidence and analysis Mr Grimes' reported donations and spending Mr Grimes reported a series of donations and spending that related to Aggregate IQ. In chronological order, these were: a donation from Vote Leave and a payment to Aggregate IQ, both of £400,000, on 14 June 2016 a donation from Mr Anthony Clarke and a payment to Aggregate IQ, both of £50,000, on 17 June 2016 a donation from Vote Leave and a payment to Aggregate IQ, both of £40,000, on 20 June 2016 a donation from Vote Leave and a payment to Aggregate IQ, both of £185,315.18, on 21 June 2016 Mr Grimes said that he incurred the spending with Aggregate IQ for services provided to BeLeave. He had sent in invoices from Aggregate IQ with his return that listed activity to be carried out for BeLeave. Mr Grimes said that he incurred this spending after he was offered donations by Vote Leave in June 2016. He asked Vote Leave to pay the donations direct to Aggregate IQ because he did not yet have a working bank account for BeLeave. Mr Grimes gave the same explanation for the donation from Mr Clarke being paid to Aggregate IQ. Vote Leave told us that it had surplus funds towards the end of the referendum campaign. It took the decision to donate these to BeLeave. It said that Vote Leave had no input into how BeLeave decided to use the funds. The creation of BeLeave While accounts differ, we understand that from some point during January 2016, Mr Grimes started volunteering in Vote Leave's 'Outreach Team'. This team ran a campaign strategy adopted by Vote Leave to support a range of groups appealing to

different demographics. Prior to May 2016, Mr Grimes was using the name BeLeave to campaign online for the UK to exit the EU. From March 2016, Mr Sanni also did some work in the name of BeLeave, such as helping develop proposals for a prospective donor. There is no evidence that a distinct entity or body called BeLeave existed at that time. For example, it had no constitution that defined its purpose, nothing saying who was involved or what they did, and nothing saying how it worked. It is not clear how much referendum campaigning Mr Grimes did in the name of BeLeave at this point. He reported campaign spending totalling £21.51 between 9 February and 13 June 2016. Vote Leave gave infrastructure support and advice to Mr Grimes to build his BeLeave brand. For example, Vote Leave's Head of Outreach directed a Vote Leave contractor to build the BeLeave website. The contractor reported to the Head of Outreach on the completion of the work. Mr Grimes got advice from Vote Leave on website content. He also got practical help with the content, including using Vote Leave staff and facilities to film videos and take photos. He told Vote Leave when he registered with the Commission as an individual campaigner. Vote Leave's Head of Outreach, in response, said that she 'owed' him a donor. In May 2016 Vote Leave's Legal Director drew up a constitution for BeLeave. According to Mr Grimes, this was because he asked Vote Leave's Head of Outreach about opening a bank account for BeLeave so that it could receive funds from prospective donors. She advised him to get a constitution, and according to Mr Grimes Vote Leave gave him a blank template he could use. Vote Leave also gave us this explanation. These accounts are not consistent with the email chain between Mr Grimes and Vote Leave, however. This shows Vote Leave providing him with a complete draft, and advising on the purpose and dissolution clauses to allow BeLeave to continue its activities after the referendum. It is clear from the evidence that the catalyst for the creation of the constitution was the fact that Vote Leave had found a potential donor for BeLeave. Discussions with the donor took place, but in the event no donation was made. In order to meet the legal definition of an unincorporated association, BeLeave had to be an association "of two or more persons... which carries on business or other activities wholly or mainly in the UK and whose main office is there" (section 45(2)(h) PPERA). By the act of drafting a constitution, Vote Leave facilitated the creation of BeLeave as an unincorporated association. By agreeing to that constitution, BeLeave's Board members created an unincorporated association. That association, BeLeave, came into existence on or around 18 May 2016. Donations to BeLeave BeLeave's only donors were Vote Leave and Mr Anthony Clake. All its donations, barring £1,000 given to BeLeave for expenses, were paid to Aggregate IQ. We got copies of email exchanges between Mr Dominic Cummings, acting on behalf of Vote Leave, and Mr Clake. These set out how Mr Clake's donation to BeLeave came about. A summary is given below. On 11 June 2016 Mr Cummings wrote to Mr Clake saying that Vote Leave had all the money it could spend, and suggesting the following: "However, there is another organisation that could spend your money. Would you be willing to send the 100k to some social media ninjas who could usefully spend it on behalf of this organisation? I am very confident it would be well spent in the final crucial 5 days. Obviously it would be entirely legal. (sic)" Mr Cummings explained to us that the 'ninjas' were Aggregate IQ Mr Clake asked about this organisation. Mr Cummings replied as follows: "the social media ninjas are based in Canada – they are extremely good. You would send your money directly to them. the organisation that would legally register the donation is a permitted participant called BeLeave, a "young people's organisation". happy to talk it through on the phone though in principle nothing is required from you but to wire money to a bank account if you're happy to take my word for it. (sic)" On 15 June

2016 Mr Clake wrote to Mr Cummings saying that he would split a donation between Vote Leave and BeLeave. Mr Cummings replied the same day to say “we are also giving money to them – you can just send us the full amount and we’ll add yours onto what we are giving them and save you the admin.” Mr Clake responded saying that he would like to give £50,000 to each campaigner (Vote Leave and BeLeave). Later on 15 June 2016, Mr Cummings asked Vote Leave’s Operations Director to send Mr Clake the bank details for both Vote Leave and BeLeave. The Operations Director sent Mr Clake these details. Shortly afterwards she sent Mr Clake contact details for BeLeave. Mr Clake then emailed Mr Grimes to offer a donation to BeLeave. He specified that this donation would made “via the AIQ account.” We have seen no evidence that BeLeave was at all involved in obtaining this donation or had any control over it or what it would be used for. Instead, by 11 June 2016 the Vote Leave officials dealing with donations to other campaigners knew that BeLeave would commission services from Aggregate IQ. They knew that these would be used in the final five days of the campaign. Vote Leave actively encouraged a donor to fund that work and offered to act as an agent for that donation. It was Vote Leave that provided the donor with BeLeave’s account details and afterwards it gave the donor BeLeave’s contact details. By the time the donor approached BeLeave, the recipient of his donation, Vote Leave had told him how the money would be used. We also got copies of various internal emails from Vote Leave and emails with Mr Grimes about the donations from Vote Leave. A summary is below. On 13 June 2016 Mr Grimes emailed Vote Leave’s Operations Director following a discussion they had about a donation. He thanked Vote Leave for considering a donation, and said: “We’d be very interested in working with data specialists like those at Aggregate IQ.” He went on to say that he wanted to work with Aggregate IQ. Vote Leave’s Operations Director replied to Mr Grimes later on 13 June 2016 saying that she would need to speak to the Finance Committee and then would ask Mr Grimes to “confirm that you are happy to transfer the money to Aggregate IQ.” On 14 June 2016 Vote Leave’s Operations Director emailed Mr Grimes to offer a donation of £400,000. Mr Grimes replied asking for the funds to be transferred to Aggregate IQ. On 17 June 2016 Vote Leave’s Operations Director emailed Mr Grimes to offer “a further donation to BeLeave.” The next day Mr Grimes replied, asking for the funds to be “sent directly to AIQ” On 21 June 2016 Vote Leave’s Operations Director emailed Mr Grimes to ask if he could make use of a £181,000 donation. He replied shortly afterwards asking for £180,000 to go to AIQ and £1,000 to BeLeave to cover travel expenses. Vote Leave gave us a minute of a Finance Committee meeting held on 14 June 2016. The minute shows that Vote Leave did anticipate a surplus of funds and it decided that these would be given away as donations. The minute agreed the £400,000 donation to BeLeave, and authorised further donations at the discretion of “the executive with supervision”. Vote Leave also gave us a minute of a Responsible Person Meeting on 21 June 2016. These show Mr Halsall, Vote Leave’s responsible person, authorising a donation of up to £440,000 to BeLeave, again after talk about surplus funds.

BeLeave’s activities Before May 2016, when Mr Grimes was using the BeLeave name in campaign material, Vote Leave had a significant influence over his activities. This is clear from Vote Leave’s input of advice and resources to the BeLeave website. It is also clear from Vote Leave’s role in trying to find donors for BeLeave activity. Mr Grimes and Vote Leave told us that BeLeave commissioned its own material from Aggregate IQ. Evidence from June 2016 does show that Mr Grimes and others from BeLeave had significant input into the look and design of the BeLeave adverts produced by Aggregate IQ. However, Vote Leave messaging was still influential in their strategy and design. For example: On 15 June 2016 Mr Grimes told other BeLeave

Board members and Aggregate IQ that BeLeave's ads needed to be: "an effective way of pushing our more liberal and progressive message to an audience which is perhaps not as receptive to Vote Leave's messaging." On 17 June 2016 Mr Grimes told other BeLeave Board members: "So as soon as we can go live. Advertising should be back on tomorrow and normal operating as of Sunday. I'd like to make sure we have loads of scheduled tweets and Facebook status. Post all of those blogs including Shahmirs, use favstar to check out and repost our best performing tweets. Copy and paste lines from Vote Leave's briefing room in a BeLeave voice" BeLeave's ability to procure services from Aggregate IQ only resulted from the actions of Vote Leave, in providing those donations and arranging a separate donor for BeLeave. While BeLeave may have contributed its own design style and input, the services provided by Aggregate IQ to BeLeave used Vote Leave messaging, at the behest of BeLeave's campaign director. It also appears to have had the benefit of Vote Leave data and/or data it obtained via online resources set up and provided to it by Vote Leave to target and distribute its campaign material. This is shown by evidence from Facebook that Aggregate IQ used identical target lists for Vote Leave and BeLeave ads, although the BeLeave ads were not run. Joint spending by Vote Leave and BeLeave Vote Leave and BeLeave told us that the BeLeave AIQ payments were donations, and Vote Leave had no influence over how BeLeave used them. We are satisfied that many parts of this explanation are not consistent with the evidence. Mr Grimes said that BeLeave was his initiative from the outset. The evidence shows that BeLeave as an unincorporated association was created when Vote Leave advised Mr Grimes on getting a constitution in place, and wrote that constitution for him. This happened because it was a necessary precursor to Vote Leave obtaining funding for the BeLeave campaign. Mr Grimes also said he ran his own campaign using his own facilities. The evidence shows that his BeLeave campaign website was set up by Vote Leave, its content was created by Vote Leave, he consulted Vote Leave on campaigning and Vote Leave actively sought funding for his work. Mr Grimes said that he chose to spend the donations from Vote Leave and Mr Clarke on Aggregate IQ. But Vote Leave officials channelled funds to Aggregate IQ in the name of BeLeave, without Mr Grimes being involved. Vote Leave said that its work with BeLeave was consistent with the duty on it as a lead campaigner to represent and engage with other 'leave' campaigners. The fact that Vote Leave and BeLeave were incurring spending as part of a common plan is consistent with that duty. However, Vote Leave and BeLeave were also under a legal obligation to report the spending accurately. The £675,315.18 reported by Mr Grimes as BeLeave spending with Aggregate IQ was incurred in pursuance of a common plan with Vote Leave. That common plan included spending incurred by Vote Leave on the infrastructure and other support given to Mr Grimes when he was using the BeLeave name, and to BeLeave itself. Further, the remaining amount of campaign spending reported by Mr Grimes (£700.19) was also incurred under the same common plan. The entire amount - £676,015.37 – should have been treated as incurred by Vote Leave and a declaration of the amounts should have been included on Vote Leave's referendum spending return. Vote Leave's spending limit Vote Leave's spending limit As referendum spending by Mr Grimes and BeLeave was joint spending with Vote Leave, Vote Leave's referendum spending was in fact £7,449,079. Its statutory spending limit was £7m. We are therefore satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that Vote Leave exceeded the spending limit for a designated lead campaigner of £7m. Mr Halsall knew, or ought reasonably to have known, that this spending would be in excess of the spending limit. He was the responsible person for a designated lead campaigner. His experience and expertise were highlighted by Vote Leave in its application for designation. He was responsible for Vote Leave's

financial and compliance processes. He was aware of the donations in question and either personally authorised them or delegated others to do so. Mr Halsall was aware of BeLeave. He was aware of the common plan or joint spending provisions in law. He had a legal duty to adhere to the campaign finance rules, including the spending limit. The Commission is therefore satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that Mr Halsall committed an offence under section 118(2)(c)(i). Vote Leave also committed an offence under section 118(2)(c)(ii). Evidence Evidence and analysis The evidence of a common plan between Vote Leave and BeLeave, and Vote Leave and Mr Grimes, is set out above. In its application for designation as lead campaigner for the ‘leave’ outcome, Vote Leave described its Board, of which Mr Halsall was a member, as being “responsible for the overall management and direction of the campaign and Vote Leave’s activities.” It said the Board would meet fortnightly. Mr Halsall was also listed as a member of the Finance Committee, which was “responsible for internal financial governance, fundraising and budgeting.” He was also listed as a member of the Compliance Committee, which was “responsible for supervision of the effective governance of [Vote Leave]; its compliance with the law; effective financial and operational process and control; managing conflicts of interest; and ensuring [Vote Leave] obtains value for money.” The application noted that the responsible person was responsible for enforcing regulatory compliance. Vote Leave’s application went on to say – in further evidence it provided at our request – that the Board was not responsible for the daily running of Vote Leave’s campaign. This was the responsibility of the Campaign, Finance and Compliance Committees. Mr Halsall sat on two of these. The further information said: “At the centre of the Vote Leave governance structure is the Responsible Person... who is a solicitor, a member of the Board of Directors, a member of the Finance Committee, a member of the Compliance Committee, as well as being a respected entrepreneur and business leader.” We saw a minute of the Vote Leave Finance Committee meeting on 14 June 2016, given to us by Vote Leave. Mr Halsall was there, along with other senior Vote Leave figures. They agreed that an initial donation be given to BeLeave of £400,000 and that subsequent donations might be given subject to the discretion of “the executive with supervision”. According to the minute, those present thought that “subject to a favourable legal opinion”, Vote Leave could donate to other campaign groups. We saw an internal Vote Leave email exchange on 14 June 2016 with the title “Donations to other campaigns”. Mr Halsall was amongst the recipients, along with other senior Vote Leave figures. In this chain: At 15:02 a Vote Leave Board Member emailed to say the donation to BeLeave was “ok for me – on the understanding that there is no “coordinated plan or arrangement”, and based on the communications we received earlier from the Electoral Commission, which say that this is what we are allowed to do.” At 15:07 Mr Halsall emailed: “Having read the advice from our Lawyer happy to agree to this donation. I assume we will ensure that BeLeave understand they have to register the donation as our Lawyer suggests.” We saw a minute of a Responsible Person Meeting on 21 June 2016. Again, Mr Halsall was present along with other senior Vote Leave figures. The majority of the minute, provided by Vote Leave, was redacted but the following paragraph was disclosed. “It was noted that, as donations are not (by definition) referendum expenses, they did not fall within [the responsible person’s] remit as Responsible Person AH took the view that as he was the only individual who was a member of the Board, the Compliance Committee and the Finance Committee, and given the shortness of time, he could authorise transfers on other grounds.” The minute also said that Vote Leave authorised donations to BeLeave based on a proposal put forward by its Operations Director. Those present agreed that any

surplus funds exceeding its cash reserve requirement should be donated to BeLeave and Muslims for Britain, a registered campaigner, until 23 June 2016. On 19 August 2016 Mr Halsall signed a letter to us setting out the approach Vote Leave took to donations to BeLeave. He said that Vote Leave had legal advice on this, although he declined to provide it. He said that Vote Leave relied on the experience of multiple volunteers who were familiar with our guidance and PPERA, and that an “honest assessment” took place before each donation was made. Mr Halsall wrote to us when he received notice of our intention to fine Vote Leave for exceeding its spending limit. He told us that when he agreed to be the responsible person for Vote Leave, he understood that he would be supported by its Finance Director, Operations Director and Legal Director. He said that “with their assistance he was confident he was introducing robust and effective systems of compliance control, both in general and specifically in relation to concerted [common plan] expenditure.” Mr Halsall said that he was “not consciously aware” of BeLeave or Mr Grimes prior to 14 June 2016. He “reasonably believed” that the Operations Director, in whom he had significant confidence, was satisfied that there was no common plan with BeLeave prior to proposing a donation. Mr Halsall, as Vote Leave’s responsible person, had a number of legal obligations under PPERA and the EURA. This included ensuring that the statutory spending limit of £7 million was not exceeded. He put himself forward as the responsible person for an organisation seeking to be designated as lead campaigner. The organisation told us that it had “the resources, skills and expertise to run a responsible and professional campaign.” Its application in support of this claim set out an internal structure of committees and explained that Mr Halsall sat on both the Finance and Compliance committees. The application explicitly placed him at the centre of its regulatory compliance processes, saying that he was “responsible” for these (reflecting the obligations PPERA places on responsible persons). Compliance with the regulatory framework was clearly within the remit of the responsible person for Vote Leave. It seems that he did delegate many of his duties to others, which is allowed under PPERA. However, this did not relieve him of overall responsibility. Further, he was copied in on much of the correspondence, and was present at key meetings. He took responsibility for decisions in relation to these donations, either directly or, it appears, by setting the terms of delegation for others. On the facts, therefore, he can be taken to have known about the donations and where they were going. Mr Halsall is not personally copied in on any of the emails we have seen between Vote Leave and BeLeave. He may not have known the extent of the control and influence that Vote Leave exercised over BeLeave. But the evidence shows that joint working between them was an issue he considered. Although he said that Vote Leave based its “honest assessment” upon legal advice, and he was supported in his role by others within Vote Leave, it was still his legal responsibility to satisfy himself that he was acting in line with the campaign finance rules. Other issues with Vote Leave’s spending return Other issues with Vote Leave’s spending return We are satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that Vote Leave’s spending return included amounts totalling £234,275.40 that were not referendum spending. Another four payments, of £1,828, were included when they should not have been. They were for an event that took place after 23 June 2016. Another 10 payments were incorrectly aggregated as one. Mr Halsall provided no reasonable excuses for these. They meant that Vote Leave’s return was inaccurate in respect of another 43 items of spending, totalling £236,501.44, which was an offence under section 122(4)(b) PPERA. We also found that eight payments of over £200 in Vote Leave’s return did not have an invoice or receipt with them, as required by PPERA. The total value of these payments was £12,849.99. Mr

Halsall did not have a reasonable excuse for this omissions, and committed a further offence under section 122(4)(b). Evidence and analysis Evidence and analysis The return originally delivered by Vote Leave included two large amounts that didn't have any supporting invoices. The first, for £91,275.43, was described by Vote Leave as "value of unused material on hand at 14 April – stocktake provided in lieu of invoice". Vote Leave described the second, for - £142,999.97, as "value of unused material on hand at 24 June – stocktake provided in lieu of notice". We found out, however, that these were not individual payments of referendum expenses. They were a proportion of 34 individual payments for items that were not fully used during the campaign. They should not have been in the return at all. Vote Leave said that this was an honest error. However, inadvertence is not a reasonable excuse. We found out that another four reported payments, totalling £1,828, should not have been in the return. They related to an event that took place after 23 June 2016, outside the regulated period. Another ten payments were aggregated into one, of £393.05. As a result, the return was missing the individual items of spending. Vote Leave disputed the need to include individual payments in its return, although as we explained this is clear in law. It did not put forward any reasonable excuse for its actions. Eight items of spending of over £200 were included in the return, but no supporting invoice or receipt was provided. In two instances some alternative documentation was supplied, but these did not meet the requirements of PPERA (in that they were not an invoice or a receipt). In respect of the remaining spending, Vote Leave advised the Commission that "having made enquiries of the supplier [it] believed that [invoices] were not available". Vote Leave did not, however, evidence this belief or indicate why it could not deliver receipts. Vote Leave said that as the invoices did not exist it was not under an obligation to get them. This, however, ignored the issue of why they were not obtained when the spending was paid, when Vote Leave knew they would need to give them to us. Further, invoices were subsequently provided on 9 and 14 February 2017. We therefore do not consider that a reasonable excuse has been put forward for these omissions. We are satisfied that when Vote Leave's return was delivered on 23 December 2016, eight items totalling £12,849.99 were missing supporting invoices or receipts.

BeLeave's spending BeLeave's spending BeLeave was never registered with us as a campaigner in the EU Referendum. Unregistered campaigners could only legally spend up to £10,000 on referendum campaigning. But Mr Grimes, acting on its behalf, incurred spending of over £675,000. On 15 March 2016 Mr Grimes applied to register a permitted participant for the EU Referendum. He put down the name of the campaigner as 'BeLeave', but ticked the box to say he was applying as an individual. We treated the application as for an individual and approved it. At the time BeLeave was not eligible to register as a permitted participant. If we had treated Mr Grimes' application as an attempt to register BeLeave, it would have been rejected. It only met the eligibility criteria in May 2016. Mr Grimes knew that BeLeave was not a permitted participant. He knew that he was. He also knew, or ought reasonably to have known, that while he could incur referendum spending of up to £700,000, BeLeave, as an unregistered campaigner, was limited to spending of £10,000. Despite this BeLeave – with Mr Grimes acting on its behalf – incurred spending of £675,315.18. This spending was joint spending with Vote Leave. Under the common plan provisions in EURA, it had to be treated as campaign spending incurred by Vote Leave. But it was still spending by BeLeave, and counted against its spending limit, even though only Vote Leave were required to report it. We are therefore satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that Mr Grimes incurred referendum spending in excess of £10,000 on behalf of a body that was not a permitted participant, and that he knew, or ought

reasonably to have known, he was doing this. Mr Grimes committed an offence under section 117(3) PPERA. BeLeave committed an offence under section 117(4) PPERA. Evidence Evidence and analysis On 15 March 2016 Mr Grimes made a notification to register a permitted participant for the EU Referendum. He wrote on the notification form that the name of the campaigner was 'BeLeave'. He put himself down as the responsible person. However, he ticked the box to say he was registering as an individual. We checked the form on the basis that Mr Grimes was registering as an individual. He met the criteria, and we registered him. When we sent him confirmation of registration, we asked him to check a print out of the register entry. This made clear that he had been registered in an individual capacity, and that BeLeave had not been registered. Mr Grimes did not tell us that there was anything wrong, in his view, with the register entry. Mr Grimes has argued that we should have done more to point out to him the error on his registration form, either at that point or since. However, as in March 2016, BeLeave did not meet the definition of an unincorporated association and was not eligible to register, we processed his application correctly and gave him the opportunity to review it. The responsibility to comply with the registration and reporting requirements rested with him. BeLeave did not become eligible to register until on or around 18 May 2016. On or around 18 May 2016 a group of five people, including Mr Grimes and Mr Sanni, agreed a constitution for an unincorporated association called BeLeave. Those five people were listed as Board members in the constitution. They carried out campaign activity within the framework of this constitution. From around 18 May 2016, therefore, BeLeave was eligible to register as a campaigner. No attempt was made to register it. Between 14 and 21 June 2016 Mr Grimes entered into four separate contracts with Aggregate IQ, each time specifying that he was acting on behalf of BeLeave. Each contract was documented by an 'insertion order'. Each insertion order is clearly shown as being between Aggregate IQ and BeLeave. Further, Mr Grimes has told us that he was acting on behalf of BeLeave. Vote Leave has told us that its donations were to BeLeave, and it paid for services given to BeLeave. We are therefore satisfied that Mr Grimes was acting on behalf of BeLeave when entering into these contracts, and not in an individual capacity. The contracts totalled £675,315.18. This is far in excess of the £10,000 limit on BeLeave as an unregistered campaigner. Mr Grimes argued that as the spending was still reported, albeit not by BeLeave, there was no loss to transparency from these events. However, these events contributed to a lack of clarity about BeLeave's status. Mr Grime's spending return Mr Grime's spending return After the referendum Mr Grimes delivered a spending return in his capacity as an individual campaigner. Although he put the name 'Darren Grimes/BeLeave' on it, it wasn't a return for two campaigners; it was a return for him as an individually registered campaigner. He included payments of £675,315 that was not his spending, but BeLeave's. This was a substantial amount of inaccurate reporting that has resulted in a lack of transparency. We are satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that Mr Grimes failed to deliver a complete referendum spending return to us. He thereby committed an offence under section 122(4)(b) PPERA. Evidence Evidence and analysis Between 14 and 21 June 2016 Mr Grimes incurred spending of £675,315.19 on behalf of BeLeave with Aggregate IQ. He included this spending on a return delivered against his individual registration as a campaigner. But it was not his spending; it was BeLeave's spending. Mr Grimes' spending return demonstrates that he, as an individual campaigner, did not incur more than £10,000 referendum spending. He didn't have to make a spending return at all. He could have made a declaration of spending under £10,000 within three months of the referendum. But if he did decide to make a return, it shouldn't have

reported any spending. All his spending was incurred under a common plan with Vote Leave. In any scenario, therefore, Mr Grimes delivered an inaccurate spending return. The fact that he may have been acting under a misapprehension is not a reasonable excuse for this, particularly given the steps we took to publish guidance and a form to notify us for registration, and to request that he checked the details of the register entry. Veterans for Britain Veterans for Britain Veterans for Britain's spending return included a donation of £100,000, reported as a cash donation received and accepted on 20 May 2016. In fact, this donation was a payment by Vote Leave directly to Aggregate IQ for services provided to Veterans for Britain in the final days of the EU referendum campaign. It was paid by Vote Leave on 29 June 2016. We are satisfied that the responsible person for Veterans for Britain, Mr Banks, without reasonable excuse delivered a spending return that contained an inaccurate donation report. He committed an offence under section 122(4)(b) PPERA. That donation was for services provided by Aggregate IQ. Aggregate IQ was providing services to Vote Leave at the same time. The evidence we have seen does not support the concern that the services were provided to Veterans for Britain as joint working with Vote Leave. Evidence Evidence and analysis Donation report The responsible person for Veterans for Britain, Mr Banks, has confirmed that he inaccurately reported some of the details of a £100,000 donation. He reported this donation with his spending return. He said it was a donation from Vote Leave, received and accepted on 20 May 2016. However, he put the wrong date, as it was actually paid on 29 June 2016. He also reported it as a cash donation when in fact it was paid by Vote Leave directly to Aggregate IQ for services provided to Veterans for Britain. This was, on Mr Banks' own account, a typographical error on his part. Such inadvertent errors do not amount to a reasonable excuse in law. Such errors do impact on transparency and that in turn impacts on public confidence in the campaign finance regime. Joint working concerns The correct date of the donation and its circumstances mean that it took place at the same time that Vote Leave donated to BeLeave. BeLeave and Vote Leave were working under a common plan. We looked at whether there was evidence that Veterans for Britain and Vote Leave were also working under a common plan. We saw a number of emails originating from within Vote Leave's Outreach Team in early 2016. Veterans for Britain appeared in a small number of these. We also got a detailed account of events from Mr Banks, and he gave us copies of email chains from the time. From these, we saw that Veterans for Britain had some interaction with the Vote Leave Outreach Team and may have got some help with building its infrastructure (mainly its website). But there is no evidence that it had extensive support or resources from Vote Leave. We saw that in mid-June 2016 Veterans for Britain expected to receive a £50,000 donation. Given the lateness in the campaign, it decided to use the money on digital campaigning. It asked Vote Leave's Head of Outreach for a recommended supplier. The Head of Outreach introduced Veterans for Britain to Aggregate IQ. Following that introduction, no one from Vote Leave was involved in the exchanges we have seen between Veterans for Britain and Aggregate IQ. Veterans for Britain started to arrange its campaign with Aggregate IQ. But on 22 June 2016 the campaign stopped because the funds had run out. Veterans for Britain asked Vote Leave if it knew of any possible donors. In response Vote Leave offered to make a donation of £100,000. Veterans for Britain asked for this to be paid direct to Aggregate IQ because it was having trouble making rapid financial transfers to the company. We saw evidence of these difficulties. This evidence is consistent with two legally separate campaigners who knew each other and had worked closely prior to the regulated referendum period starting. However, they did not appear to be collaborating on a campaign. While Vote

Leave recommended Aggregate IQ as a supplier, Veterans for Britain built a direct relationship with them. Unlike BeLeave, Veterans for Britain asked for more money for its campaign, rather than being offered it by Vote Leave. Vote Leave investigation notice Vote Leave investigation notice Under Schedule 19B PPERA, when we are conducting an investigation we can issue an ‘investigation notice’ requiring any person to disclose information, explanation or documents to us. We can give a reasonable deadline for disclosure. We issued an investigation notice to Vote Leave. Vote Leave failed to comply with the notice by the deadline we gave. It did not reply until after the deadline has passed, and while initially offering the documents for inspection, it then imposed conditions on this happening. None of the arguments Vote Leave put forward as to why it did not comply amount to a reasonable excuse. It had told us that the relevant documents were being preserved. It did not indicate any logistical challenge with producing them by the deadline. There is no evidence to suggest that it was unable to produce them. Vote Leave’s failure to comply appears to have resulted from misconceived objections, already dealt with by us, to being under investigation. We are therefore satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that Vote Leave failed, without reasonable excuse, to comply with an investigation notice we 30 issued under Schedule 19B paragraph 3 PPERA on 21 February 2018. Vote Leave thereby committed an offence under Schedule 19B paragraph 13(1). Evidence Evidence and analysis We opened an investigation on 20 November 2017 into suspected offences relating to Vote Leave, Mr Grimes and Veterans for Britain. In its first response to us after we opened that investigation, on 1 December 2017, Vote Leave’s lawyers said its clients were “anxious to be cooperative”. They went on to say: “We wish to assure you that whatever records are held are being maintained and are being reviewed to see what if anything is relevant to your re-opened inquiry”. In later letters, Vote Leave objected to the investigation. It sent us a PreAction Protocol Letter saying it was going to judicially review the decision to investigate. We responded. Vote Leave did not start judicial review proceedings. Having been unsuccessful in a number of attempts to invite Vote Leave to an interview, on 21 February 2018 we issued an investigation notice requiring Vote Leave to disclose a discrete set of documents we needed for our investigation. We sent the investigation notice to Mr Halsall as Vote Leave’s responsible person, copied to its lawyers. We gave a formal deadline of 1pm on 6 March 2018. The letter with the notice explained that Vote Leave should contact us as soon as possible if it could not meet that deadline. We heard nothing from Vote Leave or Mr Halsall until 3.50pm on 6 March 2018. At that point we got a letter from its lawyers, but none of the required documents were produced. Instead Vote Leave offered to let us inspect the documents it considered relevant at its offices. We asked Vote Leave why it hadn’t complied with the notice. In response, Vote Leave said it “has complied with the Commission’s Statutory [investigation] Notice dated February 21 2018 in all key respects. The only failing was not to reply by the arbitrary 1300 hours deadline on March 6th 2018, however a reply was sent to and received by the Commission on the afternoon of March 6th before 1600 hours.” We then had a number of exchanges with Vote Leave during which it raised misconceived objections, which we had already answered, to the investigation being opened. It repeated its assertion that we had no power to open what it called a ‘third investigation’ into this matter. It ignored our repeated clarification that this was our first investigation. It claimed our Enforcement Policy had no statutory basis and could not be relied upon either when opening investigations or issuing notices. Our Enforcement Policy does have a statutory basis. It is made under Schedule 19B paragraph 14 PPERA. Still no documents were disclosed. After weeks of correspondence

Vote Leave then made its offer of inspection contingent on us meeting it to discuss why the investigation should be closed. Concerned that this was another delay by Vote Leave, we sent authorised officers to inspect and take copies of the documents that Vote Leave said it had collated in response to our notice. In the event, these documents were incomplete and some were not the correct documents. It is a matter of fact that Vote Leave did not comply with our investigation notice. None of the required documents were produced or even made available to us for inspection by the deadline we gave. Vote Leave's response – after the deadline – still didn't produce the documents. The notice was not complied with in any respect. We looked at whether Vote Leave had a reasonable excuse for failing to comply with the notice. Vote Leave explained its approach by saying that "the investigation was not justified" and it was "concerned that the width of the notice was over reaching". It also said that the notice did not follow the wording of PPERA by saying that the documents had to be produced "for inspection". We already knew that Vote Leave objected to our decision to investigate, although it didn't challenge that decision by judicial review. But its opinion did not change the fact that our decision to investigate was properly taken in line with our Enforcement Policy, and an investigation was being conducted. PPERA allows us to require documents that we reasonably require to progress our investigation. In this instance, the notice required Vote Leave to give us copies of communications with Aggregate IQ, Mr Grimes and Veterans for Britain from a limited period during June 2016. It also required copies of adverts placed by Aggregate IQ on behalf of Vote Leave during the same timeframe. The defined scope of the request related directly and obviously to the offences under investigation. The notice said that we preferred the documents to be emailed to us but it did not require this or any other method of production. There was nothing to prevent Vote Leave making the documents available for us to inspect by 1pm on 6 March 2018 and thus complying with the notice. It did not do this. Further, Vote Leave could have asked us about the method of production in good time before the deadline. It did not do so. Vote Leave made further representations on this when sent notice of our intention to fine it for failing to comply with the notice. It said that the time we had allowed for the documents to be produced (13 days) was unreasonable. Its lawyers said that Vote Leave had given them the documents only a few days before the deadline. Neither point was a reasonable excuse for the failure to comply. In December 2017 Vote Leave had told us that its records were being maintained and reviewed. In the context of a period of time from December 2017 to March 2018, giving Vote Leave an additional 13 days was reasonable. Further, Vote Leave was given the opportunity to ask for the deadline to be extended. It did not do so.

Potential related offences

Under section 123(2)(a) and (b)(i) of PPERA, referendum spending returns must be accompanied by a declaration to us made by the responsible person of the campaigner. The responsible person is required to state that they have examined the return and, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, it is complete and correct as required by law. It is an offence for the responsible person to knowingly or recklessly make a false declaration. Civil sanctions do not attach to this offence; it can only be pursued by prosecution. We are satisfied that we have reasonable grounds to suspect that Mr Halsall either knowingly or recklessly signed a false declaration accompanying the Vote Leave spending return. We are also satisfied that we have reasonable grounds to suspect that Mr Grimes either knowingly or recklessly signed a false declaration accompanying the spending return he delivered as an individually registered campaigner. Vote Leave's spending return was inaccurate. It was incorrect for it to fail to include a declaration that Vote Leave had engaged in

joint working with Mr Grimes and BeLeave. It incorrectly stated that Vote Leave had spent under its spending limit. Mr Grimes' spending return was also inaccurate. It incorrectly stated that he had incurred over £675,000 of referendum campaign spending when this was not in fact the case. We have shared our evidence in respect of Mr Halsall and Mr Grimes with the Metropolitan Police Service. We have also shared our investigation files with the Metropolitan Police in relation to whether any persons have committed related offences which lie outside our remit. Offences committed We have determined that Mr David Alan Halsall, the responsible person for Vote Leave, committed: an offence under section 122(4)(b) PPERA in that Mr Halsall failed, without reasonable excuse to deliver a referendum spending return for Vote Leave that was a complete statement of all payments made. We have fined Vote Leave £20,000 for this offence. a further offence under section 122(4)(b) PPERA in that Mr Halsall failed, without reasonable excuse, to deliver a referendum spending return for Vote Leave that was accompanied by all the required invoices and receipts. We have fined Vote Leave £1,000 for this offence. an offence under section 118(2)(c)(i) PPERA in that Mr Halsall incurred spending which he knew or ought reasonably to have known was in excess of the statutory spending limit for Vote Leave. Vote Leave also committed an offence under section 118(2)(c)(ii). We have fined Vote Leave £20,000 for this. We have determined that Vote Leave Limited committed an offence under Schedule 19B paragraph 13(1) PPERA in that it failed, without reasonable excuse, to comply with a requirement imposed by us to produce documents by a specified date. We have fined Vote Leave £20,000 for this offence. We have determined that Mr Darren Grimes committed: an offence under section 117(3) PPERA in that Mr Grimes incurred spending on behalf of BeLeave that exceeded the statutory limit for a nonregistered campaigner. BeLeave also committed an offence under section 117(4). We have fined Mr Grimes £20,000 for this. an offence under section 122(4)(b) in that Mr Grimes failed, without reasonable excuse, to deliver a referendum spending return as an individual registered campaigner that was a complete statement of all his referendum spending. In light of our decision to impose a fine on Mr Grimes for his offence under section 117(3) PPERA, we decided not to impose a further fine on Mr Grimes for this offence. We have determined that Mr David Banks, the responsible person for Veterans for Britain, has committed an offence under section 122(4)(b) PPERA. He failed, without reasonable excuse, to deliver a referendum spending return that included an accurate report of relevant donations received. We have fined Mr Banks £250 for this offence.

Legal and regulatory framework Referendum campaign spending returns Under section 122(2) of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 ("PPERA"), a permitted participant must deliver to the Commission a return that is a statement of referendum spending. Section 120 PPERA says that a referendum spending return must specify the referendum to which the expenditure relates. Under section 120(2)(a) it must contain a statement of all payments made in respect of referendum spending incurred by or on behalf of the permitted participant during the referendum period in question. Under section 120(2)(d), where the permitted participant is not a registered political party, the return must also contain a statement of relevant donations received in respect of the referendum which complies with the requirements of paragraphs 10 and 11 of Schedule 15. Paragraph 10 of Schedule 15 requires that the statement must include the total value of any relevant donation, other than those specified, which are accepted by the permitted participant. Under section 120(3) the referendum spending return must be accompanied by all invoices and receipts relating to these referendum payments. Under section 122(4)(b) PPERA, the responsible person for a permitted participant commits an offence if, without reasonable excuse, they

deliver a return which does not comply with the requirements laid down in sections 120(2) or (3) PPERA. Section 120A PPERA provides that a return need not be made if the referendum expenses incurred by a permitted participant do not exceed £10,000, and within three months of the end of the referendum period the responsible person makes and delivers a declaration of the total amount of referendum expenses incurred.

Common plan expenses Under the European Union Referendum Act 2015 ("EURA") Schedule 1 paragraph 22, "common plan expenses" are expenses that: are referendum expenses incurred by or on behalf of an individual or body during the referendum period, and those expenses are incurred in pursuance of a plan or other arrangement by which referendum expenses are to be incurred by or on behalf of that individual or body and one or more other individuals or bodies, and with a view to promoting or procuring a particular outcome in the referendum. Under the same paragraph, if any of the individuals or bodies involved is a designated ('lead') organisation, then those referendum expenses are treated for the purpose of sections 117 and 118 and Schedule 14 PPERA as having been incurred by the designated organisation only. Schedule 1 paragraph 23(4) EURA requires a return under section 120 PPERA to include a declaration of whether there are any common plan expenses as defined in paragraph 22 incurred by or on behalf of another individual or body, and in the case of each individual or body, its name and the amount of common plan expenses. The same paragraph requires a further declaration of whether there are any common plan expenses incurred by or on behalf of the campaigner concerned that must be treated as having been incurred by another campaigner. The Commission published guidance on working together in the EU Referendum. That explained that the rules were engaged when "spending money as a result of a coordinated plan or arrangement between two or more campaigners during the referendum period that is intended to, or is otherwise in connection with, promoting or bringing about a particular outcome in the referendum." It goes on to say that it is highly likely that two campaigners are working together if they spend money on joint advertising campaigns, they coordinate spending or another campaigner can approve or has significant influence over the spending

Spending limits for the designated lead campaigners Under section 118(1) PPERA, Schedule 14 imposes limits on referendum expenses incurred by or on behalf of a permitted participant during a referendum period. For the EU Referendum, Schedule 14 PPERA was amended to set the limit on referendum expenses for a designated lead campaigner at £7m. Under section 118(2)(c)(i) a responsible person for a non-party non-individual campaigner commits an offence if he or she authorises expenses to be incurred by or on behalf of that campaigner and he or she knew or ought to have known that the expenses would be incurred in excess of the statutory limit. Under section 118(2)(c)(ii), the campaigner is also guilty of an offence. Spending limit for a non-permitted participant Section 105 PPERA defines "permitted participants" for the purpose of a referendum. It includes any of the following by whom a notification has been made under section 106 relating to the referendum: a registered political party, 37 an individual resident in the UK or registered in an electoral register, or any body failing within any of the paragraphs (b) and (d) to (h) of section 54(2).

Section 106 states that a notification for this purpose is a notification to the Commission which identifies the referendum to which it relates and the outcome for which the giver of the notification intends to campaign. Section 54 sets out permissible donors. Section 54(h) lists the following body: any unincorporated association which does not fall within any of the preceding paragraphs but which carries on a business or other activities wholly or mainly in the UK and whose main office is there. Schedule 1 Paragraph 6 of the EURA prohibits any person from being

the responsible person for more than one permitted participant, including as an individual permitted participant. Section 117 PPERA sets out certain financial limits for referendums. Section 117(1) states that the total referendum expenses incurred by or on behalf of an individual or body during a referendum period must not exceed £10,000 unless the individual or body is a permitted participant (ie registered as a campaigner with the Commission). Sections 117(2) and (3) create associated offences. Section 117(3) says that where during the referendum period any referendum expenses are incurred by or on behalf of any body in excess of £10,000, and the body is not a permitted participant, any person who authorised the expenses to be incurred by or on behalf of the body is guilty of an offence if he knew or ought reasonably to have known that the expenses would be incurred in excess of that limit. Where a person commits an offence under section 117(3), the body that was not a permitted participant is also guilty of an offence under section 117(4). Paragraph 6(3) of Schedule 1 to the European Union Referendum Act 2005 states that a person cannot be the responsible person for more than one permitted participant (including as an individual). The Commission published guidance for the section 105/106 PPERA notification (hereinafter referred to as ‘registration’) as a permitted participant in the EU referendum. That guidance explained the rules as above, and included a registration form, EUR1. Investigation notices Under Schedule 19B paragraph 3 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (“PPEREA”), where the Commission has reasonable grounds to suspect that a person has committed an offence under that Act, the Commission may by notice require any person to produce, for inspection by the Commission or a person authorised by the Commission, any document that it reasonably requires for the purposes of investigating the suspected offence or contravention. Under paragraph 3(3), a person to whom such a notice is given shall comply with it within such reasonable time as is specified in the notice. Under paragraph 13(1) a person who fails, without reasonable excuse, to comply with any requirement imposed under or by virtue of Schedule 19B commits an offence. In accordance with Schedule 19B paragraph 14 PPERA the Commission has published guidance as to the circumstances in which it is likely to give a notice under paragraph 3.

This guidance takes the form of the Commission’s published Enforcement Policy.

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Ballot paper ordering at Scottish council elections | Electoral Commission Search
Ballot paper ordering at Scottish council elections You are in the Our research
section Home Our research On this page Key findings Findings from voters What
electoral administrators and their suppliers told us What political parties told us
First published: 23 September 2019 Last updated: 26 November 2019 Summary The
Scottish Government asked us to assess the impact on voters of any changes to the
ordering of candidates on ballot papers for Scottish council elections. We carried
out research with the public, and talked to organisations which represent disabled
people to understand the potential implications of any proposed changes for voters.
We also talked to the people who run elections, and to political parties, to
understand how any changes may impact them. We tested two approaches: ordering
candidates A to Z and then Z to A on alternating ballot papers drawing the order of
candidates by lot Key findings in the testing we undertook, the order of the
candidates had no impact on voters' ability to find and vote for their preferred
candidates on the ballot paper organisations representing disabled people were
concerned that any changes would impact on a disabled person's ability to familiarise
themselves with the order and layout of the ballot paper before they come to vote.
This might impact on the accessibility of the poll for these voters while electoral
administrators were confident that they could manage any processes resulting from
differently ordered ballot papers, they wanted clearly prescribed rules for
administering any change to the ballot to ensure transparency around the process
electoral administrators also raised concerns about the potential for voter confusion
and increased costs resulting from any changes there was no clear consensus amongst
political parties about the ordering of names on ballot papers Findings from voters
The ordering of candidates on the ballot paper does not affect voters' ability to
locate and vote for their preferred candidate it took voters no longer to locate
their preferred candidate on the ballot paper when the names were ordered other than
A to Z we found that voters rarely noticed or thought about the order of candidates
on the ballot paper While our research could not replicate the exact voter experience
of completing ballot papers at a real election, we did clearly find that the ordering
of candidates on ballot papers did not affect voters' ability to navigate and
complete the ballot paper in the way they intended. This was the case regardless of
whether they were looking for a specific candidate on the ballot paper or were voting
along party lines. Do voters notice the order of candidates? During the interviews
with voters, the order of candidates on the ballot paper was rarely raised, with only
15 out of 118 participants doing so spontaneously. Even when specifically asked to
look at and comment on the order of the candidates on the ballot paper, only a
minority of voters noticed whether their ballot paper had the candidates in
alphabetical, reverse-alphabetical or random order. Can the order of candidates make
it easier or harder for voters to find their preferred candidate(s)? Our research
found that the order of the candidates had no impact on participants' ability to find
and vote for their preferred candidate(s). We asked 70 of the 118 research
participants to find and vote for a specific fictitious candidate on the ballot
paper. 20 out of the 70 participants failed to give their vote to this
candidate. However, this was never because they were unable to locate the name. The
reasons given were that they had forgotten the name of the candidate, and even though
it was a test, some preferred to vote for a candidate from the party they usually
support, or did not want to give a vote to a candidate they knew nothing about. We
asked all of the participants in our eye tracking research to find a specific
candidate on the ballot paper and timed how long it took them to find that candidate

on the differently ordered ballot papers. We found little difference in the time taken to find the candidate based on the order of the ballot papers, with it taking participants less than three seconds on average across all ballot papers. Table one: Average time to find a specific candidate by ballot paper order Ballot paper order Average time to find a specific candidate (in seconds) A to Z 3.2 Z to A 3.6 Ordered by lot 1.3 Overall 2.7 The data in table one shows that, on average, voters took slightly longer to find the candidate in the Z to A order and less time to find the candidate when the candidates were ordered by lot. However, this is likely to be because participants tended to read from the top to the bottom of the ballot paper and is therefore related to the position of the specified candidate on the test ballot paper. The specified candidate was higher up the ballot paper order in the version ordered by lot, and further down in the version ordered Z to A. Do voters have a preference for how the candidates are ordered on the ballot paper? When specifically asked, a small majority of the voters participating in our research preferred an A to Z order (60 out of 118 participants) although over a third (41 out of 118) expressed no preference because they, in general, did not think it would make any difference to people's ability to navigate and complete the ballot paper. Some participants expressed a view that a change to the traditional A to Z order might raise questions about how the order was decided and whether it was fair. Reasons for preferring A to Z Participants who expressed a preference for A to Z order did not tend to have a strong preference, nor did they think it would make it much easier or quicker for people to find their preferred candidate. The main reasons given by participants expressing a preference for A to Z were that A to Z is a commonly used and therefore familiar system for voters. Consequently it may be considered more transparent and – by extension – 'fair'. Some also expressed a belief that it would be easier or quicker for other voters to find the preferred candidate on the ballot paper However, the belief that it would be easier to find a candidate when the names are set out in A to Z order is not substantiated by our research, as most participants did not notice the order. Where the order of candidates on the ballot paper was other than A to Z, or where the participants did not realise it was A to Z, there was some suspicion and speculation amongst a few participants as to how the order had been arrived at and whether it had been designed to advantage parties or candidates nearer the top of the ballot paper. Given the potential for any random or Z to A ordering to potentially appear as a non-random order (say with a particular party's candidates grouped at the top of the ballot paper) the concerns from participants noted above indicate there will be a need for transparency about how any order is arrived at, with information easily available for voters to dispel any concerns. Reasons for preferring Z to A Of the very small number of participants who expressed a preference for Z to A ordering (7 out of 118), the reasons seemed to be less about the concept of a reverse alphabetical approach and more to do with the coincidental aspects of the Z to A ballot paper they had been given, such as candidates from their preferred party being nearer the top. Reasons for preferring ordering by lot Amongst the few participants who preferred the ballot papers to be ordered by lot (9 out of 118), reasons offered included a belief that a lack of order would encourage people to look more carefully at the full list of candidates, and a belief that it might be fairer for candidates. Understanding of the STV voting system Even when voters were able to find their preferred candidate on the ballot paper without difficulty, our research found that many voters still made errors in completing the ballot which, in an election, would lead to their vote not counting at all or not counting in the way they intended. These included: voters marking all

their choices with an X or a tick participants not realising they could vote for more than one candidate from the same party or that they could vote for more than one candidate a small number confusing independent with independence and/or the UK Independence Party Our findings demonstrate that there is an ongoing and pressing need for us, Returning Officers and poll staff, political parties and candidates to continue to educate voters on the STV voting system. Findings from specific groups of voters We included participants with as a second language and people with learning difficulties. We also included people with low literacy levels and people with sight loss. Our findings with these groups were no different to participants overall, in that they did not notice the order of candidates on the ballot paper and it had no impact on their ability to complete the paper. as a second language Participants in our research included ten voters with as a second language. Some said they found the ballot papers easy to complete and some said they found it hard. However, where participants found it hard to complete the ballot paper, it did not relate to the order of candidates' names, but to confusion or uncertainty about how to vote using the Single Transferable Vote system, such as whether to use an 'X' or how many candidates they could vote for. Voters with learning difficulties We tested the order of ballot papers with twelve voters with mild to moderate learning difficulties and, again, we found no evidence that the order of candidates impacted on their ability to complete the ballot paper. However, some participants spoilt their ballot paper by voting using multiple ticks or Xs. As with other participants, people with learning difficulties tended to express a preference for an A to Z ballot when specifically prompted to give an opinion. Two participants with dyslexia thought that an A to Z ballot would be easier for people with dyslexia to complete, although both had completed non-A to Z ballots with no difficulty. Two participants with learning difficulties said that the list of names on the ballot was very long and this had made voting harder for them. Voters with low literacy levels We found no evidence that ballot order had an effect on how easy people with low literacy levels found it to complete the ballot paper. However, we did find that some spoilt their ballot by using multiple ticks or Xs. The term 'independent' caused some issues for a small number of participants with low literacy levels, with some confusing 'independent' with 'independence'. Voters with sight loss Nine voters who participated in our research had significant sight loss. In order to replicate the polling station experience as closely as possible, large print ballot papers were provided for reference, as they would be in the polling station at an election. These are to assist voters to locate their preferred candidate, before voting on a standard sized ballot paper. We did not supply the Tactile Voting Device (TVD), which a small number of blind and partially sighted voters use in the polling station. A number of concerns have been raised about its usability at STV elections and we did not want to conflate these issues with our findings related to ballot ordering. We found no evidence that the order of names had any effect on their ability to complete the ballot paper. Some participants with sight loss spoilt their ballot papers by putting multiple crosses or ticks, but, this did not relate to ballot order. We did note that the participants with sight loss seemed less likely to look at the instructions, which may have been because they were trying to minimise the amount of text they had to read. Participants with sight loss tended to say they had no preference about the order. However, two indicated a preference for A to Z with one saying that she would find A to Z easier because she relied on her memory to find her preferred candidate on the ballot paper – although she had nonetheless found the name of the fictitious candidate (on the Z to A ballot) as required and had not noticed the order at the

time. What we learnt from accessibility groups While the findings from our research did not identify any specific evidence to suggest that ballot paper order would have a negative impact on disabled voters' ability to find their preferred candidate, we recognise that this was based on a small number of participants in our research. We also looked at the views submitted by accessibility groups and those representing disabled people in response to the Scottish Government's consultation on electoral reform and invited further comment from these groups. Inclusion Scotland and RNIB provided further information for us to consider. Whether responding directly to us, or to the Scottish Government, the majority of accessibility organisations raised concerns about the potential impact of any change to ballot ordering on disabled people. Many highlighted that it was helpful for them – particularly for those with sight loss – to be able to familiarise themselves with the order of candidates on the ballot paper before going to vote at a polling station. Concerns were raised about whether any alternative system may make this more difficult to do. Respondents suggested an A to Z order might give disabled people more certainty about where the candidate(s) they favoured were located on the ballot paper ahead of them voting. Some respondents also highlighted that any additional uncertainty about how to find their preferred candidate(s) on the ballot paper might lead to an increasing reliance on polling station staff to assist disabled voters in completing their ballot paper. They believed that this would compromise the secrecy of the vote. Respondents also highlighted that parties often produce election material containing an image of the relevant ballot paper, in order to assist voters to locate their candidate(s) on the ballot when they come to vote. They thought it may be confusing for voters if that order does not match the real ballot paper. Respondents suggested that an early decision about the ballot paper order would be helpful in enabling parties to produce campaign material which reflects the actual order of candidates on the ballot paper. It was acknowledged that two versions of the ballot paper would make this more difficult to achieve. RNIB Scotland provided feedback from the RNIB Scotland Committee on the specific options being considered. They found that the majority of Committee members favoured the current system of A to Z ordering as it was familiar to them and they thought any change could disproportionately impact on voters with sight loss. Of the two alternative options for ordering presented, their Committee members preferred the option of ordering by lot as it provided more certainty on the order in which candidates would appear on their ballot paper. Alternating A to Z and Z to A ballot orders also raised questions for them about the provision of accessible materials in polling stations, as there would need to be two versions of the large print ballot paper available for blind and partially sighted voters' reference. While outside of the scope of our research, some respondents with sight loss suggested that it would be easier to find their preferred candidates on the ballot paper if they were grouped by party. What else we learned from our research with voters While not necessarily within the scope of the research we did find some additional issues arising which may inform the design of any future ballot papers. How do voters typically navigate the ballot paper? Our eye-tracking data enabled us to better understand how voters navigated the ballot paper and identify which sections they paid more attention to. Participants who used the paper ballot, and also those who participated in the eye-tracking research, told us that, unless they were looking for the specific name of a candidate, the party emblems were the most useful section of the ballot paper to help them find their preferred candidate rather than candidate or party name. The data from our eye-tracking research told us that participants spent almost as much time looking at party emblems as they did the names and addresses of

candidates (7.9 seconds looking at emblems as opposed to 9.6 seconds looking at names and addresses). The instructions and party names were looked at for the least amount of time (4 and 3.9 seconds respectively). The interest in party emblems from voters perhaps explains the fact that there was a perception amongst some participants that it was unfair that independent candidates did not have an emblem. What electoral administrators and their suppliers told us Electoral administrators and their suppliers told us that they could implement and deliver any of the alternative ballot orders being proposed. However, they were concerned that any changes may lead to the following: confusion for voters if two different versions of the ballot paper were used across a ward pressure on the electoral timetable which may delay the printing of ballot papers and the issue of postal votes increased costs which councils would need to meet Electoral administrators would want to see prescribed in legislation the detailed rules for administering any alternative order. What electoral administrators said about alternating A to Z and Z to A ballot papers The electoral administrators we spoke to questioned how ballot papers would be issued in the polling station. Their strong preference was to have one book of ballot papers in which the order alternated rather than two books of ballot papers in which each ballot followed the same order. This approach would be reliant on polling staff alternating between two books as they issued the papers. Returning Officers were concerned that voters may be confused if two versions of the ballot paper were in circulation and may even question the veracity of one version, thereby undermining confidence in the poll. This was seen as a particular concern in the case of postal voters where two people in the same household may receive differently ordered ballot papers. It was noted that particular consideration would need to be given to the instructions in postal ballot packs under this option. Returning Officers also identified potential issues over the procedure for re-issuing ballot papers, either in the polling station or to postal voters (where a voter has unintentionally spoilt their ballot paper or postal ballot statement). The voters would have familiarised themselves with one order and may receive a differently ordered version as a replacement. Returning Officers were clear that the election rules should explicitly require the re-issued ballot to replicate the order of the initial ballot issued. This may complicate the compilation of the corresponding numbers list, which polling staff are required to complete to record which ballot paper has been issued to which voter. This is an important safeguard against potential fraud. Returning Officers also noted that the two differently ordered ballot papers could slow down the process of printing ballot papers (as two sets of data would need to be sent to the printer), and also for proofing ballot papers. Two differently ordered ballots could also impact the speed and accuracy of a manual STV count at a by-election, where count workers would need to familiarise themselves with the two different ballot orders. What electoral administrators said about drawing the order by lot Electoral administrators thought that if a change had to be made to the ballot paper, in general, the drawing of order by lots may present less difficulties for the administration of the poll as all ballots would be in the same order. Electoral administrators did, however, highlight the need for clear rules and consistency on how the drawing of lots was completed, including details of those who would have a right to observe the process and how any objections to the process could be recorded. Their preference was for prescription via the election rules or by direction from the Elections Convener. However, some suggested that a good practice approach could be set out in our guidance. Electoral administrators raised concerns that in local government areas with large numbers of wards the drawing of lots may take up to one day to complete for all wards in that

area. This could put pressure on the election timetable by delaying the printing of ballot papers and any subsequent issue of postal ballot packs. This would further limit the time available for postal voters to receive, complete and return their postal ballot packs in time for their vote to be counted. What electoral administrators said about changing the order of ballots In general, Electoral administrators were clear that any change, regardless of what it was, would need to be reflected across all formal election notices including the notice of poll, tendered ballot papers, polling station posters and large print ballot papers. Some Returning Officers believed that the STV ballot paper was already complex enough for voters without risking any additional complexity with a change to ballot order. Electoral administrators also noted that any suggestions of alphabetical bias on ballot papers were a concern for parties rather than voters and might be better managed through more vigorous local campaigning to familiarise voters with the different candidates. Electoral administrators also told us that any changes, particularly if adopting an alternating A to Z and Z to A ballot, would increase printing and potentially counting costs. Councils currently meet all local government election costs – other than the costs of e-counting – from their own budgets. They were keen to establish whether the Scottish Government would be meeting any additional costs that were incurred as the result of any changes. What political parties told us We invited views from all the parties currently represented in the Scottish Parliament. We received comments from party officials from the Scottish Conservative Party, the Scottish Liberal Democrats and the Scottish National Party. There was no clear consensus amongst parties about whether the system should change and, if so, in what way. This may be because not all parties stand multiple candidates in the majority of Scottish council wards and so they do not consider the perceived problem of alphabetical order effect as an issue for them. Only the Scottish National Party expressed a strong desire for change. They believed that the current system should be changed to alternating ballots of A to Z and Z to A. They argued that this would mitigate the effect of alphabetical order effect whilst also giving earlier certainty as to the order of their candidates on the ballot paper. In their view this would enable earlier planning for election material and vote management strategies across wards. They believed that the drawing of order by lot would not mitigate any ballot order effect (by merely replacing the alphabetical advantage with the lot drawing advantage). Background Background to this report The Scottish Government is considering whether to change the order in which candidates' names appear on ballot papers at Scottish council elections. Scottish council elections use the Single Transferable Vote (STV) electoral system where, instead of using a single X, voters number candidates in order of preference. Currently three to four councillors are elected for each council ward and parties may stand multiple candidates. Candidates are listed on the ballot paper in alphabetical order by surname. The Scottish Government is concerned that this has led to an 'alphabetic order effect', whereby voters tend to number their preferences down the ballot paper so that a candidate who appears lower down the ballot paper may be less likely to receive a first preference vote, and therefore to be elected than a candidate from the same party who appears higher up the ballot paper. In order to mitigate the potential for an 'alphabetic order effect', the Scottish Government is considering two different ballot ordering approaches and has asked us to test these with voters, alongside the existing system. These are: ordering candidates A to Z and then Z to A on alternating ballot papers drawing the order of candidates by lot The Scottish Government asked us to assess whether the alternative approaches had any positive or

negative effects on a voter's ability to cast their vote for their intended candidates(s). They also wanted to understand whether there may be any particular categories of elector more or less impacted by any changes, including disabled voters. Our aim with this research was to better understand the potential issues and problems which may be encountered in the use of differently ordered ballot papers. Alongside our research with voters, we also talked to electoral administrators and political parties to understand any potential impacts on them. Our research did not assess whether the alternative approaches mitigated the perceived ballot order effect. How we carried out our research We used a qualitative research approach to allow us to explore in detail how easily voters could find their preferred candidate(s) on the ballot papers and whether they had any preferences for a particular ordering of candidates. Voters The findings from voters set out in this report are based on in-depth interviews with 102 voters across seven locations in Scotland, both rural and urban. We commissioned Ipsos MORI to carry out the fieldwork with voters. During these interviews participants were invited to complete ballot papers with different ordering of candidates and then were asked to discuss how easy they found it to navigate the ballot paper and find the candidate(s) they wished to vote for. In addition to the current approach to ordering ballot papers (A to Z), two alternate approaches were tested – ballot papers in reverse alphabetical order (Z to A), and papers with the order of candidates drawn by lot. Examples of these papers and the detailed research methodology are set out in the full report on the Ipsos MORI research . Participants were recruited to represent a range of ages and levels of education. As we wanted to understand whether the impact of any alternative ballot ordering may be different for specific groups of voters, we actively recruited participants who speak as a second language, those with learning difficulties and/or low literacy levels, and also voters with sight loss. Alongside the in-depth interviews, we also carried out eye-tracking interviews with 16 participants, where a camera tracked how the participants navigated the ballot paper in order to find their preferred candidate(s). This provided more detail about how people read the ballot papers (for example, top to bottom) and measured the length of time participants looked at different elements of the ballot paper. In 2017 the Scottish Government consulted on proposals for electoral reform. This consultation invited respondents to give their views on alternative orders for ballot papers at Scottish council elections. A number of organisations representing disabled people submitted their views. We reviewed the responses to that consultation and invited a number of those organisations to discuss their views with us in more detail. Inclusion Scotland and RNIB Scotland provided further information to us to inform this report. Returning Officers and suppliers We held three focus groups with Returning Officer staff across Scotland. Participants included electoral administrators representing 18 out of the 32 Returning Officers in Scotland. We also talked to companies who supply services to Returning Officers, including those that print ballot papers. The sessions involved structured discussions to ascertain any potential administrative impacts from changing the order of candidates on the ballot paper. Political parties We invited political parties who are represented in the Scottish Parliament to provide us with their views on the options proposed by the Scottish Government. The Scottish Conservative Party, Scottish Liberal Democrat Party and the Scottish National Party provided comment.

2021 Scottish Parliament candidate spending | Electoral Commission Search
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Candidates section Home Campaign spending: Candidates First published: 2 February
2022 Last updated: 27 October 2022 About the data At the May 2021 Scottish Parliament
election, there were 369 constituency and independent regional candidates who had to
submit a spending return, listing details of what they spent during the election
campaign. The dataset includes the headline figures for the spending incurred and
donations received by candidates at the 2021 Scottish Parliament election. We publish
these figures to enhance transparency and provide voters with information on
donations to candidates' election campaigns and their spending and to ensure that
this information can be seen together in one place. The full individual candidate
returns are available for public scrutiny from the relevant Returning Officers for a
period of two years after an election. The returns include the total the candidate
spent, as well as a breakdown of how much they spent on things like advertising,
transport and public meetings. They also include any donations the candidate received
above £50 during the short campaign. The data taken from the spending returns
reflects what candidates and their agents submitted to Returning Officers in
Scotland. We publish this information exactly as it appears on the candidate's return
so that there is an accurate record of what was reported. Spending limits vary
between constituencies. The vast majority of Returning Officers have sent us the
returns submitted to them for inclusion in this dataset. Where information is
missing, this may be because the Returning Officer didn't send them on to us, or
because the candidate didn't submit their return to the Returning Officer. Under the
law spending on promoting regional party list candidates counts as party spending,
and was therefore reportable by the party in its election spending return.
Information about candidate spending data for previous devolved elections is
available online in the National Archive. 2021 Scottish Parliament candidate spending
Download the data 2021 Scottish Parliament candidate spending

Report: How the 2016 Scottish Parliament election was run | Electoral Commission Search Report: How the 2016 Scottish Parliament election was run

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Overall, our assessment is that the 2016 election was well run. People were satisfied with the process of both registering to vote and with the process of voting, whether they cast their vote in person at a polling station, post or by proxy. Registration and turnout A total of 4,098,462 people were registered to vote in the Scottish Parliament election on 5 May 2016. Turnout was 55.8% of the registered electorate in the constituency vote and 55.9% in the regional vote. This is the highest turnout recorded since the first Scottish Parliament election in 1999 where 58.8% of the eligible electorate voted in the constituency ballot and 58.7% in the regional ballot. Turnout across constituencies varied with the highest turnout in Eastwood (68.5%) and the lowest in Glasgow Provan (43.2%). Across Scotland 726,555 postal votes were issued amounting to 17.7% of the total electorate. This compares to 14.1% in 2011, 11.2% in 2007 and 3.6% in 2003. Nearly 77% of postal votes issued were returned by electors (76.6% in the constituency vote and 76.7% in the regional vote) and postal votes accounted for 23.7% of all votes included in the count for the constituency contests and 23.8% of all votes included in the count for the regional contests.

The voter experience Our public opinion research found that most voters believed the election to be well-run and were satisfied with the experience of registering and voting. The help and support available inside polling places was highly regarded by voters. The vast majority (93%) of respondents to our public opinion research said that they had found it easy to access information on how to cast their vote and nearly all (97%) said they had found it easy to complete the ballot papers. This confidence is evidenced by the low rate of rejected ballot papers with just 0.41% of constituency ballots and 0.17% of regional ballots rejected at the count. There were very few allegations of electoral fraud at this election and the majority of respondents (86%) believe that voting in general is safe from fraud. However, nearly a third thought that some fraud may have taken place at this election with nearly one half of these citing concerns about identity fraud and the lack of a requirement for ID in polling stations. The Commission has previously recommended the introduction of a requirement for voters to provide ID in polling stations and we will continue to make this case to governments.

16 and 17 year olds This was the first Scottish Parliament election at which 16 and 17 year olds were entitled to vote. Approximately 80,000 of them registered to vote in the election accounting for two per cent of the electorate. Awareness of the ability to register to vote online was highest amongst this age group with 90% aware of the online registration facility compared with only 66% of all survey respondents. However, 16 and 17 year olds were less likely to say that they knew about the election at 69% compared with 85% of all respondents. The majority (89%) said that it was very or fairly easy to access information on how to cast their vote and almost all of them (99%) said that they found it easy to complete the ballot paper. The administration of the poll Overall, the Scottish Parliament election was administered efficiently and professionally with all Returning Officers meeting the Commission's performance standards. The Electoral

Management Board for Scotland (EMB) played a key role in coordinating the delivery of the poll and promoting best practice for improving the voter experience at the election. The EMB continues to rely on consensus and good will to promote consistency of practice at Scottish Parliament elections as the EMB and its Convener have yet to be established on a statutory basis in relation to this election. The provisions of the Scotland Act 2012 and the forthcoming commencement of sections of the Scotland Act 2016 will devolve responsibility for the administration of the Scottish Parliament elections to the Scottish Parliament and this will provide an opportunity for the Parliament to underpin the EMB's role at Scottish Parliament elections on a statutory footing as it already has done in respect to local government elections.

Electoral Registration Officers continue to raise concerns about duplicate registration applications from electors which cause an unnecessary activity for electors and create an administrative burden on electoral registration staff in the busy period before an election. This burden could be eased by the provision of an online facility for individuals to check their registration status before applying to register. Candidates and parties A total of 313 candidates contested constituency seats at the election, an average of 4.3 candidates per constituency. This is the smallest number of candidates to date at any Scottish Parliament election. Ten parties stood candidates in constituency contests, down from twelve in 2011. The number of independent candidates standing in constituency contests declined from 14 in 2011 to eight in 2016. A total of 15 parties and three independent candidates contested the regional elections. This is down from the 21 parties and 15 independent candidates who stood in the regional elections in 2011. Our survey of candidates suggested that, on the whole, the nomination process went smoothly: 95% of candidates said that the nomination process was well-run and 93% found the process to be straightforward. However, access to information about candidate spending and donations could be improved by making candidates' election returns available for viewing online. Concerns continue to be raised by some voters about the descriptions used on ballot papers. While at Scottish Parliament elections the party name must always appear on the ballot paper before any description the party chooses to use, this is not the case at other elections including local government elections in Scotland. We continue to be concerned that the legal provisions for the registration of party descriptions present risks that voters are misled when a description appears without any reference to the party identity and we will encourage governments to work with the Commission to reform the provisions on party descriptions. Recommendations:

Voter experience Recommendation 1: Postal voting The requirement to check postal voting identifiers is a critical safeguard for protecting the postal voting system from theft and misuse. However, it is also vital that voters find it as easy as possible to complete the postal voting statement in order to verify their identity. The Commission will continue to work with the EMB to identify opportunities to increase awareness of the postal voting rules and to promote the use of waivers where appropriate. The Scottish Government should continue to keep the postal voting statement under review to ensure it is as user friendly as possible for voters and that the design and instructions minimise the opportunity for voters to make inadvertent errors which lead to their postal votes being rejected.

Recommendation 2: Voter information The Commission will review our public awareness activities aimed at all voters and specifically 16 and 17 year olds to ensure robust voter information plans are in place ahead of the 2017 council elections so that voters understand how to complete their ballot papers so they can be counted in the way they intended.

Recommendation 3: Polling station ID The Commission reiterates our recommendation

that there should be a requirement for electors across Great Britain to present an acceptable form of identification prior to being issued with a ballot paper and voting at the polling station. Similar requirements are already in place in Northern Ireland and several other comparable democracies. This measure would almost entirely remove the opportunity for personation at polling stations. Recommendations:

Administration of the poll Recommendation 4: Checking registration status Providing a way for electors to check their registration status at the beginning of the online registration application process would reduce the action required by voters to keep their register entry up to date, and would also reduce the impact on EROs of processing duplicate applications. The UK Government should develop an online service to allow people to check whether they are already correctly registered to vote before they complete a new application to register. Given the registration digital service is reserved we would urge UK Government to discuss these matters with Scottish Government where it affects devolved registration issues Any such service would need to carefully manage and protect voters' personal information. Recommendation 5: Law Commissions' review of electoral law The Law Commissions of Scotland, England and Wales and Northern Ireland are currently reviewing electoral law with the aim of consolidating, simplifying and modernising the many existing sources of electoral law. The Law Commissions require the approval of the Scottish and UK Governments before they can move onto the next and final stage of the project, which will consist of drafting new electoral legislation. We continue to urge the Scottish and UK Governments to support the work of the Law Commissions to enable the project to move on to the next stage. This will allow the Law Commissions to start drafting new law in time for it to be implemented before the Scottish Parliament election in 2021.

Recommendation 6: Ensuring legislation is clear in good time before elections We continue to recommend that Governments with legislative competence over elections within the UK should manage the development and approval of legislation so that it is clear (either by Royal Assent to primary legislation, or by laying secondary legislation for approval by Parliament) at least six months before it is required to be implemented or complied with by campaigners or electoral administrators. All governments should normally be able to plan to ensure that legislation for elections is clear at least six months before it is required to be implemented or complied with. If a government has not been able to ensure that legislation is clear by this point, it should table a formal statement in the relevant legislature explaining why it has not, and set out its assessment of the likely impact of the late confirmation of legislation for voters, campaigners and electoral administrators. Recommendation

7: Electoral Management Board for Scotland We continue to urge both the Scottish and UK Government to establish the EMB in statute for all elections. With the provisions of the Scotland Act 2012 and the forthcoming commencement of the sections of the Scotland Act 2016 which relate to Scottish Parliament elections the Scottish Government will become responsible for electoral administrative matters relating to Scottish Parliament elections. We recommend that the Scottish Government use this opportunity to establish the EMB's statutory remit for the Scottish Parliament elections and provide the Convener with a power of direction at these elections. The long-term funding and legal status of the EMB must also be secured and clarified so that it can undertake long-term strategic planning to develop its role and work programme. As the role of the EMB develops we would wish to discuss with Scottish Government any implications this may have for the Commission's current roles and responsibilities in relation to Scottish Parliament and local government elections.

Recommendation 8: Timeliness of Commission guidance resources The Commission

recognises that some of its guidance materials were delivered late to electoral administrators and will take this into account when planning activities for future electoral events. Recommendation 9: EMB Convener - Power to prescribe forms We believe that giving a power of direction to the Convener of the EMB to prescribe the forms would allow the Forms Working group to develop forms that are consistently used across Scotland and allow them to react quickly to the need of developing further forms. The EMB will need to be adequately resourced in the future to ensure that its Forms Working Group is resourced to carry out this task ahead of future elections.

Recommendation 10: Co-ordination of postal vote dispatch We welcome the EMBs approach to co-ordinating the dispatch of postal voting packs as it enables voters who will be away from their address at the time of the election to make informed choices about the most appropriate method of voting for their circumstances. We recommend that the EMB continues to co-ordinate postal vote dispatch dates in this way. Recommendation

11: Additional dispatches of postal votes We recommend that the EMB consults with ROs and EROs and parties with regard to the EMB recommending or directing an additional or second date of dispatch for postal votes in the period between the first dispatch and the postal voting deadline. As part of this consultation the EMB will need to have regard for the additional resource burden on ROs as well as the potential benefits for voters. The EMB should also consult with ROs and their suppliers to ensure that any future directions on the dispatch of postal votes can be planned into the negotiations for new contracts with suppliers. Recommendation 12: Deadlines for replacement of postal votes We recommend that the Scottish Government considers the impact of having two different deadlines for replacing postal votes ahead of future elections. The Government needs to consider the interest of postal voters and the issues raised by ROs. Recommendation 13: Awareness of implications of different voting methods The Commission will continue to work with EROs, ROs and other partners to promote awareness amongst voters of the practical implications of different voting methods (such as postal voting or appointing a proxy) particularly if they are making an application during the last month before polling day. Recommendations: Candidates, parties and campaigners Recommendation 14: Home address details of candidates and agents We recommend that Scottish Government reviews the rules relating to access to candidates and agents home address details, seeking the views of parties, candidates and electoral administrators, including the Commission, with the aim of maintaining transparency, while seeking to increase the safety of candidates. Recommendation 15:

Withdrawal of a party list candidate We would recommend that when it comes to review the rules for the 2021 election, the Scottish Government reviews the rules relating to withdrawal of a party list candidate from the ballot paper and seeks the views of other stakeholders in the electoral community. Recommendation 16: Party descriptions on the ballot paper We continue to recommend that where a candidate represents a political party on a ballot paper, it should be clear to voters which party the candidate represents. While legislation for Scottish Parliament elections already ensures that it is clear which party a candidate represents, this is not the case for other elections in Scotland. The legal provisions for the registration and use of

party descriptions on ballot papers present risks of confusion for voters and restrict the participation of political parties. The Scottish Government and other Governments of the UK should work with the Electoral Commission to reform the provisions on party descriptions. Recommendation 17: Candidate and agent briefings We would recommend that ROs consult with candidates and agents prior to setting dates for briefings. We will also ensure that this recommendation is highlighted in our guidance for Returning Officers. Recommendations 18: Costs relating to an

individual's disability Scottish Government should review the rules relating to personal expenses and disability exemptions with a view to amending the definitions of political party and candidate spending, so that reasonable expenses that can be attributed to an individual's disability are exempt, (as was recently set out in the revised PPERA rules for non-party campaigners). Recommendation 19: Reporting requirements for spending and donations The discrepancy in the reporting requirement between spending and donations during the long campaign at the Scottish Parliament election should be carefully considered by the Scottish Government ahead of the next Scottish Parliament election due to be held in May 2021. Recommendation 20: Candidate spending returns To improve transparency and accessibility of candidate spending returns, we have previously recommended that Returning Officers should be required to publish spending returns online as well as through the existing methods of public inspection. We support recommendation 12-5 of the Law Commissions' review 12 of Electoral Law which proposes a method for implementing this change through legislation. Recommendation 21: Legibility of imprints The purpose of an imprint is to show who is responsible for the production of campaign material. If the imprint is difficult for the voter to read it could lead to a loss of this transparency for the voter, and we recommend that all imprints must be legible. Recommendation 22: Regulating candidate spending and donations We continue to recommend extending our investigative and sanctioning powers at major elections for offences relating to candidate spending and donations, including at Scottish Parliament elections. It will be important for the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government to work with Governments and Parliaments across the UK on introducing the Commission's new powers for different sets of elections. Recommendation 23: Reporting campaign spending on social media We will give further consideration to how campaigners should report spend on social media at future elections. As spend in this area grows, there is the potential for less transparency if expenditure on social media is not easily identifiable within the spending returns because social media is not a specific reporting category. This will need to be considered as part of reviewing all of the expenditure reporting categories to ensure that they remain proportionate and relevant to future trends in campaigning. In case any of these changes would need to be implemented through legislation, we recommend that the Scottish Government and Parliament should consider the timing needed for implementing changes before the UK Parliamentary General Election in 2020 and the Scottish Parliamentary election in 2021. Recommendation 24: Appointment of Counting Agents To ensure consistency in approach across Scotland in determining how many counting agents are permitted at counts for future Scottish Parliament elections, Scottish Government should consult relevant stakeholders ahead of the next election to find an appropriate solution. This would ensure certainty on how counting agents are appointed across Scotland, and the approach could be implemented either through legislative change or through direction from the Convener of the EMB. Recommendation 25: Guidance on count declarations For future elections we will work with the EMB to develop a guidance note for ROs to streamline the declarations. This would include general guidance on the template script for the declaration, backdrops for declarations and other pertinent issues ROs may wish to consider before the declarations are made. Recommendation 26: Collation of election results data We recommend that the EMB continues to publish collated Scottish results data in order to provide transparency for voters. In taking this forward the EMB should consult with stakeholders, including parties and academics, in order to identify the most useful content and format for the publication of results data. Recommendation 27: Reporting on the costs

of the election We recommend that Scottish Government, when in a position to be able to do so, publicly report on the administration of the fees and charges order for this election in order to ensure transparency of process and make any recommendations necessary for improvements in the way the process is administered. Recommendation 28: Resourcing the election We recommend that the issue of local government staff resource for elections be addressed by the Scottish Government, the EMB and individual ROs, set in the context of the future role of the EMB and with consideration of how that can assist through any economies of scale that are available. We would be happy to assist in any such undertaking. Download our full report 2016 Scottish Parliament election report Related content Results and turnout at the 2016 Scottish Parliament election View the results and turnout at the 2016 Scottish Parliament election Report on the Scottish Parliament election on 6 May 2021 Read our report about how the 2021 Scottish Parliament election was run Report: How the 2011 Scottish Parliament election was run Read our report about how the 2011 Scottish Parliament election was run Results and turnout at the 2011 Scottish Parliament election View the results and turnout at the 2011 Scottish Parliament election

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role as a regulator You are in the section Home On this page Registering
political parties Registering non-party campaigners Helping parties and campaigners
comply with the rules Publishing political finance data Regulating imprints on
campaign material What happens when the law is broken First published: 1 August 2022
Last updated: 3 October 2022 Summary As a regulator, we: maintain registers of
political parties in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and register non-party
campaigners provide guidance for anyone who might want to stand or campaign in an
election publish political finance data regulate the imprint rules for parties and
campaigners take action if we have reason to suspect the political finance law has
been broken Registering political parties We maintain the registers of political
parties in Great Britain and Northern Ireland . If a party wants to stand candidates
at an election using a party name, description or emblem, they need to register with
us . about how political parties are registered An application to register includes:
a party name formal documents, including the party's constitution, and its financial
structure, showing the party can comply with election finance laws details of
important roles, such as leader, treasurer and nominating officer An application can
also include party descriptions and emblems (these are optional). We check each
application to make sure only permitted names, descriptions and emblems are approved
for use on ballot papers. They all must pass certain legal checks , including not
risking voters being confused or misled when they look at a ballot paper. Once
registered, a party has legal responsibilities under electoral law, including only
accepting money from specified permissible sources, and submitting regular financial
reports to us. Did you know? Did you know? Anyone can comment on a party registration
application . Parties can have up to 12 registered descriptions. Candidates can
choose to use any of these on the ballot paper. At some elections, candidates can use
a party description, instead of a party name, on the ballot paper. It must be clear
which party they're standing for. In Scottish Parliament elections, parties can add
'Scottish' to their name without needing to register an additional description. In
Senedd and local council elections in Wales, parties can add 'Welsh' or 'Cymreig' to
their name without needing to register an additional description. Registering non-
party campaigners Non-party campaigners are individuals or organisations that
campaign in the run-up to elections, but are not standing as political parties or
candidates. They often campaign on certain issues, or in support or opposition to
particular parties or candidates. When they spend over a certain amount on
campaigning, they need to register with us, and report on their finances . We publish
a list of registered non-party campaigners . Helping parties and campaigners comply
with the rules We provide guidance for anyone who might want to stand or campaign in
an election, from political parties and campaigners, to candidates and their agents.
This guidance helps them to understand what electoral rules they need to follow, and
what they need to report to us. It should be possible for election campaigning to be
innovative and engaging. To help parties comply with the law, and be innovative, we
offer an advice service. We're available to explain to parties and campaigners what
impact their campaign activity may have on their financial reports. There is a strong
culture of compliance with political finance law in the UK. We work with parties and
campaigners before elections to ensure high levels of compliance, so that we don't
have to take enforcement action afterwards. Publishing political finance data We
publish financial data every quarter about donations and loans for parties and
campaigners in the UK. These data sets show how parties and campaigners are being
funded throughout each year. We publish statements of accounts annually. After

elections, we publish spending returns from parties and campaigners . This shows what they have spent on campaigning to influence the way that people vote. Parties and campaigners must send their donations and loans reports, accounts, and spending returns to us by deadlines set out in law. We may take action if we don't receive them on time, especially when that delays transparency of the data. View all financial data in our database Regulating imprints on campaign material We regulate the 'imprint' rules for parties and campaigners (but not candidates), which requires that campaign material includes information identifying the person or organisation who paid for it. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, all printed campaign material, such as leaflets, must contain this information In Scotland, the rule also applies to digital campaign material, like social media adverts. What imprints must include What imprints must include Printed campaign material must include the name and address of: the printer the promoter who it's being promoted for (for example, the candidate or party) In Scotland, digital campaign material must include: the promoter who it's being promoted for (for example, the candidate or party) Learn more about imprints on campaign material What happens when the law is broken We will take action if we have reason to suspect the political finance law has been broken. The laws for political parties and other campaigners can also be enforced by the police, and some offences can only be investigated by the police. If we identify one of those offences we can notify the police so that they can decide whether to investigate. about our enforcement work

Board minutes: 4 December 2019 | Electoral Commission Search

Board minutes: 4 December 2019 You are in the Electoral Commission Board section Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Apologies and introductions Declarations of interest Minutes of the Commission Board meeting of 25 September 2019, note from the informal session on 25 September 2019, the Commissioner Day on 30 October 2019, and the Audit Committee on 30 October 2019 Update on electoral events and related matters Supplementary Estimate Corporate and business planning Forward plan of Board business 2019/20 Commission Board action tracker Chair and Chief Executive's meetings and meetings of note in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland First published: 12 June 2020 Last updated: 19 June 2020 Meeting overview Date: Wednesday 4 December 2019 Time: 10am to 12:15pm Location: Boothroyd Room, 3 Bunhill Row, London Date of next scheduled meeting: Wednesday 22 January Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Holmes, Chair Alasdair Morgan Alastair Ross (Video conference) Anna Carragher Elan Closs Stephens (Video conference) Joan Walley Rob Vincent Sarah Chambers Stephen Gilbert Sue Bruce Bob Posner, Chief Executive Craig Westwood, Director, Communications, Policy and Research Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Amanda Kelly, General Counsel David Bailey, Head of Strategic Planning and Performance David Meek, Senior Adviser, Governance Petra Crees, Planning, Performance, and Governance Manager Tom Hawthorn, Head of Policy Katy Knock, Policy Manager (for item 4 only) Kate Engles, Policy Manager (for item 4, 5 and 6 only) Priyani Peruma, Lawyer (for item 4 only) Ben Rayner, Regulations Assistant (for item 4 only) Tracey Blackman, Financial Controller (for item 5 and 6 only) Apologies and introductions No apologies. The Chair introduced the staff observing the Board. Declarations of interest No new declarations of interest. Minutes of the Commission Board meeting of 25 September 2019 (EC 67/19), note from the informal session on 25 September 2019 (EC 68/19), the Commissioner Day on 30 October 2019 (EC 69/19), and the Audit Committee on 30 October 2019 (EC 70/19) Resolved: That the minutes of the Commission Board meeting on 25 September 2019 be agreed. The records of the informal session on 25 September 2019 and of the Commissioner Day on 30 October 2019 were noted. Update on electoral events and related matters (oral update) The Chief Executive gave an update on the work of the Commission in supporting the delivery of the UK Parliamentary General Election (UKPGE) on 12 December 2019. The Chief Executive noted that there had been a strong reliance on us from registration and returning officers, as well as their teams, throughout the election period. The Board was reminded of the information it had received in the regular updates from directors during the election campaign. The Chief Executive advised the Board of the work we had done with law enforcement agencies around the country to seek to support candidate safety, as well as measures that had been introduced to keep staff safe and secure. The Chief Executive informed the Board of the Commission's participation in the National Defending Democracy Election Cell. This cell included government and other public officials tasked with ensuring a well-run election process. Our involvement helped ensure that the Cell had the correct information on how elections work, to ensure that they got their interventions right, including appropriate responses for a number of potential scenarios that could affect the election. The Board discussed other upcoming electoral events, including the likelihood of an assembly election in Northern Ireland early in 2020, and forthcoming likely changes to electoral law in Wales and Scotland. The Chief Executive highlighted that some of our policy recommendations had been taken on board in new legislation. The Chief Executive noted the progress the

Commission had been able to make on our existing work while also administering recent electoral events, including the European Parliamentary Election. The Director of Electoral Administration and Guidance advised the Board of the large number of electoral queries we had responded to so far – significantly more than in the past. Some errors had been reported to us by local authorities but so far they were minor and localised. We had used our electoral coordination and advisory board forum to discuss the high volume of registration applications received by local authorities, and the number of duplicate applications they had received, and the impacts of this. We were unable to confirm the number of duplicates received at this stage, although anecdotal evidence suggested it would be close to figures seen at the UKPGE in 2017. The Board heard that the guidance for the 2020 local elections would be published before the end of the year. The Electoral Administration and Guidance directorate were also preparing for possible assembly elections in Northern Ireland. There would be further work on canvass reform after the legislation was passed in Westminster before the election, but the devolved administrations still had to pass their necessary legislative changes. The Board discussed the planned observations of polling stations on election day, and the desire of Commissioners to contribute to this. The Director of Electoral Administration and Guidance noted that we had scaled back observations significantly in the last 10 years, as we focused on providing support from the office to ensure we were able to respond to the needs of election teams. Commissioners were also advised not to observe at polling stations on election day this time round, due to heightened security warnings it would be irresponsible to ignore. We would stay in contact with local authorities on polling day and had a team on stand-by to observe if the need arose. There were over 1,000 accredited observers from a range of organisations, including international observers, which was significantly higher than in recent General Elections. The Board discussed the security advice given to candidates and political parties. The Director of Regulation noted that this advice came from the Police. Where the Parliament Security Team was provided to former Members of Parliament (MPs), this was not an election expense. But other candidates for office were required to report any expenditure on private security contractors as an election expense, even if the Police had advised them to do this. The Board discussed the merits of introducing an exemption on this spending, similar to that in place for candidates with disabilities. This would require legislative change. The Board discussed the fact that a candidate who decided to hold a campaign event in their constituency that required security might also incur significant election expenses. The Director of Communications, Policy and Research outlined the media engagement work the Commission had undertaken. The focus had now shifted from registration promotion to regulatory work two weeks out from polling day. The week leading up to polling would be used to promote information relating to polling day. The Board heard about the efforts of social media companies to spot misinformation and disinformation. The Policy and Research teams were meanwhile beginning to focus on preparing for post-poll reporting. The research team had set up a number of surveys that would be distributed to various stakeholders, with results contributing to post-poll reporting. The team had undertaken an analysis of the manifestos of the major parties on areas that affected electoral law, and would circulate this to Commissioners. The Director of Regulation advised the Board of the work the Commission had done with newer parties and campaigners to ensure they complied with their regulatory requirements. The issues dealt with were broadly comparable to the 2017 General Election. We had received a number of comments from the public about the content of campaign material, and had taken time to ensure that

the public were aware of what we were responsible for and what was outside our remit. There had been an increase in the number of non-party campaigners, with an impact on the administrative work of the team. The Director noted that the deadline for the larger parties to declare their spending on the European Parliamentary Election fell within the timeframe of this campaign, and scrutiny work had begun on these returns. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services advised the Board of our routine contact with the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), which had been reassuring. The NCSC had not identified any areas where we should be doing additional work. The Director also confirmed the continued contingency planning for any effect of a Brexit date before elections in 2020. Supplementary Estimate (EC 71/19) The Director of Finance and Corporate Services outlined the need for a supplementary estimate. In addition to the spending required to administer the General Election, the Director highlighted areas of pressure on the budget during the current financial year, including the late confirmation of participation in the European Parliamentary Election and the number of recall petitions. Resolved: The principle of the estimate and delegated responsibility to the Chief Executive to make any appropriate changes before the Supplementary Estimate was submitted be agreed. Corporate and business planning (EC 72/19) The Chair explained the statutory requirement to prepare business and corporate plans, noting that this work needed to continue before the outcome of the election and the policy agenda of the new Government was known. The Board would obviously need to take a further close look in January, when the context would be clearer. The Chief Executive noted that the Board had a clear strategic agenda for the Commission. We also needed to ensure that we were ready to respond to the policy programme set by a new government. The Board heard of pending changes to reporting requirements, in the context of changes to accountability to the devolved administrations. The Chief Executive advised the Board of the progress made against the commitments made in the most recent business plan, which had provided for some growth. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services explained that the Commission was required by law to produce a new five-year corporate plan for consideration by the Speaker's Committee by March following a general election. In this instance, there was insufficient time to prepare a new comprehensive five-year plan in time for submission in early 2020. The Director proposed a two-stage process, where an outline corporate plan would be submitted in March 2020, and the Speaker's Committee would be recommended to require a full new corporate plan from us later in the year. This would allow us the necessary time to prepare a comprehensive plan. The Board endorsed this approach. The Board was interested in understanding the different areas to which we could allocate our resources, including the expected impact of any changes. The Director of Communications, Policy and Research highlighted the areas of new activity covered in the draft corporate plan. The Board agreed that efforts to improve digital literacy were worthwhile, but wanted to see more about how this could best be done in practice. The Chief Executive confirmed that the Commission would aim to work in partnership with other organisations, with each focussing on areas of their particular expertise. Initial contacts suggested support from such organisations for this approach. Electoral commissions in other countries had taken similar action in this area. The Board recognised the scope of our public awareness role and remit and how this had changed over time. The Board requested greater clarity on the link between the four themes previously agreed for possible new areas of work, and the proposed budget requests. Each theme was discussed in turn: promoting local authority resilience, promoting compliance, promoting voter confidence, and responding to governments' initiatives. The approaches suggested for each were broadly endorsed,

but more details were requested about both the inputs being proposed, and the expected outputs. The Director of Communications, Policy and Research provided further context for the proposed Open Data Initiative. The General Counsel provided an update on the proposed changes to the Legal team. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services updated the Board on proposed improvements resulting from the Ways of Working project, including updating the video-conferencing and hot-desking facilities, and new roles to support the digitisation work that the Commission was undertaking. Action: The Executive Team consider the scrutiny points raised by the Board and reflect them in a refined version of the proposed business and outline corporate plans, for approval at the Board meeting on 22 January 2020. Resolved: That the paper be agreed. Forward plan of Board business 2019/20 (EC 73/19) The Chair of the Audit Committee proposed scheduling a risk workshop for the whole Board. This would assist in the creation of the new corporate plan. Action: A risk workshop for the Board be scheduled as part of the creation of the new corporate plan. Resolved: That the paper be noted. Commission Board action tracker (EC 74/19) Resolved: That the paper be noted Chair and Chief Executive's meetings and meetings of note in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland (EC 75/19) Resolved: That the paper be noted. The chair invited the General Counsel to provide an update on an ongoing case.

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Apply to be an individual accredited observer First published: 25 July 2019 Last updated: 2 November 2021 Individual electoral observer application form Apply to be an individual electoral observer (new) Are you over the age of 16? Yes No You can't apply to be an electoral observer if you're under 16. Your details Your name First name Last name Your email address Your contact number Home address: House number or name Home address: Street name Home address: Town or city Home address: Postcode Home Address: Country If you live in the UK, please specify whether you live in England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland Accreditation details Is this a new accreditation application? Yes, this is a new accreditation No, this is a renewal Your accreditation will be valid for three years. Do you want to be accredited for a shorter period? Yes No Select the date you want your accreditation to be valid until. How do you want to receive your observer badge? By post to your home address By post to a different address Alternative address: House number or name Alternative address: Street name Alternative address: Town or city Alternative address: Postcode Alternative Address: Country Declaration Confirm that you have: Provided information that is true and correct Read and agree to the Code of Practice Click here to read the Code of Practice Not been convicted of an electoral offence in the last five years Read, understood and agree to our Privacy Policy Click here to read our Privacy Policy Leave this field blank

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1. Our findings You are in the May 2019 voter identification pilot schemes section Home Our research Voter identification pilots May 2019 voter identification pilot schemes First published: 11 July 2019 Last updated: 11 July 2019 Contents Overview Our findings Impact on voters: experience Impact on voters: confidence Impact on security Impact of administration of the polls Background to our evaluation Our findings The ten pilots in May 2019 have provided more evidence about what it would mean for people to show ID at polling stations in Great Britain, building on the five pilots held in 2018. More local areas took part this year. There was a wider range of rural areas and urban areas, and they included a better mixture of people: different areas have different populations, with varying socioeconomic profiles. There were also fewer differences between the pilots using each model, which meant that the evidence from this pilot scheme is more robust. However, as was the case with the five 2018 pilots, the ten areas piloting in 2019 are not fully representative, in socio-demographic terms, of many areas of Great Britain. Looking at the evidence from these pilots and our previous research, we can say that: A large majority of people already have access to an acceptable form of officially issued photo ID from the lists used in these pilots. These people would not have a problem showing it in a polling station if they had to do so. Allowing only existing forms of officially issued photo ID would not be accessible for everyone. Some groups of people would find it harder than others to show photo ID in a polling station, although this could be mitigated if locally issued photo voter cards were easily available for all. Locally issued ID that includes a photo – like the electoral identity card currently provided in Northern Ireland – would be more secure than locally issued ID without a photo. Asking people to show two pieces of non-photo ID would not necessarily be more secure than showing their poll card. It would be more secure if one piece of ID had to be an official document like a birth certificate, but that would make it less accessible. Asking people to show their poll card would be less secure than a locally issued photo ID. The poll card could be made more secure, for example through changes to the form of the poll card with the addition of printed security features, and by reviewing the process for checking them in polling stations. These would still be accessible for everyone, but could be more complicated for Returning Officers to produce. Using scanners or other technology to check the validity of poll cards in polling stations would be much more complicated and costly for Returning Officers and polling station staff to deliver. These checks would not necessarily add more security than visual checks by polling station staff. The experience of taking part in the pilot scheme appears to have had a positive impact on people's perception of the security of the polling station process, and on their confidence in it. This varied within each pilot model, across individual local authority areas. Returning Officers and their staff ran the elections successfully in the pilot scheme areas, and there were no significant administrative issues in any pilot area. Polling station staff were satisfied with how polling day went and were confident that they could manage the process of people showing voter identification at future elections. Introducing a voter ID requirement The data and findings presented in our evaluation build on the evidence base provided by the 2018 pilot scheme. This evidence further clarifies the way in which a voter ID scheme could be delivered in Great Britain. However, we are not able to draw definitive conclusions, from these pilots, about how an ID requirement would work in practice, particularly at a national poll with higher levels of turnout or in areas with different socio-demographic profiles not fully represented in the pilot scheme. If the policy is to be developed further, Government

and Parliament should consider carefully the available evidence about the impact of different approaches on the accessibility and security of polling station voting in Great Britain. This should include evidence from the experience of polling station voters in Northern Ireland, who have been required to show ID since 1985 (including requiring photo ID since 2003), as well as the evidence from the local pilot schemes in both 2018 and 2019. We have identified three key areas for further consideration:

Any ID requirement should deliver clear improvements to current security levels A photo ID requirement would provide the greatest level of security, but each of the models that have been piloted in 2018 and 2019 would provide some level of improved security compared with the current rules. Government and Parliament should consider what level of security is proportionate to the risk of personation fraud in polling stations. Any ID requirement should ensure accessibility for all voters While a large majority of people already have access to an acceptable form of photo ID, allowing only existing forms of officially issued photo ID would not be accessible for everyone. To make sure voting at polling stations remains accessible, there would need to be other options for people who do not already have an acceptable form of photo ID. This could involve providing free of charge locally issued photo ID, as currently provided for electors in Northern Ireland. Alternatively, it could involve allowing voters to use their poll card – on the current model or a different model – as the primary or secondary route to proving identity, depending on the level of security required. Any ID requirement should realistically be deliverable, taking into account the resources required to administer it The pilot scheme has shown that some ID options would be more complicated for Returning Officers and polling station staff to deliver. The relative security benefits of these options would need to be considered alongside the impact on the administration of election procedures, particularly polling station processes.

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Subject Investigated for Decision Summary of reasons(s) Breakthrough Party (registered political party) Failure to report two donations by due date Offences 2 x £200 penalties Paid on initial notice on 4 September 2023 Sanctions were appropriate in the case of both late reported donations, in line with our enforcement policy.

Conservative and Unionist Party (registered party) Failure to report four donations by due date 3 x £200 penalties Due for payment by 20 September 2023 Sanctions were appropriate in the case of three of the four late reported donations, in line with our enforcement policy. Liberal Democrats (registered political party) Failure to report 21 donations by due date Failure to report two new loans and four changes to existing loans by due date Offences £3,300.00 total penalties 4 x £200 Fixed Monetary Penalties 9 x Variable Monetary Penalties (4 x £250 and 5 x £300) Paid on 15 August 2023 Sanctions were appropriate in the case of some late reported donations and loans, in line with our enforcement policy. Others were not of such significant value as to merit action. Social Democratic and Labour Party (registered political party in Northern Ireland) Failure to report a donation by due date Offence £1,000 Variable Monetary Penalty Due for payment by 6 October 2023 A sanction was considered appropriate and proportionate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy.

Precious Life (non party campaigner at the 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election) Failure to include valid imprint on campaign material. Offence No sanction The campaigner failed to include a full imprint on some material, though did include some of the required information. The campaigner engaged with the Commission and a sanction was not proportionate in this case. All for Unity (political party) Failure to deliver two quarterly donations and loans reports by due date No sanction The party delivered all of the required submissions during the investigation, and as the party is no longer registered, with no indication of intent to re-register, the Commission did not consider that any sanction was proportionate.

Democrats (registered political party) Failure to provide audit report with statement of accounts for 2019 No sanction The party delivered accounts but not the required audit report. The Commission considered the mitigating circumstances, including in relation to the COVID pandemic, meant that a sanction was not proportionate in this case.

Irish Republican Socialist Party (registered political party in Northern Ireland) Failure to deliver quarterly donations and loans reports by due dates No determination of offence The party delivered five quarterly reports late during 2022 and 2023. All were nil reports, and the lateness varied between 4 and 87 days. The Commission made no determination of offence primarily on the basis of the personal circumstances of the registered treasurer during the relevant period. The fact that

all of the reports were nil reports was also a relevant consideration. Conservative and Unionist Party (registered party) Failure to report two donations by due date No sanction The two donations at issue were to local branches of the party. They were not of significant value in the context of political finance, and although reported late, were reported in the next quarterly report due. We also recognised that the party had made changes to ensure the errors in these cases did not recur. We concluded that it was not proportionate or in the public interest impose any sanction. Green Party Northern Ireland (registered party) Inaccurate reporting of three donations, late delivery of three donation reports No sanction Two of the three late delivered quarterly report were delivered marginally late. The three donations at issue were not of significant value in the context of political finance and the inaccuracies were minor. We also took into account the personal circumstances of the treasurer at the time, that the party took steps taken to rectify transparency, and engaged effectively with us. We also noted the Party's good compliance record both prior to these matters and since they occurred. We did not consider it proportionate to impose any sanction, and we will continue to provide ongoing support. Irish Republican Socialist Party (registered political party) Failure to deliver spending return for 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election by due date No sanction The return disclosed no controlled spending, and the registered treasurer co-operated fully with the Commission. We also took into account mitigating personal circumstances. We concluded that it was not proportionate or in the public interest impose any sanction. Labour Party (registered political party) Failure to report six donations by due date 3 x £200 penalties Paid on 13 April 2023 Sanctions were appropriate in the case of some late reported donations, in line with our enforcement policy. Others were not of such significant value as to merit action. Democrats (registered political party) Late delivery of annual statement of accounts Offence Penalty of £1,500 Paid on 2 February 2023 The party's 2021 annual statement of accounts was delivered late. A sanction was appropriate in this case in line with our enforcement policy. Portsmouth Independent Party (registered political party) Late delivery of annual statement of accounts Late notification of change of registered officer Offences No sanction The party's 2021 statement of accounts was delivered late, and notification of a change in registered treasurer was also delivered outside the required timescale. Taking into account all of the facts, the Commission did not consider it proportionate to impose sanctions. Scotland's Independence Referendum Party (registered political party) Failure to deliver annual statement of accounts Offence No sanction The party's 2021 statement of accounts remains outstanding but there was no evidence to indicate any significant transactions and the party was removed from the register in November 2022 having not sought to remain registered. The Commission was satisfied that the loss to transparency was minor and it was not proportionate or in the public interest to take further action. Conservative and Unionist Party (GB) (registered political party) Late reporting of donations Offences 3 x £200 penalties Paid on 2 November 2022 Sanctions were appropriate in the case of some late reported donations, in line with our enforcement policy. Others were not of such significant value as to merit action. Labour Party (registered political party) Late reporting of donations Offences 2 x £200 penalties Paid on 7 November 2022 Sanctions were appropriate in the case of some late reported donations, in line with our enforcement policy. Others were not of such significant value as to merit action. British Independents (registered political party) Failure to deliver annual statement of accounts for 2021 Offence No sanction The accounts remain outstanding but accounts disclosing nil or minimal income and expenditure had been correctly delivered in

previous years and the party was removed from the register in November 2022 having not sought to remain registered. The Commission was satisfied that the loss to transparency was minor and it was not proportionate or in the public interest to take further action. Redcar & Cleveland Independent (registered political party) Failure to deliver quarterly donation report and quarterly transactions report by due date No offence Closed without further action The party's Quarter 2 2022 donations and transactions reports were delivered late, but evidence of a reasonable excuse was provided. The offence in question can only be found where there is no reasonable excuse and therefore no offence was committed. Unionist Clubs Scotland (non-party campaigner) Failure to include valid imprint on campaign material No offence Closed without further action The Commission was satisfied that election material did not include the required imprint, but was also satisfied that a potential reasonable excuse existed. The offence in question can only be found where there is no reasonable excuse and therefore no offence was committed. British National Party (GB) (registered party) Late reporting of donations Late delivery of annual accounts Offences Penalties of £2,000 and £750 in relation to two late reported donations. Penalty of £3,000 in relation to late delivery of accounts The party's 2020 annual statement of accounts were delivered late. Two donations were also reported late. Sanctions were appropriate in each case in line with our enforcement policy. Burning Pink (registered party) Late delivery of annual statement of accounts No offence The party's 2021 statement of accounts was delivered late, but evidence of a reasonable excuse was provided. The offence in question can only be found where there is no reasonable excuse and therefore no offence was committed. Liberal Democrats (GB) (registered political party) Late reporting of donations Paying claims for payment received late; paying claims for payment late Offences 5 x £200 penalties; 1 x £500 penalty Sanctions were appropriate in the case of some late reported donations, in line with our enforcement policy. Others were not of such significant value as to merit action. The offences relating to claims received or paid late did not involve significant sums and we did not consider it proportionate to impose sanctions. A Better Way to Govern (registered political party) Late delivery of annual statement of accounts Offence No sanction The accounts were delivered late but considering all of the facts, the Commission did not consider it proportionate to impose a sanction. Political Unity for Progress (registered political party) Late delivery of annual statement of accounts Offence No sanction The accounts were delivered late but considering all of the facts, the Commission did not consider it proportionate to impose a sanction. Holland On Sea & Eastcliff Matters (registered political party) Late delivery of annual statement of accounts Offence No sanction The accounts were delivered late but considering all of the facts, the Commission did not consider it proportionate to impose a sanction. Democratic Network (registered political party) Incomplete quarterly donations reports Offences No sanctions The reports were delivered on time but without the required declarations, which were delivered after the deadline. The Commission did not consider it proportionate to impose a sanction. Reform (GB) (registered political party) Failure to deliver a complete campaign expenditure return for 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election (missing invoices); late payment of claims Offences No sanctions The number and value of missing invoices and late payments were minor, and it was not proportionate or in the public interest to propose sanctions. People Before Profit Alliance (NI) (registered party) Failure to return impermissible donations within 30 days of receipt. Offences No sanctions The impermissible donations were returned, albeit outside the statutory timescale, and the donor was at all relevant times eligible to appear on a register.

Conservative and Unionist Party (GB) (registered political party) Failure to return an impermissible donation within 30 days of receipt; late reporting of donations and regulated transactions (loans) Offences 4 x variable monetary penalties totalling £3,080 Paid on 3 August 2022 No sanction was imposed for late reported donations, which were not of significant value, or the failure to return an impermissible donation within 30 days. Sanctions were appropriate in the case of some late reported loans, in line with our enforcement policy. Basildon Community Residents Party (registered political party) Failure to deliver quarterly donation report; failure to deliver quarterly transactions report Offences No sanctions The overdue reports were delivered during the course of enforcement action, and the party is now exempt from donations and loans reporting. The Commission did not consider it proportionate to impose any sanctions. Workers Party of Great Britain (registered political party) Failure to deliver complete campaign expenditure return; failure to provide signed declaration accompanying campaign expenditure return. Offences No sanctions The return did not specify the relevant poll to which it related, and the relevant declaration was not included. The spending reported was however minimal, and the Commission did not consider it proportionate or in the public interest to impose sanctions. Co-operative Party (registered political party) Late reporting of a donation Offence No sanction The donation was reported late but mitigating factors meant no sanction was imposed. All for Unity (registered political party) Failure to deliver complete campaign expenditure return for 2021 Scottish Parliamentary election; failure to delivery quarterly donations and transactions reports. Offences. No sanctions. Closed without further action. Mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed. The party has since voluntarily deregistered. British Resistance (registered political party) Failure to deliver annual statement of accounts; late delivery of notification to change party's registered treasurer. Offence and contravention of a prescribed requirement. No sanctions. Closed without further action. Mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed. Conservative and Unionist Party (Peterborough accounting unit) Failure to return an impermissible donation within 30 days of receipt. No offence. The accounting unit accepted, and the party reported, a £5,000 donation from Cooper Quinn Holdings Limited. Information subsequently emerged calling into question whether the donor were permissible. The Commission's investigation determined that the donor was permissible and that no offence was committed. Scottish Green Party (registered political party) Late delivery of annual statement of accounts. Offence. £2,300 variable monetary penalty. Due by 13 July 2022. The party's 2020 annual statement of accounts were delivered late. A sanction was appropriate in this case in line with our enforcement policy. Kingston Independent Residents Group (registered political party) Late delivery of annual statement of accounts. Offence. £200 fixed monetary penalty. Paid on initial notice on 28 April 2022. The party's 2020 annual statement of accounts were delivered late. A sanction was appropriate in this case in line with our enforcement policy. Let London Live (registered political party) Late delivery of quarterly donations and transactions reports. Offences. No sanctions. Closed without further action. The party's Quarter 4 2021 donations and transactions reports were delivered late, but mitigating factors meant that no sanctions were imposed. Scotland's Independence Referendum Party (registered political party) Failure to delivery quarterly donations report. No determination of offence. Closed without further action. The party delivered two reports of transactions (loans) for Quarter 4 of 2021, both nil reports, but no donations report. The investigation established that one of the reports was in fact intended to be for donations and no reportable donations had been

accepted. It was not therefore proportionate to investigate further and further guidance was provided to the treasurer. HOPE not hate Ltd (registered non-party campaigner) Failure to deliver a pre-poll donation report for the 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election; failure to deliver a complete campaign expenditure return for the 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election (missing invoices). Offences. £1,000 variable monetary penalty Payment due by 9 June 2022. All outstanding invoices were subsequently provided. Mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed for the failure to deliver a complete campaign expenditure return. Labour Party (registered political party) Failure to deliver a complete campaign expenditure return for 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election (missing invoices). Offence. No sanction. Closed without further action. All but one of the outstanding invoices were subsequently provided. Mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed. Labour Party (registered political party) Late reporting of donations. Offences. No sanction. Closed without further action. Sixteen donations were reported late however mitigating factors meant that no sanctions were imposed in each case. Social Democratic Party (registered political party) Late delivery of campaign expenditure return for 2021 Scottish Parliamentary election. Offence. No sanction. Closed without further action. The return was delivered late but mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed. Liberal Democrats (Edinburgh West accounting unit) Failure to return a donation from an impermissible donor within 30 days. Offence. No sanction. Closed without further action. The accounting unit accepted a £1,000 donation from an impermissible donor. The donation was returned to the donor outside of the 30 day period required by law. Mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed. Open Britain Limited (registered non-party campaigner) Late delivery of 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election campaign expenditure return; failure to include all required invoices. No offence in relation to late delivery of spending return; offence in relation to the missing invoices. No sanctions. Closed without further action. The spending return was delivered late but mitigating factors related to the COVID 19 pandemic meant that no offence was found. No sanction was imposed for the omission of a small number of invoices of relatively low value. The organisation's registration as a non-party campaigner lapsed on 27 January 2021. Labour Party (Islington South and Finsbury accounting unit) Late delivery of annual statement of accounts. Offence. No sanction. Closed without further action. The accounts were delivered late but mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed. Conservative and Unionist Party (GB) (registered political party) Failure to deliver accurate quarterly donations report. Offence. No sanction. Closed without further action. The name of one donor, Walsall Unionist Holdings Ltd, was misreported in one of the party's quarterly donations reports. Mitigating circumstances meant that no sanction was imposed. Old Windsor Residents Association (registered political party) Late delivery of quarterly donations and transactions reports. Offences. No sanctions. Closed without further action. Four of the party's quarterly donations and transactions reports were delivered late, but mitigating factors meant that no sanctions were imposed. West Dunbartonshire Community Party (registered political party) Late delivery of annual statement of accounts. No offence (reasonable excuse). Closed without further action. The party's 2020 annual statement of accounts were delivered late. However, evidence of a reasonable excuse was provided. The offence in question can only be found where there is no reasonable excuse and therefore no offence was committed. Labour Party (Bath accounting unit) Late delivery of annual statement of accounts. No determination of offence. Closed without further action. The accounting unit's 2020 annual statement of accounts were delivered late. The

Commission made no determination of offence due to the personal circumstances of the registered accounting unit treasurer which meant that it was not considered proportionate to investigate. April 2019 - March 2021 April 2021 - March 2022 Subject Investigated for Decision Summary of reasons(s) Liberal Democrats (registered political party) Failure to deliver accurate quarterly donations report. Offence. £1,000 Variable Monetary Penalty. Paid on 30 March 2022. A sanction was appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy. Unite the Union (registered non-party campaigner) Late delivery of audit report to accompany campaign spending return for 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election; late payment of invoices. Offences. No sanctions. Closed without further action. The late delivery of the audit report was attributable to the COVID pandemic. Two invoices were paid outside 60 days without leave from a court. Mitigating factors meant that no sanctions were imposed.

Independent Sovereign Democratic Britain (registered political party) Late delivery of annual statement of accounts. Offence. No sanction. Closed without further action. The party's 2020 annual statement of accounts were delivered late. However, mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed. Mark Menzies MP (regulated donee) Failure to return an impermissible donation within 30 days of receipt. No offence. Closed without further action. Mr Menzies accepted a £2,500 donation from Inshmore Properties Ltd in November 2019. Information subsequently emerged calling into question whether the donor was permissible. However, our investigation determined that the donor would have been permissible if the donation had been controlled, but Mr Menzies did not accept the donation in his capacity as a regulated donee and the donation was therefore not controlled under the PPERA regime. No offence was committed. Liberal Democrats (registered political party) Failure to deliver a complete campaign spending return for 2019 European Parliament election; late payment of invoices Offences. No sanctions. Errors relating to the spending return were minor, and missing invoices were subsequently provided. Two invoices were paid outside 60 days without leave from a court. Mitigating factors meant that no sanctions were imposed. Reform UK (registered political party) Failure to deliver a complete campaign spending return for 2019 European Parliament election; late payment of invoices Offences. No sanctions. Errors relating to the spending return were minor, and missing invoices were subsequently provided. Seven invoices were paid outside 60 days without leave from a court. Mitigating factors meant that no sanctions were imposed. Liberal Democrats (registered political party) Failure to return an impermissible donations within 30 days of receipt. No offences. Closed without further action. The party accepted, and reported, a £3,500 donation from Melrose Human Resources Ltd and a £16,000 donation from Inshmore Properties Ltd. Information subsequently emerged calling into question whether the donors were permissible. The Commission's investigation determined that both donors were permissible and that no offences were committed. Conservative and Unionist Party (GB) (registered political party) Failure to return an impermissible donation within 30 days of receipt. No offence. Closed without further action. The party accepted, and reported, a donation of £9,754.98 from 'Conservatives In Ltd' in 2016. Information subsequently emerged calling into question whether the donor was permissible. The Commission's investigation determined that the donor was permissible and that no offence was committed. Conservative and Unionist Party (NI) (registered political party) Late delivery of annual statement of accounts. No offence. Closed without further action. The party's annual statement of accounts for 2020 were delivered late. However, evidence of a reasonable excuse was provided. The offence in question can only be found where there is no reasonable excuse and therefore no offence was

committed. Plaid Cymru - The Party of Wales (registered political party) Failing to deliver all required invoices with spending return; late payment of invoices. Offence in relation to failure to deliver all required invoices. No offence in relation to late payment of invoices. The Commission was satisfied that the required invoices were not delivered with the return by the required date, but that this was due to the wrong set of invoices being delivered in error. The required invoices were delivered quickly once the Commission notified the party of the error. Mitigating factors meant that no sanctions were imposed. The investigation also established that no invoices had been paid late. UK Independence Party (UKIP) (GB + NI) (registered political party) Failing to deliver complete and valid notifications of changes to the registered leaders of the party in Great Britain and Northern Ireland; failing to deliver a notification of a change to the party's registered address. Contraventions of a prescribed requirement. No sanctions. Closed without further action. The Commission was satisfied that no contravention was committed in respect of the party's change of registered address. Two contraventions were committed in respect of the change to the registered party leaders. However, mitigating factors meant that no sanctions were imposed. Democrats (registered political party) Late delivery of quarterly transaction report. Offence. No sanction. Closed without further action. The report was delivered late but the Commission was satisfied that there were mitigating factors and no sanction was imposed. Conservative and Unionist Party (GB) (registered political party) Failing to deliver accurate quarterly donation report; failing to keep accurate accounting records. Offence and contravention of a prescribed requirement. Penalties totalling £17,800 (£16,250 and £1,550 Variable Monetary Penalties). Paid on 29 December 2021. Sanctions were appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy. Renew (registered political party) Late delivery of 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election campaign expenditure return. Offence. £2,800 Variable Monetary Penalty. Paid on 8 December 2021. A sanction was appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy. Liberal Democrats (registered political party) Failure to deliver accurate quarterly donations reports. Offences. No sanction. Closed without further action. Mitigating factors meant that no sanctions were imposed on the printer. Abolish the Welsh Assembly Party (registered political party and promoter); Solopress Ltd (printer) Failure to include valid imprint on campaign material. No offence in respect of the party as the promoter of the material. Offence in respect of the printer. No sanction. Closed without further action. Mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed on the printer. Centrum Campaign Limited (registered non-party campaigner) Failure to deliver weekly donations reports for 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election. No offence (reasonable excuse). Closed without further action. The organisation provided evidence of a reasonable excuse. The offence in question can only be found where there is no reasonable excuse and therefore no offence was committed. The organisation's registration lapsed on 16 September 2020. Shaun Bailey (regulated donee) Failure to return an impermissible donation within 30 days of receipt. No offence. Closed without further action. Mr Bailey accepted a £10,000 donation in July 2020. However, the Commission's investigation determined that Mr Bailey did not accept the donation in his capacity as a regulated donee under PPERA and therefore no offence was committed. Scottish National Party (registered political party) Late reporting of donations. No offences. Closed without further action. The party appeared to have reported two donations late. However, the Commission's investigation determined that the two payments were not donations and were therefore not reportable. Space Navies (GB) (registered political party) Late delivery of weekly

donation and transaction reports for 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election; failure to deliver signed declaration accompanying 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election campaign expenditure return. No determinations of offence. Closed without further action. The weekly reports were delivered late. The Commission made no determination of offence due to the personal circumstances of the registered party treasurer which meant that it was not considered proportionate to investigate. The party was statutorily deregistered on 20 October 2021. Best for Britain Limited (registered non-party campaigner) Failure to deliver a complete campaign spending return for 2019 European Parliament election; Late delivery of weekly donations report for 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election. Offences. Penalties totalling £3,000 (Variable Monetary Penalties of £2,000 and £1,000). Paid on 6 October 2021. A sanction was appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy. UK European Union Party (registered political party) Failure to deliver a complete campaign spending return for 2019 European Parliament election; failure to deliver accompanying signed declaration; failure to deliver quarterly transaction report on time. Offences. £200 Fixed Monetary Penalty in respect of the incomplete campaign spending return. Paid on 18 October 2021. A sanction was appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy. Taking the Initiative (registered political party) Failure to deliver annual statement of accounts on time; Failure to notify the Commission of a change to the party's registered treasurer on time. Offence and contravention of a prescribed requirement. No sanctions. Closed without further action. The accounts were delivered late but mitigating factors meant that no sanctions were imposed. Represent Us Ltd (registered non-party campaigner) Payment of campaign expenses claims received after 30 days without leave; payment of campaign expenses claims outside 60 days. Offences. No sanctions. Closed without further action. Three claims were paid without leave from a court and two were paid outside 60 days. Mitigating factors meant that no sanctions were imposed. The organisation's registration as a non-party campaigner lapsed on 2 June 2021. The League Against Cruel Sports (registered non-party campaigner) Payment of campaign expenses claims outside 60 days. Offence. No sanction. Closed without further action. One claim was paid outside 60 days. Mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed. Labour Together (members association) Failure to deliver donation reports within 30 days of accepting donations, inaccurate reporting of donation, failing to appoint a responsible person within 30 days of accepting a donation. Offences. Penalties totalling £14,250 (Variable Monetary Penalties of £14,000 and £250). Paid on 2 September 2021. Sanctions were appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy. Labour Party (registered political party) Failure to deliver accurate quarterly donation reports. Offences. Penalties totalling £1,820 (Variable Monetary Penalties of £400, £320, £360, £300 and £440). Paid on 1 September 2021. Sanctions were appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy. Gwlad (registered political party) Late delivery of weekly donations and transactions reports for 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election; late delivery of campaign expenditure return for 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election. Offences. £200 Fixed Monetary Penalty in respect of late campaign expenditure return. Paid on initial notice on 6 September 2021. A sanction was appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy. Green Party (registered political party) Failure to deliver a return containing a statement of all payments made in respect of campaign expenses for 2019 European Parliament Election; failure to deliver a complete return (missing invoices). Offences. No sanctions. Closed without further action. All payments have now been reported and outstanding invoices provided. Mitigating factors meant that no sanctions were

imposed. The Justice and Anti-Corruption Party (registered political party) Late delivery of campaign spending return for 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election. Offence. No sanction. Closed without further action. The return was delivered late but mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed. Real Change Lab Limited (registered non-party campaigner) Failure to deliver a return containing a statement of all relevant donations accepted for 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election. Offence. No sanction. Closed without further action. All relevant donations have now been reported. Mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed. The organisation's registration as a non-party campaigner lapsed on 4 June 2021. Advance Together (registered political party) Failure to deliver quarterly donation and transaction reports on time. Offences. No sanctions. Closed without further action. The reports were delivered late but mitigating factors meant that no sanctions were imposed. The party has now been voluntarily deregistered. Alliance - Alliance Party of Northern Ireland (registered political party) Failure to deliver an accurate quarterly donation report. Offence. No sanction. Closed without further action. Mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed. Net Tax Payers Consent Party (registered political party) Late delivery of quarterly donation and transaction reports. Offences. No sanction. Closed without further action. The reports were delivered late but mitigating factors meant that no sanctions were imposed. The Cynon Valley Party (registered political party) Failure to deliver complete campaign spending return for 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election (missing invoices); failure to deliver a signed declaration with 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election spending return. Offences. No sanction. Closed without further action. Mitigating factors meant that no sanctions were imposed. The party has now been statutorily deregistered. Keep Our NHS Public (publisher); Solopress Limited (printer) Failure to include valid imprint on campaign material. Offences in case of publisher and printer. £500 Variable Monetary Penalty imposed on publisher, no sanction imposed on printer. Paid on 28 June 2021. A sanction was appropriate in relation to the publisher, in line with our enforcement policy. Mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed on the printer or promoter. Conservative and Unionist Party (GB) (registered political party) Failure to deliver accurate weekly pre-poll donations report for 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election; failure to deliver accurate quarterly donations reports; Failure to return donations from impermissible donors within 30 days. Offences. No sanctions. Voluntary forfeiture. Closed without further action. Mitigating factors meant that no sanctions were imposed. The party accepted donations totalling £12,200 from five impermissible donors. The Commission accepted the voluntary forfeiture of the donations for the full amount. Global Justice Now Ltd (registered non-party campaigner) Failure to deliver all relevant invoices accompanying 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election spending return; paying an invoice later than 30 days after end of regulated period. No offences. Closed without further action. The Commission was not satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that offences had been committed. Capitalist Worker (registered non-party campaigner) Failure to deliver compliant campaign spending return for 2019 UK Parliamentary general election; failure to include signed declaration with 2019 UK Parliamentary general election return. Offences. No sanction. Closed without further action. A compliant return and declaration have now been delivered. Mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed. The organisation's registration has also lapsed. The Best for Luton Party (registered political party) Failure to deliver weekly donations and transactions reports for 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election on time. Offences. Penalties totalling £400 (2 x £200 Fixed Monetary Penalty). Paid on Initial

Notice on 8 March 2021. A sanction was appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy. The party has now been voluntarily deregistered. British National Party (registered political party) Late delivery of campaign spending return for 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election. Offence. £300 Variable Monetary Penalty. Paid on 21 April 2021. A sanction was appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy. April 2020 - March 2021 Subject Investigated for Decision Summary of reasons(s) The Migrant Party (registered political party) Late delivery of quarterly donations and transactions reports; Failure to notify Commission of a change to the party's registered address within 28 days. Offences and contravention of a prescribed requirement. Penalties totalling £400 (2 x £200 Fixed Monetary Penalty). Payment by instalments agreed. Sanctions were appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy. Mebyon Kernow - The Party for Cornwall (registered political party) Late delivery of campaign spending return for 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election. Offence. £200 Fixed Monetary Penalty. Paid on 26 February 2021. A sanction was appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy. Scottish Green Party (registered political party) Failure to deliver complete campaign spending return for 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election (missing invoice). Offence. £200 Fixed Monetary Penalty. Paid on 26 March 2021. The invoice was delivered late. A sanction was appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy.

Conservative and Unionist Party (GB) (registered political party) Failure to deliver complete campaign spending return for 2019 European Parliamentary Election (missing invoices); Late delivery of auditor report accompanying campaign spending return for 2019 European Parliamentary Election. Offences. No sanction. Closed without further action. The auditor report and invoices were delivered late, but mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed. Labour Party (registered political party) Failure to return an impermissible donation within 30 days. Offence. No sanction. Voluntary forfeiture. Closed without further action. The party accepted a £6,000 donation from an impermissible donor. The Commission accepted the voluntary forfeiture of the donation for the full amount. Mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed.

Unite the Union (registered non-party campaigner) Late delivery of 2019 European Parliamentary election spending return; Failure to include a compliant declaration with 2019 European Parliamentary election spending return. Offences. Penalties totalling £750 (£350 and £400 variable monetary penalties). Paid on 5 February 2021. Sanctions were appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy. Cllr Matt Kerr (regulated donee) Failure to report donations within 30 days. Offences. £200 (fixed monetary penalty). Paid on 25 January 2021. A sanction was appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy. Campaign Central Ltd (registered non-party campaigner) Failure to deliver complete campaign spending return for 2019 European Parliamentary Election (missing invoices). No offence. Closed without further action. The Commission was not satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that an offence had been committed. Fair Tax Campaign Ltd (registered non-party campaigner) Failure to deliver complete campaign spending return for 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election (missing invoice). No offence. Closed without further action. The Commission was satisfied that the missing invoice was not required to be delivered and that no offence had been committed. Tactical.vote (registered non-party campaigner) Failure to deliver complete campaign spending return for 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election (missing statement of relevant donations). No offence. Closed without further action. The Commission was satisfied that the return was not required to be delivered and that no offence had been committed. Independent Network (GB) (registered political party) Failure to notify Commission of a change to the

party's registered campaigns officer and registered nominating officer within 30 days. Contraventions of a prescribed requirement. Penalties totalling £750 (£450 and £300 variable monetary penalties). Paid on 8 March 2021. Sanctions were appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy. Shropshire Defend Our NHS (unregistered non-party campaigner) and Bluetree Design and Print Limited (printer) Failure to include valid imprint on campaign material. Offence in respect of Shropshire Defend Our NHS - No sanction. No offence in respect of Bluetree Design and Print Limited – closed without further action. Mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed on Shropshire Defend Our NHS. Bluetree Design and Print Limited provided evidence of a reasonable excuse and the Commission therefore found no offence had occurred. Julian Dunkerton (unregistered non-party campaigner) and Paperbox (printer) Failure to include valid imprint on campaign material. Offences in case of promoter and printer. No sanction. Closed without further action. Mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed on either the promoter or printer of the material. Keep Our St Heliers Hospital (unregistered non-party campaigner) and Leaflet Frog Ltd (printer) Failure to include valid imprint on campaign material. Offences in case of publisher and printer. No sanction. Closed without further action. Mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed on either the promoter or printer of the material. 3rd Party Ltd (registered non-party campaigner) Late delivery of statement of relevant donations for 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election. Offence. No sanction. Closed without further action. The statement of relevant donations was delivered late, but mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed. Labour Party (registered political party) Failure to deliver accurate quarterly donations report. No offence (reasonable excuse). Closed without further action. The return delivered was inaccurate however the party provided evidence of a reasonable excuse and the Commission therefore found that no offence had been committed. Greenpeace Limited (registered non-party campaigner) Late delivery of campaign spending return for 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election; Failure to deliver complete campaign spending return for 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election (missing invoices). No offence (reasonable excuse). Closed without further action. The return was delivered late. Two invoices were also not included with the return and a further invoice was incomplete when delivered. However the organisation provided evidence of a reasonable excuse and the Commission therefore found that no offence had been committed. Labour Party (registered political party) Failure to deliver accurate quarterly transactions reports. Offences. Penalties totalling £2,750 (£1,000, £250, £750, £500, £250 variable monetary penalties). Paid on 16 December 2020. Sanctions were appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy. Momentum Campaign Services (Ltd) (authorised non-party campaigner) Failure to return impermissible donations within 30 days. Offences. No sanctions. Closed without further action. The organisation accepted donations totalling £3,500 from two impermissible donors. The donations were returned to the donors outside the 30 days required by law. Mitigating factors meant that no sanctions were imposed. Conservative and Unionist Party (Walsall South accounting unit) Failure to return impermissible donations within 30 days. Offences. No sanctions. Voluntary forfeiture. Closed without further action. The accounting unit accepted donations totalling £2,500 from an impermissible donor. The Commission accepted the voluntary forfeiture of the donations for the full amount. Mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed. The accounting unit has now been deregistered. Scientists for EU (authorised non-party campaigner) Failure to deliver accurate campaign spending return for 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election. No offence. Closed without further action. The

Commission was not satisfied that an offence had been committed beyond reasonable doubt. Working 4 UK Ltd (authorised non-party campaigner) Failure to deliver accurate campaign spending return for 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election. No offence. Closed without further action. One invoice appeared to be missing from the return but the Commission was not satisfied beyond a reasonable doubt that an offence had been committed. Burnley and Padiham Independent Party (registered political party) Failure to deliver as required weekly donations and transactions reports at 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election. Offences. Penalties totalling £400 (2 x £200 fixed monetary penalties) Paid on 1 December 2020. Sanctions were appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy. Independent Network (GB) (registered political party) Late delivery of campaign expenditure return for 2019 European Parliament Election; Failure to deliver a compliant declaration as to notional expenses; Late delivery of campaign spending return for 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election. Offences. No sanctions. Closed without further action. The returns were delivered late and a compliant declaration was later delivered. Mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed. The Citizens Movement Party UK (registered political party) Late delivery of campaign spending return for 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election. Offence. No sanction. Closed without further action. The return was delivered late, but mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed. Sinn Féin (registered political party) Failure to deliver accurate campaign spending return for 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election. Offence. No sanction. Closed without further action. The return did not include one of the required invoices although this was later provided. Mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed. I'm with Corbyn North Wales (unregistered non-party campaigner), Donna Jones (promoter) Failure to include valid imprint on campaign material at 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election. No offence. Closed without further action. The Commission was satisfied that a complete imprint was included on the campaign material and that no offence had therefore been committed. Rhyl People's Assembly (unregistered non-party campaigner) Failure to include valid imprint on campaign material at 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election. No determination of offence. Closed without further action. The Commission was satisfied that the campaign material was not produced by, or at the direction of, the non-party campaigner. Parent's Choice (registered non-party campaigner) Failure to deliver accurate campaign spending return for 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election. No determination of offence. Closed without further action. The return did not include all of the required invoices, but there may have been a reasonable excuse for the omissions which would have required further investigation to establish. Taking into account all of the circumstances however, the Commission did not consider it proportionate to investigate further as to whether a reasonable excuse existed. Conservative and Unionist Party (GB) (registered political party) Failure to return a donation from an impermissible donor within 30 days of receiving it. Offence. No sanction. Voluntary forfeiture. Closed without further action. The party accepted a £3,000 donation from an impermissible donor. The Commission accepted the voluntary forfeiture of the full value of the donation. Mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed. Keep Penrith Special (non-party campaigners, promoter and publisher) Penrith Posters Ltd (printer) Failure to include valid imprint on campaign material. Offence in respect of Keep Penrith Special - No sanction. No determination of offence in respect of Penrith Posters Ltd – closed without further action. Mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed on Keep Penrith Special. No determination of offence was made in respect of Penrith Posters Ltd. Communities United Party (registered political party) Failure to

deliver campaign spending return for 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election. No offence. Closed without further action. The Commission was not satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that the party failed to deliver the campaign spending return.

Independent Group for Change (registered political party) Failure to deliver accurate campaign spending return for 2019 European Parliamentary Elections. No offence. Closed without further action. The Commission was satisfied that the party did deliver an accurate campaign spending return and that no offence was committed. The party has since been voluntarily deregistered.

Lincolnshire Independents, Lincolnshire First (registered political party) Late delivery of campaign spending return for 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election. No determination of offence. Closed without further action. The return was delivered late, however the Commission made no determination of offence in respect of the failure.

Scottish Green Party (registered political party) Failure to deliver accurate quarterly donations reports. Offences. Penalties totalling £5,349.75 (7 x variable monetary penalties). Paid on 24 September 2020. Sanctions were appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy.

Conservative and Unionist Party (GB) (registered political party) Failure to deliver accurate quarterly donations reports. Offences. Penalties totalling £4,400 (£3,600, £550 and £250 variable monetary penalties). Paid on 22 September 2020. Sanctions were appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy.

Ian Paisley MP (registered donee) Failure to return donations from impermissible donors within 30 days of receiving them. Offences. Penalties totalling £1,300 (£650 and £650 variable monetary penalty). Paid on 8 October 2020. Mr Paisley accepted two donations totalling £2,600 from two impermissible donors. Mr Paisley agreed to return the donations to each donor and has done so. Sanctions were appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy.

The Brexit Party (registered political party) Failure to deliver an accurate quarterly donations report. Offence. £200 fixed monetary penalty. Paid on Initial Notice on 24 August 2020. Sanctions were appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy.

British Resistance (registered political party) Late delivery of annual accounts (2018). Offence. No sanction. Closed without further action. The accounts were delivered late, but mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed.

Matt Hancock MP (registered donee) Failure to return a donation from an impermissible donor within 30 days of receiving it. Offence. No sanction. Closed without further action. Mr Hanock accepted a £1,000 donation from an impermissible donor. He returned the donation to the donor outside the 30 day period required by law. Mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed.

Veterans and People's Party (GB) (registered political party) Late delivery of weekly donations and transactions reports for 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election. Offence. No sanction. Closed without further action. The reports were delivered late, but mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed.

Liberal Democrats (London accounting unit) Failure to return a donation from an impermissible donor within 30 days of receiving it. No offence. Closed without further action. The Commission is satisfied that the accounting unit did not accept a donation from an impermissible donor.

Prosper UK (registered political party) Failure to deliver quarterly donations and transactions reports. No determination of offence. Closed without further action. No determination of offence was made in respect of the offence in this case. The party has now been voluntarily deregistered.

Green Party (GB) (registered political party) Failure to deliver accurate quarterly donations report; Late delivery of quarterly transactions report. Offences. Penalties totalling £1,950 (£800 and £1,150 variable monetary penalties). Paid on 23 July 2020. Sanctions were appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy.

Manchester Labour

Group (unincorporated association) Failure to provide notification of gifts to a political party exceeding £25,000 and notification of gifts received by due date. Offences. £1,800 (variable monetary penalty). Paid on 21 August 2020. Sanctions were appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy. Compass (registered political party) Failure to notify Commission of a change to the party's registered leader. Contravention of a prescribed requirement. £700 (variable monetary penalty). Due for payment by 21 August 2020. Unpaid after 56 days. Penalty increased to £1,050. Paid 29 October 2020. Sanctions were appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy. John Stevenson MP (regulated donee) Failure to return a donation from an impermissible donor within 30 days. No offence. Closed without further action. The Commission was satisfied that Mr Stevenson did not accept a donation from an impermissible donor. Conservative and Unionist Party (GB) (registered political party) Failure to return a donation from an impermissible donor within 30 days. No offence. Closed without further action. The Commission was satisfied that the party did not accept a donation from an impermissible donor. Renew (registered political party) Late delivery of quarterly donations and transactions reports; Late delivery of weekly donations and transactions reports for 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election; Failure to deliver annual accounts (2018); Failure to notify Commission of a change to the party's registered treasurer by due date. Offences and contraventions of a prescribed requirement. Penalties totalling £5,580.00 (10 x variable monetary penalties). Paid 20 July 2020. Sanctions were appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy. Duma Polska = Polish Pride (registered political party) Late submission of annual accounts (2018); Late delivery of quarterly donations and transactions reports. Offences. £400 (variable monetary penalty). Paid on 27 July 2020. Mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed for the late delivery of the quarterly reports. A sanction was imposed for the late delivery of the annual accounts in line with our enforcement policy. The party was voluntarily deregistered on 2 October 2019. Conservative and Unionist Party (registered political party) Failure to notify Commission of a change to the registered treasurer of the accounting unit by due date. Contravention of a prescribed requirement. £300 (variable monetary penalty). Paid on 20 July 2020. The party failed to notify the Commission of a change to the registered treasurer of its East Lothian accounting unit by the due date. Sanctions were appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy. North East Party (registered political party) Late delivery of weekly donations and transactions reports for 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election. Offences. £200 (fixed monetary penalty). Paid on Initial Notice on 10 June 2020. Sanctions were appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy. Dr John Lister (promoter), Health Campaigns Together (registered non-party campaigner) and Reach Printing Services Limited (printer) Failure to include valid imprint on campaign material at 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election. Offences. £200 (fixed monetary penalty) in respect of Dr Lister. Paid on Initial Notice on 29 June 2020. Mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed on Health Campaigns Together and Reach Printing Services Limited. Sanctions were appropriate in respect of Dr Lister in line with our enforcement policy. Church of the Militant Elvis party (registered political party) Late delivery of campaign spending return for 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election. No offence. N/A. Closed without further action. The return was delivered late, however the investigation concluded that there was a reasonable excuse for the failure identified. Liberal Democrats (registered political party) Failing to return a donation from an impermissible donor within 30 days. No offence. N/A. No forfeiture sought. Closed without further action. The party's

Haringey Borough accounting unit accepted a £565 donation from an impermissible donor. However, the party took all reasonable steps to verify the donor's permissibility and a defence was made out. Forfeiture of the full amount of the donation was also not appropriate in this case because the donor was eligible to be on an electoral register at the time the donation was accepted. Plaid Cymru (registered political party) Failure to notify Commission of a change to the registered treasurer and registered second officer of an accounting unit by due date. Contraventions of prescribed requirements. Penalties totalling £750 (2 x £375 variable monetary penalties). Paid on 16 June 2020. Sanctions were appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy. National Party (registered political party) Late delivery of annual accounts (2018). Offence. £350 (variable monetary penalty). Paid on 27 July 2020. Sanctions were appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy. Scottish Unionist Association Trust (unincorporated association / members association) Failure to report a donation by the required deadline. Offence. £300 (variable monetary penalty). Paid on 9 June 2020. Sanctions were appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy. Stand up to Racism (Non-party campaigner) Failure to include valid imprint on campaign material at 2019 Newport West Parliamentary by-election. Offence. £300 (variable monetary penalty). Paid on 25 May 2020. Sanctions were appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy. Conservative and Unionist Party (North Ayrshire and Arran accounting unit) Late delivery of annual accounts (2018). Offence. No sanction. Closed without further action. The accounts were delivered late, but mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed. Aontú (registered political party) Late delivery of weekly donations and transactions reports for 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election. Offences. No sanction. Closed without further action. The reports were delivered late, but mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed. Ecotricity Group Limited, Mr Dale Vince and CR Signs (Stroud) Limited Failure to include valid imprint on campaign material at 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election. No offence / no determination of offence. N/A. Closed without further action. No offence was found in respect of Mr Vince. No determination of offence was made in respect of Ecotricity Group Limited and CR Signs (Stroud) Limited. This was due to matters having previously been addressed by the police by way of advice given. Lambeth Labour Group (members association and unincorporated association) Failure to provide notification of gifts to a political party exceeding £25,000. Offence. £600 (variable monetary penalty) Paid on 18 May 2020. Sanctions were appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy. Labour for a People's Vote (members association) Failure to deliver two donation reports within 30 days of accepting donations. Offence. Penalties totalling £400 (2 x £200 fixed monetary penalties). Paid on 14 May 2020. Sanctions were appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy. Shropshire Party (registered political party) Late delivery of weekly donations and transactions reports for 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election. Offences. Penalties totalling £400 (2 x £200 fixed monetary penalties). Paid on Initial Notice on 29 April 2020. Sanctions were appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy. The Cynon Valley Party (registered political party) Late submission of annual accounts (2018). Offence. £200 (fixed monetary penalty) Paid 18 May 2020. Sanctions were appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy. Ulster Unionist Party (Fermanagh and South Tyrone accounting unit) Late submission of annual accounts (2017). Offence. £200 (fixed monetary penalty). Paid on Initial Notice on 17 April 2020. Sanctions were appropriate in this case, in line with our enforcement policy. Kingston Independent Residents Group (registered

political party) Late submission of annual accounts (2018). Offence. No sanction. Closed without further action. The accounts were delivered late, but mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed. The Commission concluded two investigations into potential failures to comply with PPERA by two Northern Ireland regulated donees, relating to donations accepted prior to 1 July 2017. The Commission made no determination of offence in either case. Alliance European People's Party UK (registered political party) Failure to deliver accurate quarterly transaction reports. Offence. No sanction. Closed without further action. The party delivered inaccurate reports of loans, insofar as it reported loans that were not reportable. The Commission was satisfied this was based on the party misinterpreting the requirements, but that the issue was now resolved and no sanction was appropriate. Andover Alliance (registered political party) Late delivery of quarterly donations and transactions reports. Offence. No sanction. Closed without further action. The accounts were delivered late, but mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed. Barnet Labour Group (Members association) Failure to deliver a donation report within 30 days of acceptance. Offence. No sanction. Closed without further action. The association made some reports late, but the Commission was satisfied that there were mitigating factors and decided to impose no sanction. Conservative and Unionist Party (Berwick Upon Tweed accounting unit) Late submission of annual accounts (2017); Failure to keep accurate financial records. Offence. No sanction. Closed without further action. The accounts were delivered late, but mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed. Conservative and Unionist Party (Northumberland and Tyne & Wear accounting unit) Late submission of annual accounts (2017) No offence. N/A. Closed without further action. The accounting unit was merged with others during the relevant year, and the Commission was not informed. The former accounting unit was not required to deliver accounts as its income and expenditure were not above the required threshold. Conservative and Unionist Party (Thurrock accounting unit) Late submission of annual accounts (2017) Offence. No sanction. Closed without further action. The accounts were delivered late, but mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed. Leigh, Atherton & Tyldesley Together (registered political party) Late submission of annual accounts (2018) Offence. No sanction. Closed without further action. The accounts were delivered late, but mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed. Northamptonshire Independents (registered political party) Late submission of annual accounts (2018) Offence. No sanction. Closed without further action. The accounts were delivered late, but mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed. Nova Forte (registered political party) Late submission of annual accounts (2018) Offence. No sanction. Closed without further action. The accounts were delivered late, but mitigating factors meant that no sanction was imposed. Related content How we make decisions Find out about our Board, committees and groups Make an allegation Find out how to make an allegation What we do in elections about what we do in elections

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5. Supporting local electoral services delivery and resilience You are in the Corporate plan 2022/23 to 2026/27 section Home Our plans and priorities Corporate plan 2022/23 to 2026/27 On this page Setting challenging performance standards for local electoral services Providing accessible guidance and support for electoral administrators Supporting increased resilience of local electoral services Focus on England Ensuring the electoral system works effectively Focus on Scotland and on Wales First published: 25 April 2022 Last updated: 25 April 2022 Summary Local electoral services face significant economic, social and environmental challenges which risk impacting on their ability to deliver well-run elections and referendums. We will help local authorities and electoral administrators to respond to these pressures. We will work to support the consistent delivery of high-quality services for voters, and the development of resilient local electoral services by: setting challenging performance standards for local electoral services providing accessible guidance and support for electoral administrators supporting increased resilience of local electoral services ensuring the electoral system works effectively Setting challenging performance standards for local electoral services We will continue to support Returning Officers to deliver the elections scheduled to take place during the period of this Corporate Plan, and remain prepared to respond to unscheduled polls if required to do so. We will also support Electoral Registration Officers to deliver electoral registration services, including the annual canvass in England, Scotland and Wales, for each year of this Corporate Plan. We will set and ensure compliance with challenging performance standards. We will provide guidance and advice to help electoral administrators meet the standards and challenge them when we identify areas for improvement. We will review the performance standards framework for Returning Officers to further enhance its role in identifying and driving performance improvements, and providing accountability for the elections they deliver. Providing accessible guidance and support for electoral administrators We published accessible digital guidance for Electoral Registration Officers in May 2021 to support the delivery of the first reformed annual canvass in Great Britain. We are working to ensure all guidance for Returning Officers, candidates and agents is published in this accessible format on our website, and we will continue to refresh this guidance on an election-by-election basis. We seek the views of electoral administrators after each set of elections, and over three-quarters of administrators that responded to our survey after the May 2021 elections told us they had found our guidance very or fairly useful. We will continue to seek feedback from and consult with electoral administrators to ensure our guidance meets their needs. We will continue to provide in person and telephone support, to help electoral administrators in their work. Supporting increased resilience of local electoral services Our research and the feedback we gather from electoral administrators after each set of elections tells us about the pressures on the electoral system that are currently being experienced at the local level. In response we will develop and deliver a programme of activity to support resilient electoral services. We will work collaboratively with electoral administrators to understand the challenges they face and identify solutions to address them. We will implement agreed measures to build resilience, working in partnership with local authorities and the wider electoral community to ensure maximum impact. We will also explore how data on the costs of electoral services can be collected and used to identify and drive efficiencies in the delivery of electoral processes. Focus on England Focus on England: Supporting electoral administrators We will work closely

with key partners across the electoral community to explore initiatives such as an induction and mentoring programme for new Returning Officers. We will also do more to identify, recognise and share examples of good practice, supporting the delivery of efficient and consistent electoral services. All of this will be underpinned by a review of the support and coordination structures that exist across England, to understand and realise the benefits that could be achieved through working collaboratively across local authority areas. Ensuring the electoral system works effectively Electoral administrators need confidence that the electoral system works effectively. We will continue to conduct research to report on how elections have been run, including to secure a detailed understanding of electoral administrators' experiences. This will enable us to raise concerns and make evidence-based recommendations where appropriate, ensuring electoral administrators have confidence in the electoral system as a whole.

Focus on Scotland and Wales

Focus on Scotland: Supporting the work of the Electoral Management Board We will continue to engage closely with the Electoral Management Board, providing advice, support and challenge to maintain and drive forward the effective and efficient running of elections in Scotland. This will be particularly important in terms of the varied voting systems and franchises across the elections that will be held during the period of this Corporate Plan.

Focus on Wales: Developing the role of the Wales Electoral Coordination Board We will continue to work closely with and support the work of the Wales Electoral Coordination Board which is in a key position to lead on the delivery of electoral events and activity in Wales. We continue to recommend that this group should become a statutory board similar to the Electoral Management Board in Scotland. This, we believe, will not only assist with the effective planning of electoral events in Wales but also will ensure greater resilience of the electoral system.

Navigation 4. Supporting and securing campaigner compliance with the law

Section 4 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan

6. Making sure electoral law is fair and effective

Section 6 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan

You are in the Our research section Home Our research On this page Modernising elections research People value wide public participation in elections and like current methods for voting Improvements can be made but should not undermine the perceived importance of the process Most people know how they can cast their vote Not everyone knows why they should vote Download the full report First published: 14 October 2021 Last updated: 14 October 2021 Modernising elections research Modernising elections research This qualitative research looks at public attitudes to voting and the information available around elections. It considers views on current voting methods and explores ideas and attitudes about possible new ways of casting a vote in the future. This is part of a wider project looking at the future of voting. The evidence provided by the research will inform further work to examine the needs and aspirations of other key groups, including electoral administrators, campaigners and civil society organisations. Ultimately, this work will be used to support recommendations to the UK's governments about how the electoral system can continue to support participation in the democratic process. People value wide public participation in elections and like current methods for voting On the whole, people are content with the current options they have for voting and found them straightforward, especially once they had voted a couple of times and were familiar with the process. In-person voting is the default and preferred option for most people. Postal voting is mainly used in situations where people could not get to the polling station or were following their parents' usual method of voting. For those who had only voted in polling stations, postal voting was perceived to take more effort and be less reliable than in-person voting. However, everyone valued that there were different methods available as, above all, people wanted everyone be able to vote with ease and confidence. Whilst some issues were raised, such as around accessibility, there is no evidence to suggest that current voting processes are responsible for people choosing not to vote, or that people don't vote because they do not know how to cast their vote. For most people, procedural information was seen to be readily available. Improvements can be made but should not undermine the perceived importance of the process Innovations that made voting quick, convenient and physically accessible were seen as attractive by people who took part in the research. While ease of access to voting is important to people – and they therefore broadly support methods that might increase ease – there is also a strong sense that voting should not be so easy that it can be done with little thought. People saw it as crucial that the voting process continues to feel significant and important, and that it should allow for a sense of control, shared purpose and community. People also said that security was important and that they wanted to be certain that their vote had been counted correctly and would be stored securely. Privacy was also seen as a key element of voting. Some people were concerned that this might be lost with innovations for voting remotely, as people may be voting with others close by. Overall people liked the idea of online voting and saw it as being flexible, familiar to other online activities such as banking and shopping, and potentially could encourage more people to vote. However, there were some concerns about the security of online voting; the risk of not maintaining voters' anonymity; digital literacy; and the possibility that some people could be coerced to vote in a certain way. Most people know how they can cast their vote Overall, people had enough information to understand how to vote, except for a small number of people who had not yet voted. For young people and first-time voters to feel prepared to vote, it was important for them to know about the process of voting

and the electoral system, how candidates are elected, and the difference between elections. It was said to be important for people with mental health needs or physical disabilities to have clearer information about how to get 'extra support' if they needed it. People's knowledge about the nature of different voting methods varied considerably, with proxy voting being the option people were least familiar with. Not everyone knows why they should vote People told us that the main challenges to voting were knowing what elections were taking place and when, why it is important to vote, and how to make an informed decision about who to vote for. These challenges sometimes prevented people from voting, even though they practically knew how to cast their vote. People often said the information available during an election was 'overwhelming'. Some didn't know where to start searching, others were unsure how to identify sources they could trust, and others lacked confidence in analysing information to make a decision about who to vote for. In general, people had a desire for clear and comparable information in one place, as opposed to receiving lots of information from different sources. People also valued having 'neutral' sources of information about candidates and their policies from independent, non-partisan sources. How we carried out this research Methodology This was a large-scale qualitative project with a diverse sample covering all four nations. Interviews in Welsh were also carried out. The work was carried out by Revealing Reality. During January, February and March 2021 we conducted a total of 50 focus groups, 48 depth interviews and 15 follow up interviews, speaking to over 300 people about their voting experiences. The research covered: ages 18 to 85 in UK 16-17 in Scotland and Wales a range of socio-economic groups urban and rural locations across the four nations the disenfranchised and the highly engaged those who have voted all their lives and those who have never voted before those spanning the political spectrum The research also ensured representation from those with health needs, such as physical disabilities, hearing / visual impairments and mental health issues. It also included non-internet users and participants with low digital confidence. Objectives of the research To identify what the public think about the current ways people can cast their vote at elections in the UK To understand what is important to people when they vote To understand what would improve people's voting experience To explore what people think about proposed alternative ways of being able to cast their vote, and why they may prefer some options over others To understand whether there are differences in views and opinion by demographic or voting method To identify what information the public wants about elections, voting and politics To examine why people want this information, and what would change if they had it To explore what information is most important to different groups of people To understand how people assess whether information is good information To understand the importance to people of the source of any information Download the full report Electoral Commission Report: Future of voting Related content Electoral law is out of date. Find out where we want to see improvements Public attitudes Read our reports about public attitudes towards voting Elections Act about the UK Government's Elections Act and what it means for voting and campaigning Elections in your area Enter your postcode to find your electoral services team at your local council. You need to send your postal and proxy vote application forms to them.

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section Home Our research Currently reading: of 2 - Show page contents On this page
Size of the electoral registers Effectiveness of the reformed canvass Overview About
this report This report looks at how the 2021 canvass in Great Britain was run and
considers the ongoing impact on the electoral registers of the changes to the annual
canvass process introduced in 2020. The 2021 canvass was the second using the new
processes introduced in 2020. These changes involve comparing the registers with
other public data in order to give EROs information they can use to target their
resources at households where residents' details are most likely to have changed.
While we cannot yet draw conclusions on the impact of the new process on the accuracy
and completeness of the registers, our analysis of available data suggests potential
issues with the effectiveness of the reformed canvass in keeping pace with population
movement: The data matching process and/or the lag between matching and canvassing
means some households are being allocated to the 'wrong' route – nearly a fifth of
responses from households allocated to Route 1 (where no change in household
composition was expected) reported significant changes to electors' details.
Necessary changes to electors' details may not be reflected on the registers – 2.4
million households, one third of those allocated to Route 2 (where a change in
household composition was expected), did not respond to the canvass. The reduction in
the frequency of communication with Route 1 households may be contributing to the
under-registration of attainers (those who will soon reach voting age) – the decline
in the number of registered attainers, which began following the introduction of
individual electoral registration (IER) in 2014, continued in 2021. The number of
registered attainers dropped by 28.7% relative to 2020. While we know that new
registration applications are most readily driven by large scale electoral events, it
is nevertheless important that the canvass and other year-round registration activity
supports accurate and complete registers. This can help to reduce the large volumes
of registration applications received immediately in advance of major polls, when
Electoral Registration Officers' (EROs) staff capacity is already stretched. Our
research studies into the accuracy and completeness of the registers are the
definitive assessments of their overall quality. The next study, planned for the
December 2022 registers, will allow us to fully assess the overall impact of the new
canvass processes. Over the next year we will continue to support and challenge EROs
using the performance standards framework , and work with them to ensure we all make
full use of the data that is available. This should help to provide a better
understanding of the impact of particular practices within the current framework and
support us with identifying and sharing good practice. We also continue to recommend
that the electoral registration system in Great Britain should be further modernised,
to provide the best possible opportunity for ensuring that as many people as possible
are correctly registered. This should include better use of public data, for example
from other government services, to make registration easier for voters, and a more
joined-up electoral registration system to reduce duplicate registrations and
encourage registration all year round. Size of the electoral registers Table 1 below
shows the percentage change in the number of entries on the parliamentary registers
in each nation of Great Britain between 2020 and 2021. Table 1. Change in the number
of parliamentary entries 2020-21 Area 2020 2021 % change England 39,298,264
38,889,429 -1.0% Scotland 4,012,429 4,028,717 0.4% Wales 2,304,640 2,307,877 0.1%
Great Britain 45,615,333 45,226,023 -0.9% Scotland and Wales were the only areas to
see an increase in the number of local government register entries relative to 2020.

In each of the regions, the number of local government entries declined, albeit by varying degrees. The largest decrease was in London (-1.6%). Table 2. Change in the number of local government register entries 2020-21

Area	2020	2021	% change
England	41,186,293	40,882,721	-0.7%
North East	1,956,275	1,946,010	-0.5%
North West	5,461,941	5,421,090	-0.7%
Yorkshire and the Humber	4,025,884	4,009,237	-0.4%
East Midlands	3,583,548	3,554,099	-0.8%
West Midlands	4,276,920	4,253,449	-0.5%
East of England	4,653,094	4,633,193	-0.4%
London	6,116,260	6,021,139	-1.6%
South East	6,813,201	6,775,409	-0.6%
South West	4,299,170	4,269,095	-0.7%
Scotland	4,208,923	4,245,217	0.9%
Wales	2,342,478	2,348,576	0.3%
Great Britain	47,737,694	47,476,514	-0.5%

Variations in levels of registration can be driven by changes in the size of the eligible population or by policy changes such as extensions to the franchise. Changes can also be driven by changes to the canvassing approaches used by EROs as well as national and local voter registration campaigns. Our analysis below looks at this and what the available data tells us about the effectiveness of the canvass.

Attainers

People who will reach voting age and become eligible to vote during the lifetime of the register are known as attainers. Attainers can be included on the electoral registers. The number of attainers has been falling for several years. On the parliamentary registers in Great Britain the number fell by -28.7% between 2020 and 2021 (see Table 3 below). In percentage terms, this marked the steepest year-on-year decline since 2014. The introduction of individual registration in 2014 meant that attainers had to make their own application to register (rather than being added through a single household form) and this change coincided with a decline in numbers. In 2014 and 2015, the number of attainers dropped by 33.3% and 10.3%, respectively. Numbers rose again by 23.0% in 2016 but fell slightly each year between 2017 and 2019. This more stable trend was broken in 2020, when the number of attainers on the parliamentary registers in Great Britain fell by 21.0%. As was the case in 2020, the overall decrease in 2021 was driven by the change in England (-40.6%). This marks a considerably steeper decline in the number of registered attainers than seen in England in 2020 (approximately -26%). In contrast, in Scotland and Wales, the number of attainers increased in 2021 (as in 2020). This is likely to be the result of increased registration activity among younger people following the extension of the franchise for devolved elections to 16 and 17 year olds. This increased activity may therefore be offsetting a systematic problem with the registration of attainers which is evident in England. The reformed annual canvass may be exacerbating the decline seen from 2014 onwards, as the need to add an attainer to the register will not be identified through the data matching process. For example, many households in Route 1 will have potential attainers but now receive fewer communications from EROs to encourage them to become registered. Our forthcoming accuracy and completeness research will give us an updated assessment of the registration rate for attainers, which was 25% in our 2018 study. Attainer numbers are unlikely to increase through the existing registration and canvass processes alone. This is an area where more automated registration process could be beneficial. Data from the education sector – such as information held by the Education and Skills Funding Agency Learning Records Service, which collects data relating to learners in England, Wales and Northern Ireland registering for relevant post-14 qualifications, and the Scottish Qualifications Authority – could help EROs identify attainers and other young people. Also, data from the Department for Work and Pensions could potentially be used by EROs to register young people to vote automatically when they are allocated their National Insurance number ahead of their 16th birthday. Table 3. Number of attainers on the parliamentary registers in Great Britain 2013-21

England	Scotland	Wales	Great
41,186,293	4,208,923	2,342,478	47,737,694
40,882,721	4,245,217	2,348,576	47,476,514
-0.7%	-0.5%	0.3%	-0.5%

Britain Attainers % change Attainers % change Attainers % change Attainers % change
2021 111,958 -40.6% 40,871 6.1% 19,374 34.2% 172,203 -28.7% 2020 188,472 -25.9%
38,518 0.9% 14,437 11.6% 241,427 -21.0% 2019 254,384 -1.4% 38,171 -7.6% 12,942 0.0%
305,497 -2.1% 2018 257,938 -4.1% 41,296 -4.8% 12,948 1.2% 312,182 -4.0% 2017 269,092
-5.4% 43,357 4.3% 12,794 -6.3% 325,243 -4.3% 2016 284,522 19.0% 41,561 67.4% 13,651
10.6% 339,734 23.0% 2015 239,019 -6.2% 24,827 -36.3% 12,339 -12.3% 276,185 -10.3%
2014 254,836 -32.8% 38,963 -38.6% 14,065 -24.4% 307,864 -33.3% 2013 379,284 NA 63,471
NA 18,595 NA 461,350 NA Other register statistics Other register statistics 16 and 17
year olds (Scotland and Wales) In Scotland and Wales, 16 and 17 year olds can vote in
Scottish Parliament, Senedd and local council elections. This change was introduced
in 2015 in Scotland and 2020 in Wales. Figures here relate to the annual registers
published on conclusion of the 2021 canvass. The data does not, therefore, include
those 16 and 17 year olds who may have registered to vote in the run up to the May
2022 local elections in Scotland and Wales. Data on the numbers of 16 and 17 year
olds registered for the May 2022 elections will be published alongside the
Commission's reports on those polls. In Scotland, at the publication of the annual
registers in 2021, 77,958 16 and 17 year olds were registered on the local government
registers (see Table 4). This represents a 6.4% increase on 2020. Taken with ONS
population estimates, this indicates that roughly two thirds of 16 and 17 year olds
are on the local government registers in Scotland. 1 EROs across Scotland continued
to engage with 16 and 17 year olds after publication of the revised registers to
ensure they were registered ahead of the May 2022 polls. This work included
undertaking engagement activities such as direct mailing, phone/text, contact with
schools and universities, press releases, social media, newsletters and local
advertising, as well as local activity with partner organisations. Table 4. Number of
16 and 17 year olds on the local government registers in Scotland 2015-21 Year 16 and
17 year olds 2015 48,962 2016 79,621 2017 83,536 2018 78,383 2019 73,777 2020 73,272
2021 77,958 In Wales, 33,241 16 and 17 year olds were on the local government
registers on 1 December 2021 (a 115.1% increase on 2020). Comparison with the ONS
population estimates suggests that just under half of 16 and 17 year olds in Wales
are on the local government registers. 2 Across Wales, EROs carried out a range of
activity to encourage registration amongst 16 and 17 year olds. Using grant funding
from Welsh Government, many authorities appointed temporary public engagement
officers and, in those areas, there appears to have been an increase in the range of
engagement that was undertaken. In addition to more standard engagement activities
such as direct mailing, phone/text, contact with schools, press releases, newsletters
and social media, some authorities undertook additional activities such as: creating
website banners and TikTok videos to share with schools working with youth councils,
youth partnership groups and Young Farmers Wales sending 16th birthday cards
advertising in bus shelters pop-up sessions in city centres teacher training sessions
using Electoral Commission resources After the publication of the registers but ahead
of the May 2022 polls, the majority of authorities sent out a household notification
letter, with funding provided by Welsh Government, and many of these included extra
information promoting the extension of the franchise and some also highlighted
answers to FAQs. Case study: Vale of Glamorgan Council - outreach with 16/17 year
olds The Vale's Electoral Registration Public Awareness Officer delivered
presentations to a school that held a Personal and Social Education day. Teaming up
with a member of the council's youth service, they produced a comprehensive package
on registering to vote, how to vote and why we vote. The package also included
information on elections and politics to try to demonstrate the importance of these

to a young person. It covered a who's who in politics and what politicians do, what elections they stand in and also how this links back to the things that young people might find important, so that they had a broader understanding of the whole voting process. A few simple tasks were set for them to do during the session to help keep them engaged. This outreach work helped to increase voter registration rates in the area amongst 14 and 15 year olds in the space of a year by 31.4% (1,263 to 1,660).

Overseas electors A UK citizen living abroad who has been registered to vote in the UK in the past 15 years can apply to be an overseas voter. These registrations currently need to be renewed annually. The total number of overseas electors on the 2021 registers in Great Britain was 104,665. Table 5. Number of overseas electors on the parliamentary registers in Great Britain 2015-21

Area	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
England	97,572	241,097	205,687	113,833	185,513	170,196	94,908
Scotland	7,729	15,230	12,790	6,679	11,587	9,617	6,799
Wales	2,940	7,567	6,995	3,678	6,969		
Great Britain	5,169	2,958	108,241	263,894	225,472	124,190	204,069
						184,982	104,665

 This is a decrease of 43.4% since the publication of the annual register in 2020. This decline is likely a consequence of the fact that there has not been an election in which overseas electors can vote since the 2019 UK Parliamentary general election. The Elections Act 2022 extends the number of overseas citizens who will be eligible to register and vote, and also changes the requirement to renew registration annually to every three years. The extension of eligibility could result in a high volume of applications close to the next UK parliamentary general election, which EROs will need to be prepared to manage.

Anonymous electors The number of anonymous electoral register entries on the parliamentary registers in Great Britain decreased from 3,374 in 2020 to 3,097 in 2021. Anonymous registration is available for people meeting certain requirements, whose safety, or the safety of someone in the same household, is at risk. People registered anonymously appear on the electoral register without their name and address. Table 6. Number of anonymous electors on the parliamentary registers in Great Britain 2015-21

Area	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
England	2,151	2,194	2,440	2,550	3,214	3,064	2,788
Scotland	111	117	116	130	194	196	187
Wales	74	74	85	108	138	114	122
Great Britain	2,336	2,385	2,641	2,788	3,546	3,374	3,097

 Effectiveness of the reformed canvass Route allocations At the beginning of the canvass, all registers are matched against Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) data. The results are used by EROs to allocate properties to 'routes' which determine how many times they will contact a household to attempt to get a response (see Background section for more detail). EROs can also carry out further matching using local data, such as council tax records. The majority of EROs carried out local data matching and, as in 2020, council tax records were the most popular datasets used, followed by housing benefit data. The local data matching step had a significant impact on the number of households allocated to each route, as shown in Table 7. When asked whether their approach to local data matching was the same as or different to last year: a majority (87%) of those EROs who responded said that their approach was the same as last year. For those that decided to take a different approach, the responses suggest that they used a broader range of data sources and allowed more time to do data matching, earlier on in the process. Table 7. Number of properties allocated to each route after national and local data matching

Route	Number of properties allocated after DWP match % change	1	19,639,236	21,752,578	10.8%	2	9,281,876	7,397,346	-20.3%	3	NA
NA	310,910										

 As in 2020, the proportion of properties allocated to Route 2 (25.1%) is in line with the expectations set out in the statement of policy for canvass reform published by the UK, Scottish and Welsh governments in 2019, which predicted that

approximately one quarter of properties would need to be allocated to Route 2 nationally. The proportion of households allocated to Routes 1, 2 and 3 is also fairly stable across Great Britain, although London continues to allocate a lower percentage of households to Route 1 (66.3%) and a higher proportion to Route 2 (32.7%). This reflects population movement in London: as the rate of change in household composition is higher in London, fewer properties are successfully matched against existing DWP and local data. Table 8. Percentage of properties allocated to each route by nation and region

Region	Route 1	Route 2	Route 3
England	73.6%	25.4%	
1.0% North East	80.2%	19.5%	0.3%
North West	74.0%	25.2%	0.7%
Yorkshire and the Humber	72.9%	25.7%	1.4%
East Midlands	76.2%	22.1%	1.8%
West Midlands	73.9%	24.5%	1.6%
East of England	76.3%	22.8%	0.8%
London	66.3%	32.7%	1.0%
South East	73.9%	25.3%	0.8%
South West	75.4%	23.7%	0.9%
Scotland	74.8%	23.9%	1.3%
Wales	76.1%	22.9%	1.1%
Great Britain	73.8%	25.1%	1.1%

The changes to the annual canvass were designed to allow EROs to direct their resources at households whose composition was most likely to have changed. The effectiveness of the new canvass, based on this targeting of activity, will therefore be strongly determined by two things: the accuracy of the data matching and the level of response achieved. We can draw some conclusions about both from an analysis of household response within the two allocated routes. Household response rates per route As expected, the proportion of responses is significantly higher among Route 2 households, where changes are expected, than Route 1 households, where they are not (68.1% vs. 18.3%). The lower response rate among Route 1 households (the vast majority of all households) partly explains the smaller number of total responses under the reformed canvass. In 2019, before the changes to the canvass, 23.8 million household responses were received. This compares to 9 million responses during the 2021 canvass, a similar number to that received in 2020. However, almost a third of households in Route 2 also did not respond. These are households where the data suggests a change may be needed. It is important for the accuracy and completeness of the registers that the response rate for Route 2 households is as high as possible. We asked EROs about the sorts of barriers that canvassers may face when trying to encourage Route 2 households to respond. Many highlighted that the increasing rate of COVID-19 infections in the latter months of 2021 reduced the opportunities for canvassers to visit Route 2 properties, and in several cases local authorities were limited by area-wide policies that prohibited door knocking. Several EROs described the challenges associated with reaching communities who have historically been reluctant to engage with canvassers; and a number suggested that a loss of staff experienced in engaging with local residents may have affected the response rate among Route 2 properties. We will continue to monitor the response rates in future years and work with EROs in the meantime to help them use their local data to mitigate against the risks to the accuracy and completeness of their electoral registers. Variations in response rate Variations in response rate The Route 2 response rate continued to vary significantly in 2021 (see Table 9), as it had done in 2020. For the second year, Scotland reported the lowest response rate among Route 2 properties (50.7%) and England reported the highest (70.1%). Table 9. Response rate for Routes 1 and 2, by nation and region

Region	Route 1	Route 2
England	19.0%	70.1%
North East	7.0%	62.7%
North West	15.3%	63.2%
Yorkshire and the Humber	14.0%	67.3%
East Midlands	18.8%	75.6%
West Midlands	17.8%	
East of England	71.2%	19.9%
London	75.8%	20.4%
South East	65.9%	26.0%
South West	74.2%	22.6%
Scotland	13.6%	50.7%
Wales	15.6%	65.4%
Great Britain	18.3%	68.1%

Major and minor changes per route Major and minor changes per route The nature of the responses received is also important. Responding households can record a major change

(e.g. reporting that a potential new elector is resident), a minor change (e.g. amending the name of an existing elector) or no change (i.e. confirming the existing details of household members). Understanding the distribution of these changes can tell us about the accuracy of the data matching. Of the 9 million responses received across all routes, 2.7 million households reported a major change (30.4%). Table 10 shows how these major changes were distributed across the three routes. The pattern is broadly in line with 2020. Table 10. Distribution of major changes across routes

	Number of major changes	% of major changes across all routes	Route 1	Route 2	Route 3	Total	100.0%
Route 1	830,743	30.4%	830,743	1,856,309	49,339	2,736,391	100.0%
Route 2	1,856,309	67.8%	1,856,309	49,339	1.8%	2,736,391	100.0%
Route 3	49,339	1.8%					

The highest proportion of major changes were reported by Route 2 households – i.e., those identified during the data matching step as the households most likely to report changes to residents' registration details. However, as in 2020, nearly a third of the major changes reported relate to Route 1 households, where the DWP and/or local data had indicated no change was likely to be needed. As in 2020, of all the households allocated to Route 1 (21.7 million) the proportion reporting a major change (830,743) is small (3.8%). However, as Figure 1 below shows, of those that did respond, a fifth reported a major change. Importantly for the quality of the registers, it is also unlikely that all of the Route 1 households that needed to report a major change have done so – particularly as they would have received limited contact from the ERO. We do not have comparative data on the number of major changes reported by households during the canvasses preceding the reforms. It is therefore not clear to what extent the 2020 and 2021 canvasses are out of line with historic figures. However, it is clear that either the data matching process does not accurately identify all properties where changes will be needed and/or there is an impact from the lag time between the matching and the canvassing taking place. Figure 1. Percentage of responding households in Routes 1 and 2 who reported major / minor / no change (data collected from 4/5 LAs where a revised data specification was implemented)

1 As part of our work with EROs throughout the 2021 canvass, we have sought to understand the potential reasons for the proportion of changes reported for route 1 households. Many of those we spoke to highlighted potential reasons such as house moves within areas, marriages, attainers and deaths. It could also be a product of data accuracy, for example, with records used for matching not being up to date.

We will continue to build on this over the 2022 canvass, to develop a deeper understanding of the data and how the process is working in practice. Additions and deletions

Canvassing households does not directly result in new registrations. When a household reports that a potential new elector is resident, that individual still needs to submit an application to be added to the register. Where a household reports that electors need to be removed from the registers, a second piece of evidence (e.g. locally held data) would be needed before the ERO could confirm the deletion. Entries need to be added to, and deleted from, the registers for several reasons including migration, home movement and deaths. The level of these additions and deletions provides insight into whether registration activity is keeping pace with population change. As population mobility varies across the country, so does the scale of the challenge faced by EROs. As in 2020, the distribution of additions and deletions across the routes is largely as expected, with Route 2 households accounting for the highest proportion of changes (see Table 11). However, as with the household major changes, more than a third of both additions and deletions came from households whose composition was assumed to be unchanged following the data matching. Again, this suggests either a degree of inaccuracy in the allocation of households to routes or an impact from population movement between matching and canvassing. Table 11.

Percentage of additions and deletions per route

	Route 1	Route 2	Route 3	Additions
37.1%	59.6%	3.4%	Deletions	39.4% 57.3% 3.3%

This data suggests that at least some population change is not being picked up by the registers. However we cannot draw clear conclusions on the overall impact – partly because of the variable impact of electoral events outside the canvass. Table 12 below shows the levels of additions and deletions in recent years (for the full year, not just the canvass). Both 2020 and 2021 have recorded lower figures than many previous years. However, it is usual to see higher levels, of additions in particular, in years with significant UK-wide electoral events (such as UK general elections and the EU referendum). The lower figures in 2020 may relate directly to the effects of the pandemic – both on EROs' ability to canvass and through depressing levels of population movement. Table 12.

Percentage of additions and deletions 2010-21

Year	Additions	Deletions
2010	13%	12%
2013	15%	15%
2015	15%	15%
2016	15%	13%
2017	13%	13%
2018	11%	12%
2019	13%	10%
2020	10%	10%
2021	11%	11%

As Table 13 sets out, we also expect to see a higher proportion of changes being picked up during the canvass period, compared to the rest of the year, in years without UK-wide elections (e.g. 2018) – a trend that continues in 2020 and 2021. Table 13. Percentage of additions during and outside of canvass period

2015-21 Year	Additions During canvass	Outside canvass	Deletions During Canvass
Outside canvass	2015 40%	60%	58% 43%
2016	38%	64%	54% 47%
2017	39%	61%	56% 44%
2018	68%	32%	68% 32%
2019	62%	38%	61% 39%
2020	56%	44%	64% 36%
2021	61%	39%	61% 39%

This point is also supported by the 2021 data on the proportion of additions and deletions recorded during the canvass period across the three nations of Great Britain (see Table 14). The proportion of additions and deletions during the canvass were lowest in Scotland (39.0% and 55.0%, respectively), followed by Wales and then by England. This is in line with the level of engagement at the May 2021 elections where turnout was highest in Scotland, then in Wales and lowest across England. Table 14. Additions and deletions during full year and canvass period per nation

Full year	Canvass period % during canvass	Deletions	Full year	Canvass period % during canvass																							
England	4,308,807	2,777,863	64.5%	4,674,707	2,875,974	61.5%	Scotland	455,341	177,552	39.0%	415,722	228,843	55.0%	Wales	245,670	112,310	45.7%	232,649	137,629	59.2%	Great Britain	5,009,818	3,067,725	61.2%	5,323,078	3,242,446	60.9%

It is important that the canvass and other year-round registration activity continues to provide a high quality register at all times in order to avoid significant updates needing to be made in advance of major polls. We have previously highlighted our concern that the registration system, including the canvass, is unlikely to be sustainable in the longer term and have recommended that governments should explore more automated registration processes. For example, regular access to reliable data from a wider range of public services about people who have recently updated their address details would allow EROs to make contact directly with them at their new address to encourage them to register to vote. Integrating electoral registration applications into other public service transactions could also make it easier for individuals to keep their registration details up to date and accurate. While canvass reform has addressed one aspect of sustainability – the resource and capacity taken up through unnecessarily chasing households where there has been no change – it is not yet clear what its impact is on the other key aspect – the system's ability to pick up population changes away from major electoral events. Our next accuracy and completeness study will allow us to more clearly assess the overall impact on the registers, as it will take place after three years of the reformed canvass in Great Britain.

Background Electoral registers

There is no national electoral register for the United Kingdom. 368 separate electoral registers are compiled and maintained by Electoral

Registration Officers (EROs) across Great Britain, and one register for Northern Ireland is compiled and maintained by the Chief Electoral Officer. Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) are required to maintain two electoral registers:

Parliamentary register – used for UK Parliamentary elections Local government register – used for Scottish Parliamentary, Senedd, Northern Ireland Assembly, local government and Police and Crime Commissioner elections The electoral register is a property based database, with register entries linked to a property. This means that the quality of its information is affected by ongoing population change and EROs need to add and delete records for home-movers, electors who have died and newly eligible electors. New registers are published annually and reviewed most months. In Great Britain, there is a process of auditing the register annually before a revised version is published, which is known as the annual canvass. Each ERO is required by law to conduct an annual canvass of all properties in their area to confirm their electoral register entries and to identify electors who have moved or were not previously registered. The reformed canvass The 2021 canvass was the second to take place under a new model which incorporates data matching between the electoral registers and a combination of national and local data at the outset of the process. This data matching informs the ERO which properties are likely to have an unchanged household composition to enable them to target their canvass activity accordingly.

The ERO will then follow one of three routes for each property: Route 1: Properties are placed into Route 1 if the entries of registered electors match with other data, such as that held by the DWP, and the composition of the household is therefore assumed to be unchanged. The ERO will contact Route 1 households to invite them to provide information on any changes which have occurred. Where there are no changes to report, the household is not required to respond. Route 2: Properties are placed into Route 2 if any of the entries of registered electors do not match with other data, such as that held by the DWP, and the composition of the household is therefore assumed to have changed such that the electoral register needs to be updated. These households are required to respond to requests for information regardless of whether or not they do in fact need to report a change. Route 3: This route is available for those properties where the ERO thinks they can most effectively and efficiently obtain information on residents through a ‘single responsible person’ acting on behalf of all residents. Care homes and student halls of residence are examples of typical Route 3 properties. Should the ERO be unable to successfully obtain information about the property from the ‘single responsible person’, the property is placed into Route 2.

Engagement with EROs The Commission has the statutory power to set and monitor performance standards for EROs in Great Britain and has been doing so since 2008. In January 2020 we began a consultation on a new set of standards for EROs. However, as a consequence of the coronavirus pandemic, we deferred finalising the standards before the 2020 canvass. We did, however, make the draft standards and accompanying tools available to EROs, and these formed a key part of our guidance, support and challenge package relating to the delivery of the first reformed canvass in Great Britain. The new standards were then finalised and laid before the UK, Scottish and Welsh Parliaments in June 2021. Over 2020 and 2021 we have used the standards to inform our engagement with EROs about electoral registration, and to support and challenge them in their work to maintain the electoral registers in their area. We have placed a significant focus in our engagement with EROs on supporting them to develop relevant and appropriate KPIs, helping them establish a baseline of their own performance and set targets which take into account their own specific circumstances, and supporting them with using available data to identify areas where

improvements may be made. Now that the standards have been in operation for two years, we can use the data and information gathered to identify potential patterns that are emerging. We will continue to use the performance standards framework over the course of this year to build on the work we have carried out with EROs in 2021, continuing to support them to better understand and report on the impact of their activity using the data available to them. In particular we have identified areas of practice and key pieces of data that we want to focus on in our engagement with EROs during the 2022 canvass – for example, where there are a high number of major changes reported from properties allocated to Route 1 and non-responses from households in Route 2. The data we have gathered to date will help to inform and shape that engagement with individual EROs, with the aim of developing a deeper understanding of the impact of particular practices and approaches, which in turn can help us to identify and share examples of good practice. Download the electoral registration data 2021 Electoral registration data 2021 1. ONS (2021) Analysis of population estimates tool for UK ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. ibid. ■ Back to content at footnote 2 1. HM Government, Scottish Government and Welsh Government (2019) Reform of the Annual Canvass: Statement of Policy ■ Back to content at footnote 1 1. In 2021, we implemented a slightly revised data specification. In previous years, data on changes to household composition were broken down into two metrics: the number of households reporting a major change and the number of households reporting a minor or no change. This year, we disaggregated the second metric so that we could report separately on the number of households reporting a minor change vs the number reporting no change. However, only about four in five local authorities were able to implement this change within their electoral management software (EMS). ■ Back to content at footnote 1 Page history First published: 16 May 2022 Last updated: 25 May 2022 Related content Northern Ireland electoral registration canvass 2021 Read our report about the electoral registration canvass which took place in Northern Ireland in 2021. Analysis of electoral registration data about electoral registration data Accuracy and completeness of electoral registers about the quality of the electoral registers in the UK Public attitudes Read our reports about public attitudes towards voting

Consultation on draft guidance for Returning Officers: Assistance with voting for persons with disabilities | Electoral Commission Search

Consultation on draft guidance for Returning Officers: Assistance with voting for persons with disabilities You are in the Our consultations section Home Our consultations Draft guidance for Returning Officers: Assistance with voting for persons with disabilities On this page Summary How to respond How we developed the draft guidance What the draft guidance includes Background First published: 5 September 2022 Last updated: 7 December 2022 Consultation closed The consultation has now closed. The feedback provided during this consultation was used to inform the further development of the guidance, in advance of our statutory consultation which is running from 5 December 2022 until 16 January 2023. Summary Summary There should be no barriers to voting for people with disabilities. Everyone should have the right to vote on their own and in secret. The Elections Act 2022 includes provisions relating to assisting people with disabilities to vote, and introduces a duty on the Commission to provide guidance to Returning Officers (ROs) on the requirement to provide reasonable equipment to assist voters with disabilities in polling stations.

ROs must have regard to this guidance, which will support them to make accessibility arrangements for the May 2023 elections and beyond. In requiring this, the Act has provided a timely opportunity to review our existing guidance to help ensure everyone can vote independently and confidently. We want the updated guidance to help ROs and their teams to understand the barriers to voting faced by those with disabilities and make informed decisions on what they can do to help make voting accessible for all.

Your views will play an important role in ensuring that the guidance (that we will publish for formal consultation from late November 2022) sets out actions that can have a real and positive impact for voters with disabilities, and help to inform ROs with planning for future elections. This consultation is also available in easy read and BSL formats . How to respond This consultation is open from 5 September 2022 until 17 October 2022. You can respond by: filling in our online form emailing your views to EAConsultation@electoralcommission.org.uk or writing to us at: Electoral Administration Guidance Team The Electoral Commission 3 Bunhill Row London EC1Y 8YZ Your feedback will inform the further development of the guidance, in advance of our statutory consultation which we expect to run from 28 November 2022 until 10 January 2023. If you have any questions or require any help to be able to respond, please get in touch on 0333 103 1928. How we developed the draft guidance To help inform the guidance, we have engaged with a range of civil society, charity and third-sector organisations across the whole of the UK. These represent people with physical and learning disabilities, mental health conditions, and invisible disabilities. We asked them about: the barriers voters with disabilities experience at the polling station possible solutions to make voting more accessible how the changes made by the Elections Act could be used to improve the accessibility of elections We also shared information via Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Community (DLUHC) officials with members of their Access to Elections working group. This provided the opportunity for members to get in touch with us directly and be involved in developing the guidance. In addition, we discussed the changes introduced by the Elections Act and the development of the guidance with representatives of the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (Solace) and members of the Elections, Registration and Referendums Working Group (ERRWG), which includes the Association of s (AEA), electoral administrators and government officials. What the draft guidance includes The draft guidance covers: Understanding and identifying the barriers to voting faced by those with disabilities or specific accessibility needs

Providing accessible information about what to expect in the polling station, how to vote in a polling station and what support is available. The equipment that should be made available as a minimum at the polling station, and what other equipment or support may also be helpful to provide. Providing specific accessibility training for polling station staff, and what that training should cover. Working with civil society, third sector and charity organisations to raise awareness of accessibility measures among voters. Some groups we engaged with also raised points about how voter information could be made more accessible, such as about different types of elections and how to register to vote and apply for an absent vote. Whilst this is not in the scope of this specific guidance, we are considering how we can address this in our wider guidance and resources for voters. Also raised consistently by those we spoke to was early and accessible information before elections about the candidates and parties standing, and their policies and manifestos. Whilst the management of this information is the responsibility of political parties and candidates, we have previously called for action in this area. We have recommended that political parties make sure their information is easy to read and understand; ensure they send their information in good time so everyone can read it; and publish accessible manifestos at the same time as other versions. We will continue to encourage parties and candidates to do this and we will highlight this feedback in our continued engagement with political parties in particular.

[View the draft guidance](#)

Background Who we are . We provide comprehensive guidance for ROs, which covers information about what they should be doing to help support voters with disabilities to participate. It includes specific resources to help and support voters with disabilities at polling stations. For example, we produce a polling station accessibility checklist to highlight practical accessibility considerations, and a handbook for polling station staff with information on how to ensure voting at the polling station is accessible. We have also worked with RNIB and Mencap to create videos for use during polling station staff training, to help staff better understand the challenges voters with disabilities may face when going to a polling station. You can find out more about our role and responsibilities on our website.

Elections Act 2022 The UK Elections Act 2022 includes provisions relating to assisting people with disabilities to vote whether they are blind, partially sighted or have another disability.

1 These provisions will require ROs to provide such equipment as is reasonable for the purposes of enabling, or making it easier for, relevant persons to vote independently and in secret. Relevant persons are defined in the legislation as those who find it difficult or impossible to vote due to blindness, partial sight or another disability. Independently refers to voting without assistance from another person, not without any form of assistive device. These provisions will apply to: UK parliamentary general elections Police and Crime Commissioner elections in England and Wales Northern Ireland Assembly and local elections Local elections in England

ROs are personally responsible for the conduct of elections. In Northern Ireland, the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) is the RO, so references to 'ROs' throughout this document and the guidance should be read to include the CEO.

1. Elections Act (legislation.gov.uk)

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Executive Team and Senior Leadership Team | Electoral Commission Search
Executive Team and Senior Leadership Team You are in the section Home In this section Our Executive Team Our Senior Leadership Team Our salaries Travel and subsistence Interests, gifts and hospitality Chief Executive's external meetings Related content Interim corporate plan 2020/21 - 2024/25 Our interim corporate plan was published following the 2019 UK Parliament general election. It has now been replaced by our 2022/23 to 2026/27 plan. Our spending about our spending estimates, reports and accounts Our Commissioners Register to vote All you need to register to vote is 5 minutes and your National Insurance number.

6. Making sure electoral law is fair and effective in Wales | Electoral Commission

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6. Making sure electoral law is fair and effective in

Wales You are in the Corporate Plan for Wales 2022/23 to 2026/27 section Home Our plans and priorities Corporate Plan for Wales 2022/23 to 2026/27 On this page Supporting effective consideration and implementation of legislation in the Senedd and the UK and Scottish parliaments Engaging with governments' current electoral law reform agendas, while continuing to make the case for further reform Continuing to provide expert advice on the practicability and impact of any changes which could be made to improve the electoral system First published: 25 April 2022 Last updated: 25 April 2022 Summary Our electoral system is underpinned by a legal framework which establishes how elections are delivered. It sets out who is allowed to vote and the various ways they can cast their vote. It sets out who can stand for elections, who can campaign, and how much they can spend. And it sets out how electoral administrators should deliver elections, including counting and declaring the results. Given its cross cutting impact, we want to work with parliamentarians and governments to improve electoral law so that it is fit for purpose, reduces complexity, inefficiencies and risk, and enables innovation. We will work with others to reform electoral law by: supporting effective consideration and implementation of legislation in the Senedd and the UK and Scottish parliaments engaging with governments' current electoral law reform agendas, while continuing to make the case for further reform continuing to provide expert advice on the practicability and impact of any changes which could be made to improve the electoral system Supporting effective consideration and implementation of legislation in the Senedd and the UK and Scottish parliaments We will continue to scrutinise new electoral legislation and provide expert briefings to Welsh Government and the Senedd, and to other UK governments and parliaments, on legislative proposals. We will focus on providing an evidence-based analysis of any proposed changes to electoral law, to support informed consideration of any changes. We will also work to support effective implementation of any new legislation, ensuring that voters, electoral administrators and campaigners understand what it means for them in each case. We will work closely with Welsh Government and the Senedd as it develops legislation for Welsh elections. This may include reform ahead of the next local government elections in May 2022, a wider local government elections Bill and reform of Senedd elections ahead of the 2026 polls. We will provide advice on the practical implementation of proposals which reflect the views of the electoral community. Through our role in designing forms and our public awareness activity, we will also play a key role in implementing any changes, such as making the postal voting system more accessible. We also expect to play a key role in evaluating and publishing a report on the piloting of any reform measures, which may include early voting centres, mobile polling stations and voting in educational establishments. Engaging with governments' current electoral law reform agendas, while continuing to make the case for further reform There is an urgent need for the Welsh Government and other UK governments to simplify and modernise electoral law. It is increasingly complex, which is not just a technical or legal problem. There are real costs and consequences for voters, campaigners and electoral administrators, as well as for the regulators and enforcement bodies which struggle to uphold and enforce the law. The UK's Law Commissions have produced a blueprint for simplified and modernised electoral law, which is supported by us, parliamentary select committees, electoral administrators, electoral lawyers and academics. We will continue to make the case for the implementation of this electoral law reform, while supporting parliamentarians and governments with reform when it

happens. Continuing to provide expert advice on the practicability and impact of any changes which could be made to improve the electoral system. We want to maintain high levels of public confidence in the electoral process, including perceptions of the legitimacy of the results. We will continue to research public attitudes to understand how the electoral system could be improved to meet voters' needs. We will also continue to conduct research on the delivery of and participation in elections and referendums, and use this research to identify reforms to electoral law and process that would improve them. We will continue to support governments to successfully implement changes to electoral law, and will provide evidence-based recommendations, expertise and practical advice. Technological advances in digital campaigning bring new challenges, and we know that lack of transparency is already a concern for voters. Results from our 2021 public opinion tracking survey show that 33% of people in Wales disagree that they can find out who has produced the political information they see online (37% UK wide). And, 37% are concerned about how or why online political ads are targeted at them (40% UK wide). We will therefore continue support to the Welsh Government and other UK governments to implement our recommendations on digital campaigning, while encouraging further improvements.

Navigation 5. Supporting local electoral services delivery and resilience in Wales
Section 5 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan for Wales
7. A modern and sustainable electoral system in Wales
Section 7 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan for Wales

You are in the Party panels section Home How we make decisions Party panels On this page Minutes, and actions of the meeting and matters arising (ECPPP 01/09/2015) Strategic Review EU Referendum Bill Transition to IER Enforcement Policy Consultation Commission Update Report Any other business Date of the next meeting Actions First published: 1 December 2015 Last updated: 2 September 2019 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Conservative Party (Chair): Andrew Stedman (AS) Daisy Woods (DW) Labour: Margaret Lynch (ML) Mike Creighton (MC) Liberal Democrats: Darren Briddock (DB) Plaid Cymru: Geraint Day (GD) Scottish National Party: Scott Martin, Scottish National Party (SM) Electoral Commission: Claire Bassett, Chief Executive (CB) Alex Robertson, Director of Communication (AR) Bob Posner, Director of Party & Election Finance and Legal Counsel (BP) Lisa Camps, Communications Officer (LC) Minutes, and actions of the meeting and matters arising (ECPPP 01/09/2015) The minutes from 01/09/2015 were agreed with no clarifications sought or noted. There were no other matters arising from the minutes. Strategic Review CB explained that, as part of her role, she will be conducting a strategic review of the role of the Commission and its remit. PPP members were asked to consider what they want from the Commission going forward so that this can be discussed at the group's next meeting. MC suggested consideration might want to be given to the role of the Commission in the administration of elections, specifically around the Commission having more power to intervene. AS suggested that the Commission might want to consider looking at gaining more statutory powers over local authorities, especially where they might be underperforming. He cited electoral registration as a particular area where this might be effective. CB replied that these are good indications of the kind of conversations the Commission is looking to have, but added that we do need to be mindful that any changes will need buy-in from Parliament. EU Referendum Bill AR updated that, following a likely amendment to the Bill, the Commission will now be able to designate on one side of the campaign only if appropriate. AR explained that, once the Bill becomes an Act and provisions are commenced by order, an initial tranche of guidance will be published. On the voting age for the referendum, AR reported that there are a lot of measures that will need to be carried out to effectively enact votes at 16, including secondary legislation and changes to the Government Digital Service registration system. He added that, when the referendum date is known, the Commission will be issuing an assessment of how much of the preparation has taken place and what will still need to be done. ML asked if the timescale was longer for the Scottish Independence Referendum and AR replied that it was a lot longer. MC asked if there are any legal problems around 16 year olds registering to vote, and BP responded that there are sensitivities around holding data on 16 year olds, but that measures were put in place at the Scottish Independence Referendum to manage this. Transition to IER GD noted a lot of awareness raising usually takes place in universities but not as much seems to be targeted at young people that aren't in education. AR responded that the main way to remind people to register is through Electoral Registration Officers and that their activity is aimed at everyone. Then, in addition, the Commission runs campaigns targeted at those groups that have been found to be typically under-registered, of which students are one. Enforcement Policy Consultation BP explained that the Enforcement Policy came in in 2010 and that, now five years have passed, it is felt that it's time to revisit the policy through consultation. He added that there will be a focus on targeting resources most effectively, and gave as an example the fact the team

currently spend a lot of time reminding people to meet requirements, whereas this time might be more effectively spent on more substantive areas of work. He explained that, if appropriate, the revised Policy will be brought in before the polls in May 2016. AS commented that cases can take quite a long time to be resolved and that this can prolong the period of worry for the party volunteers involved. BP responded that, although the team need to be thorough, he is hoping to streamline the process on more straightforward matters. MC asked if the Commission will be looking at the impact of other legislation on its Enforcement Policy. BP responded that there are sometimes overlapping regulatory regimes and the Commission is mindful of this. Commission Update Report ML asked if the Commission is happy that everything is in place to ensure the register is complete and accurate, and added that she is concerned that the register could 'erode' over time. BP responded that all statutory duties on local authorities / EROs remain and that the canvass will still take place. He added that the Commission has a responsibility to monitor performance to seek to ensure that EROs work effectively, particularly as local authority resources get tighter. AR commented that, now the transition to IER is complete, the Commission now has the opportunity to make registration better, and cited the use of behavioural insights and the sharing of best practice across local authorities as ways in which this might be done. ML mentioned that the issue of CORE had been raised again recently, and wondered how much longer local authorities could continue to compile separate registers. AS reported that parties have been discussing a standard data format for the register and that he and others will be meeting with Paul Avery at the Cabinet Office to discuss it. BP explained that the Commission are planning to make updates to PEF online as it can currently be difficult to use. He added that the Commission also want to introduce online guidance and forms, but that the project would require funding. DB responded that, on the spreadsheet version of the form, there are four dates required for every transaction, and that two of them (incurred date and invoice date) aren't actually required in statute. He also added that there are different fields in the spreadsheet to those on PEF Online. BP responded that this can be looked into. AS commented that he was disappointed to see that Commission had said in July in its post elections report that there should be full compliance now that PPERA had been around for 15 years, considering that accounting units are run by volunteers with limited terms. BP replied that the Commission does recognise that there are occasions where compliance might be more challenging. Members asked about the online consultation on new party registration applications. BP explained that there is currently a pilot whereby new applications are put online and people can them comment. BP agreed to circulate the details of how members could get involved with the consultation. Any other business ML explained that there is a difficulty around banker's drafts from the Cooperative Bank being accepted as payment for election deposits, and asked if the Commission had looked into enabling electronic transfers. BP replied that he would feed this back to the Electoral Administration team. AS commented that problems are posed by the fact that letters from local authorities confirming that someone will be added to the register don't confirm when they will be added, which causes challenges around the permissibility of donations. AR responded that the template letter has been changed so that the date will now be included. Date of the next meeting The date of the next meeting is 8 March 2016 – SNP to Chair Actions Action Owner Status Commission to circulate details of the Party Registration Consultation to members BP Email sent 3 December 2015 Related content Party registration decisions View our decisions on political party names, descriptions and emblems View current applications View the political party names, descriptions and

emblems which we are currently considering as part of our assessment process
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Looking ahead to 2020/21 and using our resources to support the delivery of our goals | Electoral Commission Search Looking ahead to 2020/21 and using our resources to support the delivery of our goals You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 On this page Looking ahead to 2020/21 Using our resources to support the delivery of our goals Our environmental impact Using our financial resources efficiently First published: 30 June 2020 Last updated: 17 August 2020 Looking ahead to 2020/21 One of our challenges for the year ahead is to ensure local authorities can continue delivering well-run elections. We supported the UK Government's decision to postpone the polls scheduled for May 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. There are significant challenges to delivering the combination of polls now scheduled for May 2021. We are working with the UK's governments and supporting local authorities, to ensure they can deliver the polls successfully, safely and in line with relevant guidelines. There is already pressure on local authority resources because of outdated and complex legislation. There are more than 50 Acts and 170 Statutory Instruments relating to the delivery of elections. This leads to real costs, consequences and risks for voters, candidates and campaigners, regulators and governments. Proposals from the UK's Law Commissions provide a well-researched basis for further work. In 2020-21, we will continue calling on the UK's governments and parliaments to take these forward. While annual canvass reforms in Great Britain are welcome, governments need to do more to modernise the registration system. The existence of more than 370 separate registers that do not communicate with each other leaves the system vulnerable, while voters being unable to check online whether they are already registered leads to duplicate applications before every election. In the coming year, we will continue to encourage the UK's governments to commit to making registration more automated and connected to address these challenges. The nature of political campaigning continues to change, with parties spending a greater portion of their advertising budgets on digital advertising. In response to these changes, we need the right powers and tools to continue regulating political finance effectively. In 2020-21, we will work with all concerned to encourage compliance and we will run a new campaign to help voters understand digital campaigning rules. We welcome the Committee for Standards in Public Life (CSPL) review of electoral regulation in the UK. The nature of political campaigning has significantly changed, as has the public's expectations since the UK Parliament wrote the rules 20 years ago. We will be ready to provide CSPL and others with information and advice to help deliver outcomes and recommendations that best enable people to continue recognising the UK as a leading and robust democracy. Whilst acknowledging the likely continuing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, our 2020-21 work programme includes: continuing with our transition towards providing our guidance in a new modern, more accessible format working with partners on improving the accessibility of elections so that everyone has equal access to election information and processes supporting the UK's governments' annual canvass reforms supporting the 2021 canvass in Northern Ireland developing a strategy to support increased resilience in the delivery of electoral services at a local level publishing new performance standards for EROs engaging with the Scottish and Welsh governments' policy and legislative agendas for changes to the franchise for their elections reviewing our compliance with our Welsh language obligations, to a standard the Welsh Language Commissioner is satisfied with completing a review of political parties' and campaigners' registered descriptions to make sure only those meeting the legal tests are included delivering a new political finance online system to support parties and campaigners to deliver their financial

returns efficiently building the capacity to prosecute suspected offences and consulting on the way we approach the use of prosecutions engaging with government policy and legislative agendas for political finance strengthening our engagement with social media companies and other providers of digital advertising, to ensure their services and policies support transparency for election and referendum campaign activity enhancing our public awareness activity to help people understand digital campaigning rules and by producing education materials for young people improving the accessibility of our information by developing our website further including work to share open data developing a new five-year Corporate Plan implementing our new people strategy delivering digitally-enabled business change to reflect the expectations on a modern employer continuing to work with the Scottish and Welsh parliaments to implement our new accountability arrangements reviewing how we deliver legal services that effectively meet our changing requirements reviewing quality management processes across our main services and functions Using our resources to support the delivery of our goals Our people Staff relations and engagement The expertise, hard work and high level of commitment of our workforce enable successful performance and delivery of our Corporate Plan. We value the positive and constructive relationship we have with colleagues and work hard to maintain it. Our staff engagement group meets on a regular basis to seek input from colleagues on emerging issues and help to maintain good relations with staff. We also actively encourage staff involvement as part of the day-to-day process of line management, and we share information on current and prospective developments widely and regularly. To support this, we have a recognition agreement with the Public and Commercial Services Union. We completed our latest staff survey in March 2020 and 86% of employees responded. Our employee engagement score was 72% (up from 65% in 2018-19). Our scores compared most positively to the Civil Service benchmark in areas such as our people agreeing that: we took action after the previous survey they feel a strong personal attachment to our organisation and its work they would recommend the Electoral Commission as a place to work The areas where we compared least positively to the Civil Service benchmark and we need to improve on include people agreeing that: there are opportunities for them to progress in their careers at the Electoral Commission they have the IT systems and equipment they need to do their jobs effectively we are committed to creating a diverse and inclusive workplace Equal opportunities and diversity We are committed to the principle of equality of opportunity and the value of diversity. Our single equality scheme sets out our duties and commitments across the whole of the UK and includes an action plan that we update annually. The scheme reflects the public sector equality duty, which prohibits discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. We have designed our scheme to ensure: that everyone who is eligible is able to participate in the democratic process, by identifying barriers, making recommendations and working with others to remove them that we embed equality and diversity in all our work, treat all customers fairly and with respect, and are transparent in the decisions we make equality of opportunity for everyone and that all staff are treated fairly and with respect We completed equality impact assessments on relevant policies and procedures throughout 2019-20. The equality impact assessments support a commitment to evidence-based policy making. In addition to arrangements for consultation and monitoring, the assessment process helps to develop effective policies that meet the needs of people in respect to any protected characteristics. Our staff group on equality, diversity and inclusion met regularly

and supported our activities in these areas. Our latest staff survey includes questions about equality, diversity and inclusion. Results showed that an area of concern for our staff is that our organisation does not reflect the diversity of the people we serve, and they do not think we are doing enough to show our commitment to creating a diverse and inclusive workplace. We will start to address these concerns as we embed a new people strategy in 2020, which includes work to review and improve our recruitment and selection procedures. Occupational health and safety We review our health and safety policy annually. We also have procedures, guidance and risk assessments in place to cover our core activities. A health and safety group oversees our arrangements. They meet regularly and report to our senior leadership group. However, primary responsibility for health and safety sits with people managers. We initiate independent health and safety audits of our premises each year, which involves inspecting working environments and reviewing safety management systems. These audits tell us if our arrangements are suitable and highlight any improvements we need to make. Findings from audits completed in 2019-20 were generally satisfactory and arrangements were compliant with legislation and best practice. Our environmental impact Our environmental impact We recognise that delivering our activities has an impact on the environment and we continue to work towards minimising this impact. The following information summarises our use of energy and water, and the production and disposal of waste material. We lease office space in four cities from a combination of public and private sector property owners. We do not have direct control of utility supplier and waste disposal targets and management at our premises. For a number of our offices, the property owner manages energy and water consumption as well as waste disposal and recovers costs through a consolidated service charge. This report includes consumption and waste disposal data from the London office only, which is our largest property and the base for the majority of our staff. Offices in Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast have relocated to smaller, more environmentally efficient premises in the last 10 years. The lease on our London office ends in 2020. After reviewing our accommodation options, we have decided to renew the lease. Other initiatives are in place, in order to help minimise environmental impact. Since 2011-12, we have: reduced printed resources provided to electoral administrators and other groups, focusing on electronic provision wherever possible encouraged the use of video and teleconferencing to avoid unnecessary travel with consequential CO₂ emissions operated recycling facilities in all our offices upgraded to more energy efficient information communication technology equipment Summary (London office) Area: greenhouse gas emissions 2019-20 Actual 1 2019-20 Target * 2018-19 2017-18 CO₂e in tonnes Not available 211 187 235 Area: estate energy 2019-20 Actual 1 2019-20 Target * 2018-19 2017-18 Consumption (kWh) Not available 661,061 639,526 682,595 Expenditure Not available Not available Not available Not available Area: estate waste 2019-20 Actual 1 2019-20 Target * 2018-19 2017-18 Amount (tonnes) Not available 9.84 10.00 9.67 Expenditure Not available £1,111 £1,227 £994 Area: estate water 2019-20 Actual 1 2019-20 Target * 2018-19 2017-18 Consumption Not available 795 m³ 742 m³ 847 m³ Expenditure Not available Not available Not available Not available *The annual target shown is calculated as an average of the previous two years. Emissions report (London office) Greenhouse gas emissions: Non-financial indicators (CO₂e in tonnes) 2019-20 2018-19 2017-18 2016-17 Total gross emissions Not available 187 235 268 Gross emissions - fossil fuel consumption Not available 151 198 227 Gross emissions - travel Not available 36 37 41 Related energy consumption (kWh) 2019-20 2018-19 2017-18 2016-17 Electricity Not available 446,018 487,611 495,414 Gas Not available 193,508 211,990 187,181 Financial

indicators (£) 2019-20 2018-19 2017-18 2016-17 Expenditure on energy Not available
Not available Not available Not available Expenditure on travel £138,514 £125,450
£113,852 £166,585 Performance commentary on emissions Reported fossil fuel
consumption has decreased year on year, an ongoing effect of the property owner's
introduction of measures to reduce levels of electricity consumption, including lower
'out of hours' operation of plant and machinery and the introduction of energy-
efficient lighting. Waste report (London office) General waste and recycling figures
are based on a proportion of total building waste and are not directly controllable
by us. Confidential waste disposal for the organisation is handled separately from
that for other building occupants. We shred the confidential waste we generate on-
site before it is recycled into low-grade paper Non financial indicators (tonnes)
2019-20 2018-19 2017-18 2016-17 Total waste Not available 10.00 10.01 9.67 Non-
hazardous waste: Confidential 2.13 5.58 2.81 2.48 Non-hazardous waste: General waste
reused or recycled Not available 7.22 7.26 7.19 financial indicators 2019-20 2018-19
2017-18 2016-17 Total disposal cost Not available Not available Not available Not
available Confidential £1,169 £1,227 £1,134 £994 General waste reused or recycled Not
available Not available Not available The figure for the general and
recycled waste is based on a proportion of total building waste. All general waste
produced in the building, including that generated by us, is sent to a nearby energy
from waste plant, instead of landfill sites. Using our financial resources
efficiently Using our financial resources efficiently In 2019-20, the resource
initially made available to us by the UK Parliament was £19.4m for voted activity. We
received non-voted funding of £200k to pay Commissioners' fees. In January 2020,
£2.8m was added to our resource to fund expenditure on the 2019 UK Parliamentary
general election, and our Annually Managed Expenditure (AME) budget was increased by
£285k to manage the risk of variations in legal provision. This augmented our net
cash requirements by £3m. In achieving our objectives, we have used £20.0m worth of
resources for the whole year. This was out of the available sum of £22.2m approved by
the UK Parliament in our Supplementary Estimate (HC 64) for the net resource
requirement. The graphic below summarises our financial performance on the 'voted'
element of our budget. Financial performance 2019-20 Our financial performance
follows our strategic performance, being dominated by a shifting electoral timetable.
For the year 2019-20: our staff costs represent 47% of our expenditure, which is the
same as 2018-19 our operating costs rose from 28% to 36% of our allocated budget due
to additional public awareness work for the European Parliamentary elections and the
UK Parliamentary general election we saw a similar spend for EU referendum operating
costs, which represent the costs of litigation defended net of costs received during
the year our capital expenditure had a slight increase from 4.3% to 4.5% We report
our underspend on the Treasury's usual measure ("R-DEL excluding depreciation") as
this reflects in-year operational decisions. In 2019-20 this was £1.5m against the
voted budget of £20.3m (7.4%). This was predominantly due to unused contingency and
other savings in delivering the unscheduled UK Parliamentary general election. The
cancellation, in March 2020 of the May 2020 polls, by the UK Government also caused
the deferral of significant costs into 2020-21, increasing the underspend in this
year. Excluding these exceptional factors, the underspend was £0.369m (1.8%), meeting
our corporate objective. However due to these exceptional factors we have chosen to
report that objective as unmet within our performance report. The underspend is
comprised of: £599k underspend on the UK Parliamentary general election £589k in
reduced campaign spending due to the cancellation of the May 2020 elections £96k in
reduced staffing costs £76k of unexpected income from the Senedd and Scottish

Parliament. £103k as a combination of smaller underspends £33k of unclaimed policy development grant Other £235k in depreciation due to reduced capital spend £415k in provisions due to lower than expected legal costs £111k in capital projects The £21k underspend against non-voted funding is due to lower than expected costs for Commissioners. Our income in our accounts relates to charges for registering political parties and work completed for the Senedd and Scottish Parliament. We collect fines raised against political parties and individuals for failure to comply with the rules on party and election finance and then surrender these to the Consolidated Fund as required by law. The penalties due was £232,980 in 2019-20 received by 31 March 2020 and surrendered to the Consolidated Fund. In addition to monitoring performance against budgets, we also managed within our cash limits set by Parliament. We required cash amounting to £20.2m in 2019-20 to finance our voted activities, which was £1.5m less than the sum of £21.7m approved by the UK Parliament in our Supplementary Estimate. The reconciliation of net resources outturn to net cash requirement provides a reconciliation from our outturn to the net cash we required in-year. The Statement of Cash Flows shows that the cash balance as at 31 March 2020 was £197k. The Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2019 shows negative taxpayers' equity of £0.4m due to outstanding invoices accrued for. Supplier payments Although we are independent of government, we aim to comply with the Prompt Payment Code that operates across the public sector. The target is to pay undisputed invoices within 30 days. In 2019-20, we paid 81.6% of invoices (99.9% in 2018-19) within 30 days. The reduction was due to a required change in process for purchase orders, which is now in place meaning we anticipate performance now increasing again. Freedom of Information, complaints and parliamentary questions We are committed to the principles of openness and transparency in public life and acknowledge the duty to provide information to the public. In 2019-20, we received 287 Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, a significant increase on the 224 we received in the previous year. We responded to 59.4% of these within the 20 working days statutory timeframe (against a target of 90%) due to an increased number of large and complex requests during the electoral events. The proportion of large, complex and repeated requests has also increased compared to previous years. We responded to 13 FOI internal review requests, 4.5% of the total requests answered. The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) notified us of six complaints, one related to a subject access request and five related to FOI requests; this is less than 2% of the total FOI requests answered in 2019-20. We received 20 subject access requests, compared to five in 2018-19. We responded to all of these promptly. We received one complaint and this is pending closure from the ICO. We also received six requests for erasure under the General Data Protection Regulation/Data Protection Act 2018. The holding of the European Parliamentary elections and UK Parliamentary general election contributed to most of the increase in the volume of requests we received in 2019-20. We handled 51 complaints, compared to 37 in 2018-19. We upheld three complaints and partially upheld a further three. These complaints were mainly due to administrative errors and delays in responding to queries. We received 11 requests for review. While none of these reviews changed the original outcome of the complaint, they did enable further explanation and assistance. The Parliamentary Ombudsman is considering one complaint and we are awaiting the outcome of that. In addition, we received correspondence from 709 members of the public complaining about difficulties in being able to vote due to the Brexit-related short lead in notice to the European Parliamentary elections. We responded to 49 parliamentary questions during 2019-20, including questions about digital campaigning, electoral fraud, the accuracy and completeness of the electoral

registers and the effectiveness of electoral law. Bridget Phillipson MP, a member of the Speaker's Committee, was our spokesperson in the UK Parliament and answered questions on our behalf. Supply estimate for 2020-21 Our supply estimate for 2020-21 (HC303) provides for a net resource requirement of £21.9m. The Speaker's Committee approved this on 29 April 2020. There is no reason to believe that future approvals will not be forthcoming. We plan to use these resources to continue delivering our four goals around the delivery of elections, the regulation of political finance, the use of our expertise to improve democratic processes and the best use of our resources.

1. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the data was not available from our landlord at the time of publishing. We will publish this data on our website in due course.

■ Back to content at footnote 1 a b c d Related content Testing the EU referendum question Find out about our testing of the EU referendum question Report: Voting in 2017 Read our report about voting at the general election in 2017 Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run Results and turnout at the 2017 UK general election View the results and turnout at the 2017 general election

Changes to legal requirements for parties and non-party campaigners | Electoral Commission Search Changes to legal requirements for parties and non-party campaigners You are in the Elections Act section Home Elections Act On this page Changes Our role First published: 5 July 2021 Last updated: 2 February 2023 Summary From November 2022, there are new legal requirements for political parties and non-party campaigners (NPCs). Changes Political parties There is now a new registration requirement for political parties. Parties wishing to register with us are required to declare whether they have assets or liabilities over £500 and where they do, provide a record of these assets and liabilities. The declarations and records will be published on our registers . Further information about this new requirement can be found in our guidance . Parties are no longer able to register with us if they are already registered as an NPC. NPCs There is now a new registration threshold for NPCs at UK Parliamentary general elections. NPCs are required to register with us if they spend over £10,000, either in England or spread across the UK. These NPCs will then need to provide financial returns when they reach the existing reporting thresholds. The reporting threshold is £10,000 in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and £20,000 in England. During a regulated period, certain categories of campaigners will be banned from spending more than £700. For example, this includes overseas groups campaigning an UK election. NPCs are no longer able to register with us if they are already registered as a political party. Our role Our public register has been updated to reflect the asset and liabilities changes for political parties, and the changes to NPC registration thresholds. We have also updated the website that parties and NPCs use to submit applications (PEF Online) as well as our printable forms, to facilitate the new requirements. The changes to do with registration of parties and NPCs came into force on Thursday 24 November. We have published an updated suite of guidance on party registration, including the new rules for registration of new parties. We will produce a Code of Practice on controlled expenditure, which will include guidance on the NPC changes. You can read the draft version of the NPC Code of Practice . Related content Elections Act about the UK Government's Elections Act and what it means for voting and campaigning About the Elections Act about the Elections Bill, including the measures it contains and which elections it applies to. Changes to notional spending Read about the proposals to clarify the rules that relate to notional spending for candidates and agents. The Electoral Commission's ability to bring prosecutions about the proposal that would stop us from being able to bring prosecutions against those who break electoral law relating to parties and campaigners.

How investigations work | Electoral Commission Search How
investigations work You are in the Investigations section Home Investigations

On this page Why we investigate Who we investigate How and why we work with the police When we investigate The investigation process Concluding an investigation The sanctioning process Our sanctions First published: 9 December 2021 Last updated: 9 December 2021 Our role As the regulator of political finance in the UK, we ensure that parties and campaigners follow the law. If we believe that the law may have been broken we take action so that voters, parties and campaigners can be confident in the fairness of the system. There is more detail about investigations and sanctions in our Enforcement Policy . Why we investigate The Political Parties Elections and Referendums Act (PPERA) sets out the law and our role in enforcing it. We produce guidance, but Parliament makes the law. The law for parties covers: money spent on campaigning ahead of elections all donations and loans keeping registered party officer details up to date annual accounts For other campaigners, the controls are less wide-ranging but there are still legal obligations around financial transparency. We aim to ensure that: the law is followed all parties and campaigners abide by the financial rules voters can be confident in the integrity and transparency of party and election finance in the UK Where we do find offences have taken place, it is also important that voters know that there are consequences for those who break the law. Who we investigate We regulate the finances of registered political parties throughout the year, and non-party campaigners around general elections and elections to the devolved parliaments. We also regulate the donations made to regulated donees, which include: elected officials members of political parties members associations unincorporated associations that make donations totalling more than £25,000 a year to political parties At referendums, we regulate the finances of campaigners too. How and why we work with the police The Political Parties Elections and Referendums Act (PPERA) contains a wide range of offences, and as the regulator, we will investigate most offences and take appropriate action. However, the police can also investigate all PPERA offences if they choose to. A small number of offences can only be investigated by the police. We work closely with the police to ensure that potential offences are investigated, and that the appropriate action is taken. Occasionally, we may notify the police of offences if we do not have the power to take action, or we believe a police investigation is more suitable. Police investigations may lead to criminal prosecutions if appropriate.

When we investigate We open investigations where we have reasonable grounds to suspect that an offence has occurred, and it is proportionate and in the public interest to investigate. We will always consider whether a situation can be resolved without the need of an investigation if that is more proportionate or in the public interest. To decide whether to open an investigation, we look at the evidence and circumstances as part of a process called an assessment. We consider a number of factors when deciding whether to open an investigation. These include, but are not limited to: the seriousness of the suspected offence the strength of the evidence the impact, including the deterrence effect on others, of an investigation and/or any sanction that might be imposed the compliance history of the person(s) who may have committed the suspected offence any steps already taken to rectify the breach The investigation process The purpose of an investigation is to establish whether or not the suspected offence has taken place, and if it has, who committed it. During an investigation, we gather evidence about potential offences from those we believe hold relevant information about what happened. When doing this, we actively look for evidence to prove or disprove our reasonable suspicion that an offence has occurred.

Evidence-gathering can take many forms, from asking people to provide information voluntarily, through to interviewing witnesses or suspects or requiring evidence to be provided to us. For example, we have the power to issue a legal notice to any person or organisation that we believe to hold relevant documents or information. That notice sets out what the recipient must supply us with and the deadline for doing so. Failure to comply with the notice is a criminal offence, and so is knowingly or recklessly providing false information to us during an investigation. Also, if someone doesn't comply with our notice, we can apply for a disclosure order from a court to gain the relevant information. The time it takes to complete an investigation varies on a case-by-case basis. It depends on a range of factors, such as the number and complexity of the potential offences, and the level of cooperation from those we're investigating or from witnesses. Our priority is always to conduct a fair and thorough investigation, and we always try to conclude investigations as quickly as possible. This is both in the public interest and the interests of those involved.

Concluding an investigation

At the end of an investigation there are three possible outcomes:

- We are satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that an offence has been committed
- We are not satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that an offence has been committed
- We make no determination of offence. This means that after opening the investigation, we decided that it was not in the public interest to continue the investigation, and decided to close it without making a determination of offence

The sanctioning process

If we find an offence has been committed, we will consider whether a sanction is appropriate. Someone not involved in the investigation will make this decision. If we decide to impose sanctions, we issue an initial notice to the person we propose to sanction, setting out: our proposed sanction the reasons for it including the grounds for finding an offence the timeframe for the recipient to respond

The person or organisation then has a period of time to make representations, either about the finding of offence, or the proposed sanction. After considering any representations, we take a final decision about the offence and the sanction. We may conclude that the offence did not take place, or we can change the level of any fine, or decide not to impose any sanction. If we remain satisfied that an offence was committed and a sanction is appropriate, we will issue a final notice. This sets out why the sanction was imposed, how and when to pay any fine or take any required action, and how to appeal to the court. We publish the outcome of every investigation, setting out what we found and whether a sanction was imposed. Where an investigation highlights important lessons for others about the law, or providing more details about it may strengthen confidence in the law being followed, we may choose to publish a report summarising the investigation.

Our sanctions

A sanction could be a fine of between £200 and £20,000. Or we may require the person or organisations to improve their internal compliance procedures, spending money on internal improvements rather than on fines. This might involve:

- A compliance notice, where we set out the action that the person or organisation must take so that the breach of the law does not continue or recur.
- A restoration notice, where we set out the action that the person or organisation must take to restore the position, as far as possible, to what it would have been had no offence occurred.
- Enforcement undertakings, where the person or organisation that has, or may have, committed offences, offers to take specific actions within an agreed timescale to prevent, as far as possible, any potential offences continuing or recurring.

We then decide whether to accept the undertakings. If the people or organisations do not implement the requirements of compliance or restoration notices, or the elements of their undertakings within the agreed timeframe, we can issue further sanctions relating to

the offences.

Codes of Practice on spending by candidates and political parties at elections to the National Assembly for Wales: a consultation | Electoral Commission Search

Codes of Practice on spending by candidates and political parties at elections to the National Assembly for Wales: a consultation You are in the Our consultations section Home Our consultations On this page How to respond Introduction What this consultation is for Explaining the Codes of Practice Download the Codes The consultation First published: 25 October 2019 Last updated: 19 March 2020 How to respond This consultation closed on 31 January 2020. We will soon be publishing our consultation report. Introduction Elections legislation enables the Commission to prepare Codes of Practice about election spending for political parties and candidates. A Code of Practice is a statutory document that provides detailed practical guidance on how to comply with legal obligations. Our aims in preparing the Codes are: To provide guidance for candidates, their agents and political parties about what items of spending count towards the spending limits and are to be reported To provide enhanced clarity to political parties and candidates about when spending (including notional spending) should be in a candidate return and when it should be in a party return To ensure that there is clarity and consistency in the reporting of spending, including digital campaigning by parties and candidates. The Codes set out what is and isn't included in the categories of spending for elections that are listed in the legislation. The Codes also allow us to give guidance on the cases and circumstances when spending will be regarded as for the purposes of a candidate's election. These Codes, once finalised, will be presented to the Minister for Housing and Local Government for approval (with or without modification), before being laid before the National Assembly for Wales for approval. These Codes will apply to elections to the National Assembly for Wales. When in force, political parties and candidates must have regard to the Codes, particularly when organising their campaigns and when completing their spending returns after an election. Following the Codes will provide parties and candidates with a statutory defence. We have previously drafted and consulted on Codes of Practice for elections that fall within the remit of UK Parliament. These Codes have been submitted to the Minister for Cabinet Office to approve and lay before Parliament. The Scottish Parliament has responsibility for the law on Scottish Parliament and Scottish local government elections, and separate Codes for those elections would be needed. The Electoral Commission will be drafting codes for elections to the Scottish Parliament and we will consult on those separately. We would welcome views on the draft Codes for National Assembly for Wales elections from candidates and political parties in Scotland. There are number of similarities between elections to both legislatures, and we would find any feedback from stakeholders in Scotland valuable. What this consultation is for We are the independent body which oversees elections and regulates political finance in the UK. . Codes of practice for National Assembly for Wales elections We have the power under Schedule 8, paragraph 3 Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act (PPERA) 2000, to prepare a Code for political parties on what does and does not fall in Part 1 of that Schedule. The Welsh Government intend to amend the National Assembly for Wales (Representation of the People) Order 2007, to provide us with the formal power to draft a Code of Practice for candidates. The purpose of this consultation is to seek views to ensure that our aims are achieved in making the Codes as clear and comprehensive as possible, and to promote consistency in reporting. As part of this work we will be consulting with Government, political parties and other stakeholders from across the electoral community. Once the consultation process is completed and we have made any necessary changes to the

Codes, they will be presented to the Minister for Housing and Local Government, and then will be laid before the National Assembly for Wales. The Codes we are currently consulting on for National Assembly for Wales elections, will not apply to other elections. We are consulting on these Codes now to ensure that the Code of Practice for both parties and candidates can be in force for the National Assembly for Wales elections in May 2021. Other Codes of Practice and consultations We prepared Codes of Practice for parties and candidates for UK Parliamentary elections and other elections that fall under the remit of UK Parliament. We consulted on these Codes, published our response to that consultation and presented the codes to the Minister for the Constitution in July 2019. These UK Codes will apply to elections to the UK Parliament, the Northern Ireland Assembly, local elections in England and to other elections in some circumstances. Responses received during the UK Codes consultation were analysed and several suggestions incorporated into the final version of the Codes. This included feedback on: transparency of spending on digital campaigning; costs of items used at several elections and the treatment of overheads. This feedback has been reflected in the Codes for National Assembly for Wales elections, and due to the fragmented nature of electoral law, we hope this will provide some consistency for parties and candidates across the various Codes we will have made.

Explaining the Codes of Practice How election spending works Spending by parties and candidates in the lead up to elections is regulated. The law places separate limits on how much candidates and parties can spend on campaigning. There are also controls on who can incur and pay for spending to make sure election spending is within the legal limits. Candidates at a National Assembly for Wales election can stand as a candidate in a constituency, or as a candidate on a regional list, or they can do both if the constituency is located within the region where they are standing.

Candidates that stand in a constituency and on a regional list are known as dual candidates. Campaign spending promoting the regional list candidates counts towards the party campaign spending limit and must be reported in the party return. Spending promoting the constituency candidate counts toward the separate candidate limit.

There may be some instances where campaign material promotes both the regional list candidates and a constituency candidate. In these instances, campaign spending may need to be split between the candidate return and the party return. Sometimes candidates make use of items their supporters (such as their party or a non-party campaigner) have transferred or made available to them at less than market value. The law requires an amount to be treated as spending by the candidate. This is called notional spending. A candidate's notional spending must be included in their spending return. A similar rule applies to parties. A party's notional spending must be

reported in the party return. Parties and candidates are required to report spending within certain categories. These categories are set out in the legislation. Some of the categories for parties and candidates are the same and some are different. For example both sets of rules include categories called 'advertising' and 'unsolicited material'. However, the rules for political parties have additional separate

categories for 'party political broadcasts' and 'manifestos'. What the codes do The Codes set out what should be included in each category of spending, as well as listing what isn't included. The Codes are designed to give illustrative examples rather than an exhaustive list. In particular, the Codes seek to address: the circumstances when something should be in a candidate return and when something should be reported by a political party; how to account for spending that promotes dual candidates (a candidate standing in both a constituency and in an electoral region). Why we are making the codes In writing these Codes we have drawn on our

experience of regulating elections and reviewing spending returns. We learnt a lot from the feedback we received on the UK Codes. We asked parties about their experiences and incorporated their views. We want to gather more feedback through this consultation. The aim of the Codes is to ensure that the rules are as clear and comprehensive as possible. This should make it easier for candidates and parties to comply with the law. This will improve transparency, fairness, and consistency, and therefore improve public and campaigner confidence. For example: The Codes will promote consistency in reporting, so everyone knows what to expect in a spending return of a candidate or party. Parties and candidates should find it easier to comply with the law and this should make it easier for people to compare returns and spending, and check that the rules are being followed. In turn, this will increase transparency of election spending. Given the commentary around spending on digital campaigning at elections, the Codes are one way we are able to be clear where money spent on digital campaigning at elections should be reported. Since these are statutory Codes having been approved by the National Assembly for Wales, they will create an enforceable framework of how election spending law will be applied. This strengthens the regulatory framework of spending at elections. Download the Codes The consultation We are seeking your views on whether we have achieved our stated aims. Please answer the questions below in your consultation response. You are welcome to send us any comments you may have outside of the questions we have asked. The language in the Codes The Codes are a piece of statutory guidance. They will be laid before the National Assembly for Wales. This means we need to use formal language. However we also want the Codes to be easy to read and understand. Deciding where to account for an item of spending What is candidate spending and what is party spending? The political party and candidate Codes are intended to give clear guidance as to what should be in a candidate spending return and what should be in a party spending return. The candidate Code explains when something is candidate spending. You can find this section on pages 9-10 of the candidate Code under the heading, "When will expenses be regarded as incurred for the purposes of a candidate's election?" This will help the candidate and their agent know what is candidate spending. It will also help parties with knowing what is not candidate spending, and needs to be reported as party spending. This will include any spending by the party to promote regional party list candidates. In elections to the National Assembly for Wales, some campaign materials will encourage voters both to vote for a constituency candidate, and to vote for a political party in the regional elections using their second vote. Therefore, while some campaign activity can be regarded as used wholly for the purposes of the candidate's election in a constituency, in other circumstances the costs of campaign material will need to be split between the candidate and the party. The Codes will provide guidance on when to apportion costs between the two spending returns. Under our powers to draft Codes of Practice, we are limited in what we are able to include in the Codes about splitting spending between the candidate and party return. So we will provide further guidance on how to split spending alongside the Codes. The candidate Code also explains how to account for spending which promotes dual candidates (where a candidate stands both in a constituency, and on a regional party list). Examples in the Code The Codes currently include specific examples for illustration purposes. These can be found set out in the boxes on pages 10 to 11. So we can keep these up to date with, for example, technological advances and changes to the way candidates and parties campaign, the example boxes do not form part of the Code. The examples are currently contained in the body of the Codes and, as such, in order for them to be updated, the Codes would

need to go back through the National Assembly for Wales approval process. The examples will therefore likely remain fixed, and will not be able to be updated over time. Alternatively, we could remove the examples boxes and put them in supporting guidance instead, which can be more easily updated as necessary. We intend that the text in the Codes, even without the example boxes, will give clear guidance on how to treat different types of expenditure. Further comments We welcome any further comments that you may have in relation to the Codes. Related content Consultation: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Statutory consultation on guidance for Returning Officers: Assistance with voting for disabled people Draft guidance for Returning Officers: Assistance with voting for disabled voters (statutory consultation) Consultation response: Draft performance standards for Electoral Registration Officers Read the response to our draft performance standards for EROs consultation

You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23 First published: 4 July 2023 Last updated: 27 September 2023 Title Summary Our work in Northern Ireland over the last year has largely been dominated by electoral events, from supporting the May 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election at the start of the year, through to preparations for the May 2023 local council elections over the later part of the year. This work has been delivered against a backdrop of political uncertainty, with the Assembly unable to elect a First Minister and Deputy First Minister following the May 2022 election. As a responsible regulator, we have maintained up to date contingency plans for an unscheduled election, and throughout this period we have continued to work closely with the Chief Electoral Officer, political parties and the electoral community across Northern Ireland to provide advice and support on issues relating to electoral law, financial reporting, campaigning and voter registration. Work done to achieve our aims We supported the successful delivery of the May 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election. Following the Northern Ireland Assembly election, we published a report reflecting data and evidence gathered on voting, campaigning and delivering the election. This included recommendations for improving the system further. We ran a mass-media voter registration campaign ahead of the Assembly election, supported by press and partnership activity. We developed new resources for democratic engagement with schools and other learning providers. Welcome to Your Vote Week took place at the end of January, with a involvement from 20 schools across Northern Ireland. We published campaign spending from the Northern Ireland Assembly election. The Commission's Board travelled to Belfast to meet with the Chief Electoral Officer, academics, youth groups and political parties. Our May 2022 election report found that 71% of candidates in Northern Ireland had experienced some kind of abuse or intimidation. As a result, the Board met with female representatives of all the major parties in Northern Ireland to hear their experiences of abuse while campaigning and to consider ways to increase the safety of candidates at future polls. Ahead of the May 2023 local council elections, in partnership with the Police Service for Northern Ireland (PSNI), Public Prosecution Service and the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland (EONI), we published joint guidance for candidates to help them recognise and respond to intimidatory and criminal behaviour. We launched our voter registration campaign for the May 2023 Northern Ireland local council elections. In partnership with EONI, Royal Mail and the PSNI we hosted pre-election seminars in Belfast, Omagh and online for candidates and agents taking part in the May 2023 local elections. We also offered one-to-one surgeries to support those participating in the election. Despite the absence of a functioning Assembly, the Northern Ireland Political Parties Panel continued to meet during the year. The panel provides an important link for sharing information between the Commission, the Chief Electoral Officer and political parties. Looking ahead Our report on the May 2023 Northern Ireland local council elections will be published in autumn 2023. We will continue to support parties and campaigners to comply with the law, while ensuring that political finance is transparent. We will also continue to provide support and guidance to EONI. In March 2023 the Chief Electoral Officer stood down and an interim appointment was made to ensure the delivery of the local council elections. When a new Chief Electoral Officer is appointed, we will work closely with them to support the delivery of well-run elections and electoral registration in Northern Ireland. We will publish our latest assessment of the accuracy and completeness of the electoral register in

Northern Ireland in autumn 2023. We will continue to provide expert advice and recommendations for improving the current system, including making the case for reform of the canvass and wider electoral registration process in Northern Ireland. We will build on the work we have already done to provide educational resources, and will seek to establish new partners to promote and improve political literacy across demographics less likely to be engaged in the democratic process. The implementation of the Elections Act will continue to impact on our work in Northern Ireland. Working closely with the Northern Ireland Office, the Chief Electoral Officer, and other stakeholders, we will support the implementation of the changes made to the electoral process in Northern Ireland through the Act. This will include responding to relevant consultations on secondary legislation, updating and producing new guidance, and promoting awareness of these changes to the electoral community in Northern Ireland. We will maintain up to date planning for a Northern Ireland Assembly election, which is due to be held before April 2024 if an executive is not formed by January 2024.

Commitment to EDI The Electoral Commission serves a diverse democracy in Northern Ireland. We published our new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Single Equality Scheme for Northern Ireland in autumn 2022. Under new legislation, Ulster-Scots and Irish language commissioners are expected to be appointed and will be tasked with developing best practice standards and promoting the services provided by public authorities. The Commission will monitor this in relation to its own work and services. [Navigation](#) [Previous](#) [Next](#) [Powers and sanctions report](#) [Wales annual report](#)

You are in the section Home In this section Accuracy and completeness of electoral registers at the May 2023 local elections in England Public attitudes 2023 Attitudes to voter registration research report Electoral registration in Great Britain in 2022

Advance voting pilots evaluation Electoral registration in Great Britain in 2021

Northern Ireland electoral registration canvass 2021 Modernising elections research

Public attitudes Northern Ireland political transparency research Public attitudes towards voting in the context of COVID-19 Conducting elections under coronavirus restrictions Analysis of electoral registration data Ballot paper ordering at

Scottish council elections Electoral fraud data Referendum question research Voter identification pilots Overview of what our research involves We conduct research on a wide range of subjects, which helps inform our work and our policies. We measure the quality of the electoral registers and carry out surveys on public attitudes about democracy and the process of voting. Following elections and referendums, we collect data such as the size of the electorate, turnout and rejected ballot papers.

Descriptions of our different research projects and responsibilities Accuracy and completeness of electoral registers We measure the quality of the electoral registers in the UK. Accuracy means we look at the number of false entries on the electoral registers and completeness means measuring whether those eligible to register are on the registers. Analysis of electoral registration data Our analysis looks at key data relating to entries on the electoral registers, such as the number of entries, attainers, additions and deletions. It also looks at the results of the annual canvass activities that electoral registration officers at local councils carry out each year. Public attitudes We carry out public opinion surveys covering a range of electoral issues such as voting, registering to vote, party finance and electoral fraud. Electoral data We collect data following elections and referendums in the UK.

This includes data such as the size of the electorate, turnout, the number of rejected ballot papers and information on postal voting. Voter identification pilots

We evaluated the Government's pilot schemes in 2018 and 2019, where voters were required to bring identification to vote at the local government elections in

England. Reporting on electoral fraud We collect data from all police forces across the UK about allegations of electoral fraud. Referendum question research For referendums in the UK, we look at the way the proposed referendum question is worded to make sure it is easy for voters to understand. As part of our assessment, we carry out research with the public. Modernising elections research We carried out some qualitative research to look at public attitudes to voting and the information around elections. The research considers views on current voting methods and explores ideas and attitudes about possible new ways of casting a vote in the future. Related content

Elections in your area Enter your postcode to find your electoral services team at your local council. You need to send your postal and proxy vote application forms to them. Types of elections about the types of elections in the UK. Past elections and referendums Read our reports and view data about past elections and referendums Electoral law is out of date. Find out where we want to see improvements

6. Background to our evaluation | Electoral Commission Search

6. Background to our evaluation You are in the May 2019 voter identification pilot schemes section Home Our research Voter identification pilots May 2019 voter identification pilot schemes Pilot areas by numbers and equality: feedback from local and national organisations Confidence assessment: findings and recommendations First published: 12 July 2019 Last updated: 12 July 2019 Contents Overview Our findings Impact on voters: experience Impact on voters: confidence Impact on security Impact of administration of the polls Background to our evaluation Previous pilot scheme In 2017, the UK Government asked local councils in England to test different ways of identifying voters at polling stations. At the local elections in May 2018, people in five areas had to show ID before they could vote in a polling station. We published our independent evaluation of the 2018 pilot scheme in July 2018. Overall we found that the scheme worked well, but we said that a wider range of local authorities should run more pilots in 2019. The May 2019 pilot scheme The Government decided to run more pilots at the May 2019 local elections. People in ten areas had to show ID before they could vote in a polling station: Local authorities holding pilots in May 2019 Photo ID only Pendle and Woking Photo or non-photo ID Braintree, Broxtowe, Craven, Derby and North Kesteven Poll card Mid Sussex, North West Leicestershire and Watford Local Returning Officers ran the processes in each area, and the Cabinet Office oversaw the pilot scheme as a whole. The legislation that allowed the pilot scheme to take place was published in March 2019. Northern Ireland At elections held between 1985 and 2002, voters at polling stations in Northern Ireland had to show one of a number of specified pieces of ID before they could be issued with their ballot paper. The list of specified ID included a number of non-photographic identity documents. This requirement had been introduced to address concerns about electoral fraud, which at the time were widely perceived to be a problem in Northern Ireland. The list of specified ID was changed in 2002, and in elections since 2003 voters at polling stations in Northern Ireland have been required to show specified photo ID. The Government said this change was needed because of the ease with which identity documents could be falsified and the fact that non-photographic documents were regarded as providing insufficient proof of identity. The ID does not need to be current, but the Presiding Officer must be satisfied that the photograph is of a good enough likeness before issuing a ballot paper. The list of acceptable photo ID includes an Electoral Identity Card, which an elector can apply for free of charge from the Electoral Office. When the photo ID requirement was first introduced in Northern Ireland we found that the uptake of the electoral identity card varied between areas, and also that a number of disadvantaged groups were less likely to have eligible identification. However, our public opinion research after subsequent elections since 2003 suggests that voters in Northern Ireland have not experienced any difficulties in meeting the photo ID requirement. Other areas of the electoral system This evaluation has only looked at the process of voting at a polling station and the potential impact of ID to reduce the risk of fraud at polling stations. It does not look at other areas of the electoral system where further strengthening might also be needed, such as improving protections for postal voters. We have made other recommendations for improvements to strengthen postal voting . The UK government also needs to make progress on implementing these recommendations and others that were highlighted in 2016 by Sir Eric Pickles in his review of electoral fraud . Aims of this report The law says that we have to publish an independent review of the pilot scheme within three months of the election, and there are specific questions that we have to consider: Whether the turnout of voters

was higher than it would have been if the scheme had not applied Whether voters found the procedures provided for their assistance by the scheme easy to use Whether the procedures provided for by the scheme led to any increase in personation or other electoral offences or in any other malpractice in connection with elections Whether those procedures led to any increase in expenditure, or to any savings, by the authority We collected information from different sources to make sure that our review of the 2019 voter ID pilot scheme is thorough and robust. This included: A survey asking people in each local area what they thought of the scheme A survey of people who worked in polling stations Data about what ID people showed to vote, and the number of people who were turned away for not having the right ID Views and evidence from organisations that represent different groups of voters, including local groups in each area Information about how much it cost to run the pilot scheme An expert review of the security of the different voter ID models Alongside this report we have also published key figures about each of the ten local authority areas that ran pilots in May 2019 . Report navigation links Previous 5. Impact of administration of the polls Related content Party registration decisions View our decisions on political party names, descriptions and emblems View current applications View the political party names, descriptions and emblems which we are currently considering as part of our assessment process Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run

About the Elections Act | Electoral Commission Search About
the Elections Act You are in the Elections Act section Home Elections Act First
published: 5 July 2021 Last updated: 5 July 2021 About the Act The UK Government is
making changes to the UK electoral system. The Elections Act contains measures that
affect: elections and the way we vote campaigning and the rules on campaign spending
and funding parliamentary oversight of the Electoral Commission The changes in the
Act apply to UK Parliament elections, Police and Crime Commissioner elections in
England and Wales, and local elections in England. Some provisions will apply to
Northern Ireland Assembly elections and local elections in Northern Ireland. The Act
seeks to improve the security, accessibility and transparency of elections and
campaigning. The changes it introduces will need to be well planned, with
implementation phased and properly funded to ensure that electoral administrators and
others involved in running elections can implement the measures as intended. As
devolution leads to different rules for different parts of the UK, it will be
important to ensure that the entirety of the system continues to work well and that
everyone can understand what rules are in place at different elections. Now that the
Act has been passed into law – and there are new rules for elections, voting and
campaigning – we will work with voters, local councils, political parties,
campaigners and representative bodies, to ensure everyone involved in elections
understands and is prepared for the changes. Further reading Further reading Read the
full Elections Act Significant changes proposed to UK elections - our response

You are in the Party panels section Home How we make decisions Party panels First published: 14 July 2020 Last updated: 14 July 2020 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Conservative Party: Alan Mabbutt (AM) Chair of the meeting Andrew Steadman (AS) Megan Tucker (MT) Liberal Democrats: Darren Briddock (DB) Labour: Andrew Whyte (AW) Scottish National Party: Scott Martin (SM) Electoral Commission: Craig Westwood, Director of Communications & Research (CW) Louise Edwards, Director of Regulation (LE) Laura McLeod, Public Affairs Manager (LM) Minutes of the last meeting and actions arising (PPP 04/12/2018) The minutes were agreed. AM asked for an update on the Commission's review of the registers of political parties. LE advised that the Commission has reviewed party descriptions on the Northern Ireland register; the review for Great Britain would now take place after the May polls. AM asked for clarification on the deadline for new parties registering ahead of May local elections. LE stated the deadline was 4 February to guarantee a decision before the May polls. Codes of Practice on election spending by candidates and political parties AS highlighted the practical difficulties in terms of timing that would exist if implemented in April, as May is a particularly busy time with local elections. LE outlined the current timetable the Commission is working to and noted timing concerns. AS reiterated a proposal for a joint meeting take place with the Commission and all parties to 'test' the draft codes. DB noted that there are some common themes to feedback so would be a useful exercise. CW and LE agreed a meeting would be scheduled. Preparations for May 2019 local elections in England and Northern Ireland CW gave an outline of the Commission's public awareness work ahead of the May local elections. AS asked if the Commission micro targets specific groups; CW explained that the Commission doesn't micro target audiences on multiple data points, but does undertake broader targeting to reach under registered groups and specific demographics, for example overseas voters and students. AM asked if the Commission had been consulted on the change of wording on the nomination forms for standing as a candidate, from 'witness' to 'attest' a candidate recording his or her home address. DB stressed the need for parties to advise people about the change. CW agreed to consult with colleagues and update accordingly. Potential recall petition in Peterborough AS had proposed the agenda item and mentioned the recommendations in Commission's report following the first recall petition in North Antrim. He said that it has been noted there is a tight timetable to deliver any recall petition. CW explained the Commission has been advising Peterborough Council accordingly, to support its contingency planning. The Commission's Enforcement policy AS stated his concerns with the tone of the language being used by the Commission in some regulatory correspondence. DB and AW expressed similar views. DB noted that volunteer treasurers were resigning due to accusatory language being used in correspondence. AM explained many volunteer inherit unfavourable situations and the current tone of communication is unhelpful. AS stressed that the Commission's current approach makes it more likely volunteers won't tell the parties of their mistakes which ultimately impacts on transparency. LE stated her commitment to looking into the tone of letters being issued, in line with feedback from the parties. AW explained his concerns regarding the Commission's current enforcement approach. He highlighted his view that despite having a range of options available, there has been a shift in Enforcement Policy, and large fines are being issued. LE referred to the Commission's Enforcement policy that was revised, following consultation, and been effective from April 2016. LE noted that decisions to impose fines, and the size of that fine, are determined in

line with the Policy and on the facts of each case. AM asked in light of public interest, and volunteers trying to help not hinder the democratic process, if the Commission would review its Enforcement Policy. LE explained the Commission is due to consult this year on the policy and will be interested in feedback from the parties. GDPR text for electoral registration forms AS flagged the issue of GDPR wording on forms and stated his support for informing voters clearly on the form 'your data will be given to political parties'. He highlighted many voters are unaware that even with GDPR rules, it doesn't apply to political parties. CW agreed it is important for voters to know who has access to their data and explained the Commission's canvass reform project will undertake a review of the full suite of form, including the wording relating to GDPR on forms. DB noted a particular issue with nomination forms, where signatories may not realise that their names will be made public. AM suggested as part of that work, the Commission look at the self-nominating election forms used in Scotland. Commission Update Report AM noted that at previous PPP meetings, members had had the opportunity to engage with Commissioners. LE and CW agreed to explore the possibility of involving Commissioners at a future meeting. MT asked for information on the delivering modern guidance project and what would be available to see at user group meeting scheduled for 27 March. CW agreed to update the PPP after the meeting. AS noted that minutes from meetings are now only available for the previous year on the Commission's website. LM agreed to share with him older copies of minutes. DB emphasised the need for the Commission to assist parties and ensure new PFR Online portal starts at the beginning of their financial year (calendar year). AM explained the parties were at the very early stages of thinking about potential legislation to change regulated periods. LE stated the Commission would be keen to have a discussion with the PPP on their thinking Any other business LE explained the Commission would shortly consult with parties on a prosecutions policy being part of the Enforcement Policy. Action Status LM to arrange a meeting with the PPP to discuss draft Codes of Practice. Completed Investigate if the Commission was consulted on the change of wording on home address forms. Update to be provided at 4 June meeting LE and CW agreed to explore the possibility of involving Commissioners at a future meeting. Update to be provided at 4 June meeting LM share a copy of previous minutes with AS Completed

Parliamentary Parties Panel minutes: 4 June 2019 | Electoral Commission Search
Parliamentary Parties Panel minutes: 4 June 2019 You are in the Party panels
section Home How we make decisions Party panels First published: 14 July 2020 Last
updated: 15 July 2020 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Scottish National
Party: Scott Martin (SM) Chair of the meeting Conservative Party: Andrew Steadman
(AS) Liberal Democrats: Natalia Villazan (NV) Darren Briddock (DB) Labour Party:
Andrew Whyte (AW) Change UK: Sian Green (SG) Electoral Commission: Craig Westwood,
Director of Communications & Research (CW) Ailsa Irvine, Director of Electoral
Administration and Guidance (AI) Laura McLeod, Public Affairs Manager (LM) Minutes of
the last meeting and actions arising (PPP 21/02/2019) The minutes were agreed. SM
asked for an update on whether the Commission had been consulted on the change of
wording on the nomination forms for standing as a candidate, from 'witness' to
'attest'. AI confirmed the Commission was consulted on the draft legislation last
autumn and did not highlight any issues with the change of wording. AS noted that the
tone of language being used by the Commission in some regulatory correspondence had
not changed since discussions at the February PPP meeting. CW agreed to feed back to
colleagues. SM asked when the Commission will consult on its Enforcement Policy. CW
explained the Commission is due to publicly consult in the autumn. On the subject of
holding a PPP meeting with commissioner representatives, CW confirmed the Commission
is happy to explore the possibility for the December meeting if parties are similarly
willing to be represented at a more senior level of chair and/or treasurers. Parties
agreed to consider this and report back. Members asked about the membership of the
Commission's Parliamentary Advisory Group (PAG), particularly with a view to mapping
interested peers within parties. LM offered to share the PAG membership list. SM and
DM explained that one year of rolling minutes was unsuitable. SM gave the example of
minutes from the PPP meeting, following the 2014 European Parliamentary election in
2014, showed discussion at the meeting on UC1 forms for EU citizens. DB suggested
five years as a suitable period for minutes to be available on the website. SM asked
the Commission's policy on limiting the availability of PPP minutes on the website.
CW explained this is in line with migration to a new website. LM restated her offer
to share copies of older minutes on request. AW asked for an update on the
Commission's PFR online and modern guidance projects. CW explained work on PFR online
had been delayed by the elections. AI explained the modern guidance system is lined
up with the Commission's website project and transfer over to the new system will be
coordinated in a way that coordinated with the electoral cycle. Post-election review
– May 2019 local elections AI gave an outline of the Commission's public awareness
work for the elections and explained that during our campaign, 570,000 applications
to register were submitted online across England and Northern Ireland. AS
complimented the Commission's campaign and asked when data on duplicate applications
to register would be available. CW confirmed this would follow in the autumn and be
shared with the PPP. CW asked the PPP for any observations or comments on how the new
advertiser verification/registration rules , Google and Twitter worked for the
parties. AW explained they had internal discussions on how to meet the requirements
and didn't have any problems meeting them. Other attendees noted that they had not
had feedback from campaigns/marketing colleagues. pilots and evaluation SM asked how
the pilots had gone and DB highlighted his concerns over voters being turned away at
polling stations. CW outlined the Commission was collecting data from a range of
sources to feed into its statutory evaluation report. He explained that over 170
charities and organisations had been contacted and the Commission would welcome any
feedback from the parties. AW and AS agreed to encourage agents or party staff to

send over any relevant examples. Post-election review –European Parliamentary elections (EPEs) AI explained that the poll being delivered at short notice was testament to the work of Electoral Registration Officers, Returning Officers and their teams across the UK. AI noted the issues with EU citizens resident in the UK and by UK overseas voters, who found they were unable to vote at this poll when they wished to do so. NV asked if the Commission can quantify the number who were unable to vote. AI explained we are unlikely to be able to quantify precisely how many of them were unable to vote on polling day itself. AI highlighted the Commission's post poll reporting would consider in particular the experiences of EU citizens who were unable to correctly register to vote. She explained it will look at what happened in the months leading up to the elections, on where responsibilities lay for enabling EU citizens to vote and what actions were taken. AI welcomed any feedback from the PPP. SM asked if the Commission will be able to identify how many EU citizens registered for the 2019 EPEs compared with 2014 figures. AI confirmed that it would. SM noted the straight forward process in some other Member States and asked about the Commission's recommendations following the 2014 European Parliamentary elections. CW said that the Commission had made the case for making the process easier for EU citizens and met with the Cabinet Office, adding that following the EU referendum the Government was clear that the UK would not participate in the EPEs in 2019 so no changes to the process were introduced. DB asked if the Commission conducted a review of seats for this election, as it normally does. CW agreed to consult with colleagues and update accordingly. SM asked if the problems with overseas voters receiving postal ballot packs too late was due to the late confirmation of the UK taking part in the EPEs. AI detailed this was not an issue which related solely to these most recent elections as at any election postal votes cannot be sent out until the close of nominations for candidates and then need to be sent overseas. CW detailed the recommendations the Commission has previously made to the Government to improve access to the voting process for overseas electors. CW reiterated the Commission's offer of support and help to the parties if needed in preparing their spending returns, particularly with regard to the retrospective regulatory period. Progress update from Parties on joint code of conduct on intimidatory behaviour The Commission proposed the agenda item and invited an update from the PPP on the joint code of conduct. AW explained the parties had met in late March and agreed to work towards a statement of principles. NV explained the Jo Cox Foundation had recently been appointed to act as independent support to the group in to agree a cross-party approach and this work is ongoing. Commission Update Report CW highlighted the Commission submitted evidence to the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee's inquiry on electoral law reform and is due to give oral evidence before summer recess. Any other business No item was raised. Action Status CW to feed back regarding the tone of language still being used by the Commission in regulatory correspondence Complete: Louise Edwards to write to the PPP LM to circulate membership of the Commission's Parliamentary Advisory Group Complete: circulated with minutes CW to update on whether the Commission conducted a review of the allocation of seats for European Parliamentary election. Complete: The Commission did not as the requirement for it to do the statutory review was removed by the Government in legislation.(European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 Sch.9 para.1) Commission to share data breakdown on registrations from the May 2019 local elections Ongoing: LM to share with PPP when breakdown is available Party representatives to advise whether they would be able to be represented by chair and/or treasurer at the 3 December meeting, alongside commissioner representatives. Ongoing: Pending confirmation from

parties. Conservative Treasurer confirmed To be discussed at September meeting.

The Electoral Commission's ability to bring prosecutions | Electoral Commission Search These are the views we set out to parliamentarians before the Elections Act became law. We last updated these views in early 2022. Close alert The Electoral Commission's ability to bring prosecutions You are in the Elections Act section Home Elections Act On this page Changes proposed by the government Our view Further reading First published: 5 July 2021 Last updated: 5 July 2021 Last updated These are the views we set out to parliamentarians before the Elections Act became law. We last updated these views in early 2022. Changes proposed by the government Laws introduced by the UK Parliament when the Electoral Commission was established allow us to bring prosecutions against those who break electoral law relating to parties and campaigners. The UK Government is proposing a change that would stop us from being able to bring such prosecutions. Our view Effective enforcement when the rules are broken gives voters confidence in the electoral system. The UK Government does not consider this to be an area of work we should undertake. In the public interest, in order to fill any regulatory gap, the Police and Crown Prosecution Service will need to work with us to take forward appropriate prosecutions. This means prosecuting the full range of offences, from the lower order criminal offences often brought to light through our investigatory work, right through to the more significant offences. We would welcome the government making it clear in the passage of the Bill that this will be the case. Voters have the right to expect that any political party or campaigner which deliberately or recklessly breaks electoral law will face prosecution. Further reading Further reading The Government's Written Ministerial Statement: Increasing Parliamentary Accountability in Electoral Policy Related content Elections Act about the UK Government's Elections Act and what it means for voting and campaigning About the Elections Act about the Elections Bill, including the measures it contains and which elections it applies to. Changes to legal requirements for parties and non-party campaigners about proposals to change the law affecting parties and non-party campaigners. A strategy and policy statement for the Electoral Commission about the UK Government's proposal for the Electoral Commission.

Results and turnout at the 2012 Greater London Authority elections | Electoral Commission Search Results and turnout at the 2012 Greater London Authority elections You are in the Greater London Authority (GLA) elections section Home Greater London Authority (GLA) elections First published: 15 August 2019 Last updated: 28 October 2019 Download You can download the: full dataset as an XLS You can also download our full report , written by Colin Rallings and Michael Thrasher (Elections Centre, Plymouth University, Drake Circus, Plymouth, PL4 8AA). Summary Local elections were held for just under 2,400 seats in 128 authorities in England. In six authorities the whole council was elected following boundary changes; in the other authorities either a third (115 councils) or a half (seven councils) of members were elected. In 11 cities there were referendums on an elected mayor; direct elections for the new post of Mayor in both Liverpool and Salford; and the fourth contest for the election of the Mayor and Assembly of the Greater London Authority. Some 8,800 candidates contested the local elections, yielding a candidate/seat ratio of 3.6 overall. Just 4 councillors were elected unopposed. The 2012 local elections gave over 15.9 million registered electors the opportunity to vote: 40% of the total electorate in England. Nearly 75,000 electors (0.5% of the total) registered in the weeks leading up to the election under the so-called '11 day rule'. Some 4.94 million valid local election votes were cast at the ballot box, making the overall turnout 31.0%. This was some four percentage points below the turnout at the comparable stage in the electoral cycle in 2008. The proportion of ballots that are rejected at the official count continues to be small. In 2012 it was about one in every two hundred votes cast. Over 2.6 million postal votes were issued -16.6% of all those with a contested election in their ward. In five council areas more than 30% of the electorate had a postal vote; in another ten fewer than 10% had a postal vote. More than two in three (68.0%) of those with a postal ballot returned it. In contrast fewer than a quarter of those electors required to vote 'in person' did so (24.2%). The proportion of postal votes rejected or otherwise not included in the count was 4.2%. Rejection following a mismatch of signature and/or date of birth was much more common than rejection for incomplete information. In a little under one in five of these cases voters returned their postal voting envelopes but failed to include either the ballot paper itself or the verification statement or both. About one half of one percent of electors with a postal vote were granted a waiver to use their date of birth as their sole identifier. Some 16,000 local electors (0.10% of the total electorate) appointed proxies to act on their behalf. The proportion of ballot papers rejected at the count, and of postal votes rejected before the count, was higher at the mayoral referendum than at the local elections in those cities which had a combined electoral event. The pattern of postal voting and postal vote rejection at the GLA contests was similar to that in other parts of England with local elections only. Related content Report: How the 2012 GLA elections were run Read our report about how the 2012 Greater London Authority elections were run Report: How the 2016 GLA elections were run Read our report about how the 2016 Greater London Authority elections were run Results and turnout at the 2016 Greater London Authority elections View the results and turnout at the 2016 Greater London Authority elections Report: Voting in 2017 Read our report about voting at the general election in 2017

You are in the Party panels section Home How we make decisions Party panels First published: 14 July 2020 Last updated: 14 July 2020 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Conservative Party: Alan Mabbutt (AM) Chair of the meeting Andrew Steadman (AS) Megan Tucker (MT) Liberal Democrats: Darren Briddock (DB) Labour: Andrew Whyte (AW) Scottish National Party: Scott Martin (SM) Electoral Commission: Craig Westwood, Director of Communications & Research (CW) Louise Edwards, Director of Regulation (LE) Laura McLeod, Public Affairs Manager (LM) Minutes of the last meeting and actions arising (PPP 04/12/2018) The minutes were agreed. AM asked for an update on the Commission's review of the registers of political parties. LE advised that the Commission has reviewed party descriptions on the Northern Ireland register; the review for Great Britain would now take place after the May polls. AM asked for clarification on the deadline for new parties registering ahead of May local elections. LE stated the deadline was 4 February to guarantee a decision before the May polls. Codes of Practice on election spending by candidates and political parties AS highlighted the practical difficulties in terms of timing that would exist if implemented in April, as May is a particularly busy time with local elections. LE outlined the current timetable the Commission is working to and noted timing concerns. AS reiterated a proposal for a joint meeting take place with the Commission and all parties to 'test' the draft codes. DB noted that there are some common themes to feedback so would be a useful exercise. CW and LE agreed a meeting would be scheduled. Preparations for May 2019 local elections in England and Northern Ireland CW gave an outline of the Commission's public awareness work ahead of the May local elections. AS asked if the Commission micro targets specific groups; CW explained that the Commission doesn't micro target audiences on multiple data points, but does undertake broader targeting to reach under registered groups and specific demographics, for example overseas voters and students. AM asked if the Commission had been consulted on the change of wording on the nomination forms for standing as a candidate, from 'witness' to 'attest' a candidate recording his or her home address. DB stressed the need for parties to advise people about the change. CW agreed to consult with colleagues and update accordingly. Potential recall petition in Peterborough AS had proposed the agenda item and mentioned the recommendations in Commission's report following the first recall petition in North Antrim. He said that it has been noted there is a tight timetable to deliver any recall petition. CW explained the Commission has been advising Peterborough Council accordingly, to support its contingency planning. The Commission's Enforcement policy AS stated his concerns with the tone of the language being used by the Commission in some regulatory correspondence. DB and AW expressed similar views. DB noted that volunteer treasurers were resigning due to accusatory language being used in correspondence. AM explained many volunteer inherit unfavourable situations and the current tone of communication is unhelpful. AS stressed that the Commission's current approach makes it more likely volunteers won't tell the parties of their mistakes which ultimately impacts on transparency. LE stated her commitment to looking into the tone of letters being issued, in line with feedback from the parties. AW explained his concerns regarding the Commission's current enforcement approach. He highlighted his view that despite having a range of options available, there has been a shift in Enforcement Policy, and large fines are being issued. LE referred to the Commission's Enforcement policy that was revised, following consultation, and been effective from April 2016. LE noted that decisions to impose fines, and the size of that fine, are determined in

line with the Policy and on the facts of each case. AM asked in light of public interest, and volunteers trying to help not hinder the democratic process, if the Commission would review its Enforcement Policy. LE explained the Commission is due to consult this year on the policy and will be interested in feedback from the parties. GDPR text for electoral registration forms AS flagged the issue of GDPR wording on forms and stated his support for informing voters clearly on the form 'your data will be given to political parties'. He highlighted many voters are unaware that even with GDPR rules, it doesn't apply to political parties. CW agreed it is important for voters to know who has access to their data and explained the Commission's canvass reform project will undertake a review of the full suite of form, including the wording relating to GDPR on forms. DB noted a particular issue with nomination forms, where signatories may not realise that their names will be made public. AM suggested as part of that work, the Commission look at the self-nominating election forms used in Scotland. Commission Update Report AM noted that at previous PPP meetings, members had had the opportunity to engage with Commissioners. LE and CW agreed to explore the possibility of involving Commissioners at a future meeting. MT asked for information on the delivering modern guidance project and what would be available to see at user group meeting scheduled for 27 March. CW agreed to update the PPP after the meeting. AS noted that minutes from meetings are now only available for the previous year on the Commission's website. LM agreed to share with him older copies of minutes. DB emphasised the need for the Commission to assist parties and ensure new PFR Online portal starts at the beginning of their financial year (calendar year). AM explained the parties were at the very early stages of thinking about potential legislation to change regulated periods. LE stated the Commission would be keen to have a discussion with the PPP on their thinking Any other business LE explained the Commission would shortly consult with parties on a prosecutions policy being part of the Enforcement Policy. Action Status LM to arrange a meeting with the PPP to discuss draft Codes of Practice. Completed Investigate if the Commission was consulted on the change of wording on home address forms. Update to be provided at 4 June meeting LE and CW agreed to explore the possibility of involving Commissioners at a future meeting. Update to be provided at 4 June meeting LM share a copy of previous minutes with AS Completed

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section Home How we make decisions Party panels First published: 14 July 2020 Last
updated: 15 July 2020 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Scottish National
Party: Scott Martin (SM) Chair of the meeting Conservative Party: Andrew Steadman
(AS) Liberal Democrats: Natalia Villazan (NV) Darren Briddock (DB) Labour Party:
Andrew Whyte (AW) Change UK: Sian Green (SG) Electoral Commission: Craig Westwood,
Director of Communications & Research (CW) Ailsa Irvine, Director of Electoral
Administration and Guidance (AI) Laura McLeod, Public Affairs Manager (LM) Minutes of
the last meeting and actions arising (PPP 21/02/2019) The minutes were agreed. SM
asked for an update on whether the Commission had been consulted on the change of
wording on the nomination forms for standing as a candidate, from 'witness' to
'attest'. AI confirmed the Commission was consulted on the draft legislation last
autumn and did not highlight any issues with the change of wording. AS noted that the
tone of language being used by the Commission in some regulatory correspondence had
not changed since discussions at the February PPP meeting. CW agreed to feed back to
colleagues. SM asked when the Commission will consult on its Enforcement Policy. CW
explained the Commission is due to publicly consult in the autumn. On the subject of
holding a PPP meeting with commissioner representatives, CW confirmed the Commission
is happy to explore the possibility for the December meeting if parties are similarly
willing to be represented at a more senior level of chair and/or treasurers. Parties
agreed to consider this and report back. Members asked about the membership of the
Commission's Parliamentary Advisory Group (PAG), particularly with a view to mapping
interested peers within parties. LM offered to share the PAG membership list. SM and
DM explained that one year of rolling minutes was unsuitable. SM gave the example of
minutes from the PPP meeting, following the 2014 European Parliamentary election in
2014, showed discussion at the meeting on UC1 forms for EU citizens. DB suggested
five years as a suitable period for minutes to be available on the website. SM asked
the Commission's policy on limiting the availability of PPP minutes on the website.
CW explained this is in line with migration to a new website. LM restated her offer
to share copies of older minutes on request. AW asked for an update on the
Commission's PFR online and modern guidance projects. CW explained work on PFR online
had been delayed by the elections. AI explained the modern guidance system is lined
up with the Commission's website project and transfer over to the new system will be
coordinated in a way that coordinated with the electoral cycle. Post-election review
– May 2019 local elections AI gave an outline of the Commission's public awareness
work for the elections and explained that during our campaign, 570,000 applications
to register were submitted online across England and Northern Ireland. AS
complimented the Commission's campaign and asked when data on duplicate applications
to register would be available. CW confirmed this would follow in the autumn and be
shared with the PPP. CW asked the PPP for any observations or comments on how the new
advertiser verification/registration rules , Google and Twitter worked for the
parties. AW explained they had internal discussions on how to meet the requirements
and didn't have any problems meeting them. Other attendees noted that they had not
had feedback from campaigns/marketing colleagues. pilots and evaluation SM asked how
the pilots had gone and DB highlighted his concerns over voters being turned away at
polling stations. CW outlined the Commission was collecting data from a range of
sources to feed into its statutory evaluation report. He explained that over 170
charities and organisations had been contacted and the Commission would welcome any
feedback from the parties. AW and AS agreed to encourage agents or party staff to

send over any relevant examples. Post-election review –European Parliamentary elections (EPEs) AI explained that the poll being delivered at short notice was testament to the work of Electoral Registration Officers, Returning Officers and their teams across the UK. AI noted the issues with EU citizens resident in the UK and by UK overseas voters, who found they were unable to vote at this poll when they wished to do so. NV asked if the Commission can quantify the number who were unable to vote. AI explained we are unlikely to be able to quantify precisely how many of them were unable to vote on polling day itself. AI highlighted the Commission's post poll reporting would consider in particular the experiences of EU citizens who were unable to correctly register to vote. She explained it will look at what happened in the months leading up to the elections, on where responsibilities lay for enabling EU citizens to vote and what actions were taken. AI welcomed any feedback from the PPP. SM asked if the Commission will be able to identify how many EU citizens registered for the 2019 EPEs compared with 2014 figures. AI confirmed that it would. SM noted the straight forward process in some other Member States and asked about the Commission's recommendations following the 2014 European Parliamentary elections. CW said that the Commission had made the case for making the process easier for EU citizens and met with the Cabinet Office, adding that following the EU referendum the Government was clear that the UK would not participate in the EPEs in 2019 so no changes to the process were introduced. DB asked if the Commission conducted a review of seats for this election, as it normally does. CW agreed to consult with colleagues and update accordingly. SM asked if the problems with overseas voters receiving postal ballot packs too late was due to the late confirmation of the UK taking part in the EPEs. AI detailed this was not an issue which related solely to these most recent elections as at any election postal votes cannot be sent out until the close of nominations for candidates and then need to be sent overseas. CW detailed the recommendations the Commission has previously made to the Government to improve access to the voting process for overseas electors. CW reiterated the Commission's offer of support and help to the parties if needed in preparing their spending returns, particularly with regard to the retrospective regulatory period. Progress update from Parties on joint code of conduct on intimidatory behaviour The Commission proposed the agenda item and invited an update from the PPP on the joint code of conduct. AW explained the parties had met in late March and agreed to work towards a statement of principles. NV explained the Jo Cox Foundation had recently been appointed to act as independent support to the group in to agree a cross-party approach and this work is ongoing. Commission Update Report CW highlighted the Commission submitted evidence to the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee's inquiry on electoral law reform and is due to give oral evidence before summer recess. Any other business No item was raised. Action Status CW to feed back regarding the tone of language still being used by the Commission in regulatory correspondence Complete: Louise Edwards to write to the PPP LM to circulate membership of the Commission's Parliamentary Advisory Group Complete: circulated with minutes CW to update on whether the Commission conducted a review of the allocation of seats for European Parliamentary election. Complete: The Commission did not as the requirement for it to do the statutory review was removed by the Government in legislation.(European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 Sch.9 para.1) Commission to share data breakdown on registrations from the May 2019 local elections Ongoing: LM to share with PPP when breakdown is available Party representatives to advise whether they would be able to be represented by chair and/or treasurer at the 3 December meeting, alongside commissioner representatives. Ongoing: Pending confirmation from

parties. Conservative Treasurer confirmed To be discussed at September meeting.

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First published: 14 October 2021 Last updated: 14 October 2021 Meeting summary Date: Wednesday 31 March 2021 Time: 9.30am to 1pm Location: By video conference Date of next scheduled meeting: Wednesday 21 April 2021 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Board members: Rob Vincent - Meeting chair Sue Bruce Alex Attwood Sarah Chambers Elan Closs Stephens Stephen Gilbert Alasdair Morgan Joan Walley In attendance: Bob Posner, Chief Executive Craig Westwood, Director, Communications, Policy and Research Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation (joined the meeting at item 4) Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Kieran

Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services Chantelle Shokar, Legal Officer Zena Khan, Senior Adviser, Governance Apologies and introductions Apologies were received from Binnie Goh, General Counsel. The Meeting Chair welcomed all to the meeting advising that Royal Warrants had been received for Sue Bruce, Elan Closs Stephens and Alex Attwood. Declarations of interest There were no new declarations of interest.

Minutes of the previous Board Meeting (EC 20/21) Resolved: That the minutes of the Commission Board meeting on 24 February 2021 be approved. Update on elections (Oral) The Board received an oral update from the Chief Executive, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance and Director, Communications, Policy and Research. The Board noted that we're continuing to engage at a UK-wide level, through national and regional forums and individually with local authority chief executives and election teams. We have started our weekly meetings of the Electoral Coordination and Advisory Board which brings together officials from the three governments, Regional Returning Officers from across the UK and representatives from stakeholder groups such as Solace, the AEA and the SAA. We have been working closely with the Electoral Management Board in Scotland and the Electoral Coordination Board in Wales to support them in their work to coordinate the delivery of the polls, and working similarly with London Elects and the GLA team in relation to the London elections. The Board noted that the Cabinet Office election cell is standing up, and will also be incorporating security issues for Scotland and Wales. The cell brings together the various agencies and departments with responsibility for security, law enforcement, civil contingency, disinformation and the Commission, and seeks to manage strategic risks to the election. The Board noted that we are continuing to work with Royal Mail closely, to understand progress with their preparations and their contingency planning, with weekly meetings in place between Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance and their Head of Elections. It was noted that a meeting was scheduled after Easter Bank holiday for our and their Chief Executive to meet. The Board noted that we had been working with the CPS and the NPCC, and in Scotland with Police Scotland, to revise and reissue our joint guidance for candidates on how to minimise the risk of intimidation while campaigning and how to report if it happens. This guidance was widely welcomed in 2019. The Board noted that as of 30 March, we had taken decisions on all 59 party registration applications received in January, for which we had guaranteed a decision by the end of March. Thanks to a significant effort from the party registration team and assistance by staff from other teams, we

have also taken decisions on 11 more applications that arrived in early February. Two parties were seeking urgent decisions on descriptions they wanted to use in Scotland, which have not yet been taken because of the lateness of the applications they made. The Commission had successfully defended court action from one of these parties. The Board noted progress with communications activity, in particular the 'Got 5?' voter registration campaign, which was progressing strongly against targets, with a total of 405K applications to register in Great Britain in the period 9 to 26 March, and over 37 million impressions/views of digital adverts in a similar period. Plans were progressing well to enable the postcode lookup to function well as a voter resource, with polling station data in so far from c.60% of councils. It was noted that the team was handling a spike in public queries, following the distribution of the voter information booklet in Scotland last week, and there was a continued push by us to generate media coverage to raise voter awareness of the need to register, the options for voting methods, and the safety arrangements for polling stations. Resolved: That the oral updates be noted. Annual review of governance (EC 21/21) The Board received the report as part of the annual review of the Corporate Governance Framework, highlighting changes already taken place and proposed minor changes. It was noted that minor amends to sections of 'Responsibilities of Individual Commissioners' and 'Members attending meetings by video or teleconference' will be reviewed and updated. Resolved: That the Board noted the following changes already taken place: agreed change of name of the Audit and Risk Committee agreed updates to the Terms of Reference for the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee at Annex H, as previously approved by the Board on 16 September 2020 agreed the amendment to the quoracy rules (Commission Board paper eEC 19/21) which was approved at the Extraordinary Board meeting of 4 March 2021 by email circulation, that this will no longer be incorporated into the Standing Orders, following the receipt of the Royal Warrants appointing Susan Bruce and Dame Elan Closs Stephens, by the terms of new standing order 15a, the approved amendment¹ automatically expired before incorporation. There are now four Commissioners appointed under the provisions of section 3A of the Act. Together with the appointment of Alex Attwood as Commissioner for Small Parties, there are eight Commissioners on the Board and the risk of permanent inquoracy has now been averted. Following these developments, the applicable rule on quorum is now standing order A132. Resolved: That the Board approved the proposed minor changes: the paragraphs on the Commissioner's accountabilities to the devolved governments at paragraphs 1.3 and 1.10, delegation of powers and duties diagram at page increased meetings for the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee at paragraphs 2.10 and Annex H10 removal of section on Steering Groups at paragraphs 2.19 – 2.20 now that they are defunct the transfer of Governance and other responsibilities to the General Counsel removal of reference to powers relating to European Parliamentary elections at page 20 the Guidance for Commissioners on claiming fees and travel and subsistence at appendix 4 of the Corporate Governance Framework to reflect the 2021 rates Risk framework (EC 22/21) The Board received a report providing the Board with an opportunity to review the Commission's risk management framework, and consider the headline actions from our risk improvement plan. It was noted that the plan was our response to the recent internal audit on risk maturity. The Audit and Risk Committee have endorsed this approach. That the Board noted the actions in the risk improvement plan. That the Board has scheduled a discussion on risk appetites, linked to the new Corporate Plan 2022/23 – 2026/27. Update on Board Effectiveness review action plan (Oral) This item was deferred to a future Board meeting. Governance matter (EC 23/21) At this point

the chairmanship was handed over to the Chief Executive to chair this item for avoidance of conflict. Resolved: That the Board noted the term dates of Rob Vincent's membership of RemCo from March 2020 until March 2023 and Chair of that Committee. Resolved: That the Board approved the reappointment of Elan Closs Stephens as member of Audit and Risk Committee from January 2021 until January 2024. The chairmanship was resumed by Rob Vincent for the remainder of the agenda. Commission Board action tracker (EC 24/21) The Board received the Commission Board action tracker noting further updates. Resolved: That the Commission Board action tracker be noted. Forward plan of Board business (EC 25/21) Commissioners discussed items of business for future meetings. These would be reflected in the Forward plan of Board business at the April meeting. Resolved: That the Forward plan of Board business be noted. Annual review of schedule of policies (EC 26/21) The Board received the report of our key policies setting out in table form, whether statutory or discretionary, their purpose, the policy 'owner', and when each policy is due for review. Resolved: That the Board was content that the Schedule of Policies had been reviewed and updated in line with the Corporate Governance Framework. Annual declaration of interests (EC 27/21) The Board received the report which shows Commissioners interests and any changes made. This is a regular requirement at the start of each Board meeting. Once a year, a paper is prepared with a list of all declared interests of Commissioners. Resolved: That the Board noted the annual declaration of interests and is content for this to be published on the Commission's website. Registers of interests, gifts, donations and hospitality (EC 28/21) The Board received a paper presenting the Commission's Registers of Interests, Donations, and Gifts and Hospitality. Resolved: That the Board noted the registers and for them to be published on the Commission's website

Northern Ireland Assembly Parties Panel minutes: 29 January 2019 | Electoral Commission Search Northern Ireland Assembly Parties Panel minutes: 29 January 2019 You are in the Party panels section Home How we make decisions Party panels On this page Welcome and introductions Notes of previous meeting on 10 April 2018 Issues raised by the political parties Planning for local government elections – May 2019 Electoral Commission issues Update from Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland Next meeting date – 19 March 2019 First published: 12 June 2019 Last updated: 2 September 2019 Meeting overview Date: 29 January 2019 Time: 9.30 am Location: Radisson Blu Hotel, Belfast Date of next scheduled meeting: 19 March 2019 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting DUP: Lee Reynolds Green Party: Kate Barry Sinn Féin: Gary Fleming UUP: Barbara Knox The Electoral Commission: Anna Carragher, Commissioner Ann Watt, Head of Electoral Commission, Northern Ireland Cahir Hughes, Manager, Electoral Commission, Northern Ireland Roisin McDaid, Senior Officer (Political Parties Liaison) Caralyn Morton, Business Support Officer Electoral Office for Northern Ireland: Virginia McVea, Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland Royal Mail: Rachel Winham, Head of Elections and Political Parties Scott Forsyth, Special Events Planning Manager NI Claire Connolly, Elections Manager NI Apology: Alliance Party, Sharon Lowry SDLP, Catherine Matthews Welcome and introductions The Chair, Anna Carragher, welcomed everyone to the meeting, introducing Rachel Winham, Claire Connolly and Scott Forsyth from Royal Mail. Notes of previous meeting on 10 April 2018 The Panel agreed the notes of the previous meeting. There were no matters arising. Issues raised by the political parties No items had been raised by the parties in advance of the meeting. Planning for local government elections – May 2019 Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland The Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) gave an update on the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland's (EONI) plans for the May local government elections. As discussed at the Panel's last meeting, training of Council staff was a key part of the planning process as many trained staff had moved on since the local government review. The scenario based training schedule had included a masterclass for Council Chief Executives and STV training featuring a mock count. Most councils intended to run their own mock count training, and Chief Executives had plans for count centres in place. The CEO highlighted other training materials including videos on the EONI website. She thought there could be potential to do videos of Royal Mail freepost mailing processes in a similar way. She advised that following the recent review, the polling stations scheme was to be published within a week and reminded the Panel of the recently introduced app showing the location of polling stations for all addresses in Northern Ireland. Following engagement by the Northern Ireland Office on a Fees and Charges Order, a draft of NIO proposals was anticipated in the very near future. One party raised concerns about the closure of local EONI offices and the centralisation of EONI's work in Belfast. In particular the party said that those who needed to hand deliver application forms (for registration or absent votes) would have to travel to Belfast if it was too close to the deadline to post the forms. The CEO said she was confident that the centralisation of EONI offices in Belfast would have little impact on the forthcoming elections and absent voting in particular. The new data management system would offer more flexibility for managing workloads. A centralised absent voting process had been used successfully at the recent West Tyrone by-election and the recall petition in North Antrim. However, she acknowledged that parties would not be able to drop off collections of absent vote applications at the deadline in Banbridge for example, but freepost was available. People wishing to register would be encouraged to do so via the quicker online process. Plans were

currently being considered for dropoff facilities for registration forms to be available at the 11 local councils venues and additional facilities (i.e. kiosk or other IT hardware) to be piloted in mid-Antrim and Dungannon where broadband coverage was limited. If electors experienced difficulties, they would be able to contact the EONI helpline who would be able to send out freepost forms. The centralisation of the EONI's services had followed significant funding cuts. Staff from Banbridge and Newtownabbey had now been relocated to Belfast and it is intended that the Derry/Londonderry and Omagh offices would remain open until after the election in May 2019. The CEO would be happy to engage in discussions with parties to explore issues of concern. Information on arrangements, including how-to videos would be shared via the EONI website and Councils hoped to also use these voter information resources at a local level. Meetings had also been held with NILGA to share information. The CEO was also currently reviewing capacity to hold registrations clinics. The Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) gave the Panel an update on online registration statistics. From 19 June 2018 to 29 January there had been 37,299 online and 13,461 paper applications. The Electoral Commission Public awareness The Commission will launch a large scale public awareness campaign on 21 February with the key message that the public can now register online ahead of the local council elections. The campaign will run until the registration deadline of 12 April and will include TV, radio, press, digital and outdoor advertising. This will be supported by public relations work to highlight key information and deadlines, such as the absent vote deadline, and how to complete the ballot paper. Guidance for candidates on spending and donations The Commission published its guidance on spending and donations for candidates and agents on its website in December. Parties were alerted to possible changes affecting personal and disability expenses ahead of the election. It was stressed that parties should check the website regularly for any updates to this guidance and contact Róisín McDaid with any queries. There was a discussion relating to Brexit and the possibility of a European Parliamentary election – for which the regulated period would have started on 23 January 2019. Ann Watt said that as a responsible regulator, the Electoral Commission had to prepare for a range of possible unexpected events. The Commission would keep the parties updated as and when they knew more. Royal Mail Rachel Winham gave the Panel an overview of the Royal Mail's contingency planning for various potential electoral event scenarios. She explained the structure of its elections operation, with the Doxford team as the hub for elections operations, Clare Connolly the lead in Northern Ireland and main contact for candidates, and Scott Forsyth in charge of overall planning for Northern Ireland and East of Scotland. Rachel talked the Panel through the free mailing process, highlighting the introduction of Streetsort, artwork checks and electronic billing. There would be 11 drop-off points across the 11 council areas with 26 April being the final drop-off day. She also offered as much support as was needed to parties, asking them to contact her by phone. Information on local elections would be emailed to Panel members following the meeting. Pre-election seminars EONI, the Electoral Commission and Royal Mail would jointly be delivering seminars for candidates and agents in March 2019. The Commission would inform representatives of dates and venues as soon as possible, and encouraged party officials to publicise these widely so those standing for election could attend these briefing sessions. Electoral Commission issues Recent Commission publications Report on recall petition in North Antrim On 5 November the Commission published its report on the North Antrim recall petition. The overall assessment was that the petition was well-run with no significant problems affecting voters or campaigners. The petition was the first to

take place across the UK since the Recall of MPs Act was introduced in 2015, and therefore the first time the legislation was tested. The report noted that there was a lot of debate about the number and location of signing venues. Some parties had said that three signing venues was insufficient. The Chief Electoral Officer's view was that three venues were adequate when combined with the availability of postal signing on demand. In the report the Commission concluded they had seen no evidence that more signing venues would have increased the number of people who signed. The report identified a number of practical issues which the UK Government should consider addressing to help voters, campaigners and administrators at any future petition. It had been circulated to all APP members and was also available on the Commission's website. 'Protecting the debate' report The Commission had responded to the UK Government's consultation on the above report, urging the Government to introduce urgent changes to the law so that voters could see who was responsible for online election and referendum campaign material. The Commission had recommended: all non-printed material should contain an imprint new regulations should apply to any online platform, even those yet to developed, to future-proof legislation The Commission should have enhanced powers to obtain information from digital platforms Code of Practice for electoral observers Cahir Hughes said that following the 2018 review and consultation on a proposed Code of Practice for Electoral Observers, a revised Code of Practice had been laid on 19 December 2018 in the UK Parliament and Scottish Parliament. The new Code is more accessible and easier to read and has been strengthened to ensure observers are aware of their obligation to remain politically impartial. There is also an increased period of accreditation from 1 to 3 years. The observer scheme has also introduced an online application system with new ID badges and enhanced security. Further information about the Code of Practice, application process and additional guidance is available on the Commission's website. To date there have been fifty applications to the revised scheme. Legislation to postpone an election to the Northern Ireland Assembly The Commission had expressed its concern to the Government about its recent legislation postponing the requirement to call an election to the Northern Ireland Assembly. Whilst the Commission Board recognise the realities of the current political situation, it wanted to express its concerns about the postponement of an election that is due. New Commissioners The Chair made the Panel aware that three new Commissioners nominated by the political parties had been approved by the House of Commons to serve on the Electoral Commission Board. They replace individuals whose terms had come to an end. Lord Gilbert of Panteg, Chair of the House of Lords Communication Select Committee - Conservative Party nominated Commissioner. Joan Whalley, a former Labour MP for Stoke on Trent North – Labour Party nominated Commissioner. Alastair Ross, a former DUP MLA – Commissioner nominated by the smaller parties. The CEONI extended an invitation to the new Commissioner for the smaller parties to meet her. Update from Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland Schools registration project The CEO told the Panel of her ongoing work to reach young people. She had now been able to access the NI system with unique access to each pupil on the C2K database – which she hoped would help increase the number of attainers registered. She asked for the parties help in her continued efforts to explore how best to reach people with influence over young people. Political finance – statutory return deadlines Parties were reminded of the following deadlines: Quarter 4 - 2018 donation and loan returns to be submitted by 30 January 2019. Statement of accounts for the year ending 31 December 2018 for parties with income and expenditure of £250,000 or less must be submitted by 30 April 2019. Statement of accounts for accounting units with income of expenditure over £25,000

but under £250,000 must also be submitted by 30 April 2019. Next meeting date – 19 March 2019 The next Panel meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 19 March 2019 at 9.30am at the Radisson Blu Hotel. List of agreed actions Action Responsible Royal Mail – Mailing information to be circulated Rachel Winham and Caralyn Morton Submit donation and loan returns for Quarter 4 by 30 January 2019. Party representatives Submit Statement of Accounts up to £250,000 by 30 April 2019. Party representatives Submit Statement of Accounts for Accounting Units as detailed by 30 April 2019. Party representatives

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Board minutes: 25 September 2019 You are in the Electoral Commission Board section Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Apologies and introductions Declarations of interest Minutes of the Commission Board meeting of 26 June 2019, note from the Commissioner Day on 17 July 2019, and note from meeting of Commissioners on 5 September 2019 Discussion on imminent political events affecting the Commission (oral update) Policy development grants scheme for 2020/21 Public awareness plans for the May 2020 elections Business planning 2020/21 – planning strategy and themes Performance report Quarter 1 2019/20 Schedule of Commission Board and Committee meetings 2020/21 Chief Executive's update Forward plan of Board business 2019/20 Action tracker Chair and Chief Executive's meetings and meetings of note in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland First published: 20 January 2020 Last updated: 6 February 2020 Meeting overview Date: Wednesday 25 September 2019 Time: 9:30am to 1:15pm Location: Boothroyd Room, 3 Bunhill Row, London Date of next scheduled meeting: Commissioner Day, Wednesday 30 October 2019 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Holmes, Chair Alasdair Morgan Alastair Ross Anna Carragher Elan Closs Stephens Joan Walley Rob Vincent Sarah Chambers Stephen Gilbert Sue Bruce (Videoconference) Bob Posner, Chief Executive Craig Westwood, Director, Communications, Policy and Research Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation Amanda Kelly, General Counsel David Bailey, Head of Strategic Planning and Performance David Meek, Senior Adviser, Governance Tim Crowley, Head of Campaigns and Corporate Communications Mel Davidson, Head of Support and Improvement Niki Nixon, Head of External Communications (for item 4) Mette Christiansen, Senior Policy Adviser (for item 5) Jess Cook, Senior Communications Officer (for item 6) Apologies and introductions Ailsa Irvine, Director of Electoral Administration and Guidance, gave her apologies. The Chair asked the Board to observe a few moments silence for Jessica Holmes, a valued colleague who had recently passed away. Declarations of interest No new declarations of interest. Minutes of the Commission Board meeting of 26 June 2019 (EC 52/19), note from the Commissioner Day on 17 July 2019 (EC 53/19), and note from meeting of Commissioners on 5 September 2019 (EC 54/19) Action: Amend paragraph 8.2 in the minute from the 26 June 2019 Board to note that the percentage of voters who did not return to vote after being turned away, while small in absolute terms, could still amount to a significant number of voters across all polling stations at an election and therefore affect the outcome. Resolved: That, after an amendment to 8.2, the minutes of the Commission Board meeting on 26 June 2019 be agreed. The records of the Commissioner Day on 17 July 2019 and of the Meeting of Commissioners on 5 September 2019 were noted. Discussion on imminent political events affecting the Commission (oral update) The Chief Executive gave an overview of political events relevant to the Commission, including a new Speaker, the approaching Brexit date, and potential electoral events. There was also consideration of the recent outcomes of referrals of certain individuals to the police. The Director of Corporate and Financial Services provided an update on our no-deal Brexit planning. It was noted that we had calibrated our thinking with the release of Operation Yellowhammer documents. For our own internal operations outside of an electoral event we did not expect to be significantly affected. We had offered support to non-UK European Union staff. One possible area of wider concern for local authorities was supplies of paper in the event of a snap election. The Board discussed contingency planning for an unscheduled UK Parliamentary General Election. We would continue to work with Returning Officers and the Cabinet Office to support their contingency planning. The Board discussed

complications associated with a possible winter poll, including the proximity to the annual canvass, potential issues resulting from bad weather, and the fact that many polling stations were usually located in schools, which might be in session on the day of a potential election. There was discussion of the potential difficulties for overseas British nationals registering and participating in any unscheduled election. We had recommended that Returning Officers contact registered overseas voters to inform them of the advantage of appointing a proxy to vote for them to mitigate any difficulties. The Board discussed the anticipated Queen's Speech and what impact legislation being developed by the government would have on the Commission's work programme. There was an expectation that the new Speaker would be elected in early November. There would also be a new Clerk to the Speaker's Committee. Plans were in place to ensure that both were well-briefed on the work of the Commission, as soon as they were in place. The Board received an update on recent police and National Crime Agency (NCA) investigations of cases we had referred to them. We were following up with the police, the NCA and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to understand better how they had reached their conclusions. In due course the Board might need to consider how best the Commission should proceed in future when evidence of possible criminal behaviour not covered by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act (PPERA) was uncovered. Policy development grants scheme for 2020/21 (EC 55/19) The Director of Communications, Policy, and Research outlined the recommendations made and the associated considerations of timing. Owing to the volatile political environment, further recommendations might be required before the 7 March 2020 deadline. The Cabinet Office had nevertheless said that recommendations now would be helpful. The Board discussed the value of a more fundamental look at the system in the future, including whether providing funding for compliance might be more appropriate than providing funding for policy development. This would of course require new legislation. It was confirmed in response to questions that the political parties, including the smaller parties for whom the grants were proportionately more important, were already aware of our likely recommendations. Resolved: That the Commission recommend to government that they amend the statutory instrument so that: the Independent Group for Change, which currently had more than two Members of Parliament (MPs), be included in the list of eligible Great Britain-wide parties for the coming year the European Parliamentary Election data be removed from the formula once the United Kingdom had left the European Union The Board delegated responsibility on agreeing any necessary further recommendations to government on including or removing a party from the scheme in accordance with the statutory eligibility criteria, for example following a General Election, to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair. Public awareness plans for the May 2020 elections (EC 56/19) The Director of Communications, Policy, and Research noted that this was the usual annual consideration of the plans and budget related to the scheduled May polls. He highlighted the value of a campaign planned well in advance, both for its own sake and to ensure that the Commission had scope to react quickly to any unscheduled polls. The Board heard that the May 2020 media-buying environment would be less complicated than the May 2019 environment as the areas were more closely geographically located. There had been conversations with large social media organisations about their involvement in potential voter registration campaigns. The Board considered the difficulties in collecting information that would assist with decision-making on these campaigns. The Board noted that it was not possible to track the number of voters who took action as a result of our media spend, how many of those who took action were already registered, nor how many of those then went out

and voted. The Board heard that research conducted around the May 2019 elections had found that there was high awareness of our campaign, but that this did not always lead to action by voters. This had been factored in to our brief to agencies in developing the 2020 campaign. The Board discussed the possibility of focussing our resources more in advance of national elections where there was a higher level of public awareness. The Head of Campaigns and Corporate Communications confirmed the continued refinement to the 'Got 5?' campaign, including changing the mix of media (broadcast, out-of-home, social, and digital). The Board noted that our creative and media planning agency would submit three fully costed options as part of the campaign. In response to questions about the merits of a campaign promoting online registration, when some of our target audience could not access online registration options, the Director of Communications, Policy, and Research noted that a simple message that promoted one method of registration was more likely to result in action. Voters who could not access online registration options would be targeted separately through partner agencies who already had relations with these audiences. The Board sought an assurance that there was sufficient provision to influence hard-to-reach groups, including through partnerships. The Board heard that the current partnership strategy had evolved significantly over the past five years and that this strategy was kept under review to ensure the appropriate balance between resource, potential impact, and supporting partners working with hard-to-reach groups. The Board heard that a generic partner pack would be launched during National Democracy Week, to support partner organisations to register voters throughout the year. The Board encouraged continued and indeed increased focus on the harder to reach groups, making the most of existing networks, including schools, colleges and universities. The Board asked whether the level of duplicate registrations had dropped. The Head of Campaigns and Corporate Communications confirmed some progress in reducing this, but it was still a continuing challenge. Action: The Director of Communications, Policy, and Research to circulate the list of partner organisations used in voter registration campaigns. Resolved: That the paper be agreed. Business planning 2020/21 – planning strategy and themes (EC 57/19) The Chief Executive explained why this was being considered earlier in the year for 2020/21, to guide work by the Executive before it became set in stone. More specific, costed ideas would come to the Board in December. He identified four new priority areas for possible extra work and funding: building local authority resilience and capacity, promoting compliance, improving voter education, and responding to government initiatives and priorities. The Board encouraged the Chief Executive to ensure that the Commission's own existing reform agenda was being pushed forward, in addition to efforts to support government reforms. The Chief Executive noted that in the current year we had demonstrated our ability to improve our effectiveness and efficiency, and to maintain projects and work-streams while delivering on unexpected events. The extra resources agreed by the Speaker's Committee for the current year had been an important part of this. The Chief Executive invited each director to explain any possible new corporate initiatives in their area. The Board discussed the four priority areas. This included the initiative to enhance our support work on democratic education and digital literacy. There was also consideration of opportunities from effective partnership working, for example with other regulators. The new priority areas looked promising, including new support for compliance. Nevertheless the Commission should be clear in ensuring the scope and nature of new initiatives e.g. over digital literacy is consistent with the Commission's role and remit. The Board encouraged an approach that emphasised building the resilience of the electoral system. This would allow us

not only to help local authorities directly ourselves but also to promote support for them in receiving the resources they needed to achieve what was asked of them.

Resolved: That the paper be agreed, taking into account the specific points noted above. Performance report Quarter 1 2019/20 (EC 58/19 and 59/19) The Chief Executive explained the details of the new format of the report. The Chief Executive reminded the Board of the changes in how performance was rated. For example, we had reinterpreted red to mean action must be taken in a particular area, not that there was necessarily a major concern across the whole of that area. This allowed a more open approach to problems. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services provided more detail of the rating of Goal Two, and the first quarter issues in delivering Political Finance and Regulation online. We were using agile project management, where we actively tested stages of the project throughout the development of the new system. Progress on the project was now getting back on track. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services provided an update on the budget forecast, which was currently projecting an overspend. He explained that the volume of litigation had been higher than expected, meaning higher associated costs. There was also a further impact from the costs arising from the European Parliamentary Election: more of the spending than anticipated had fallen in this financial year, compared to the previous one, because of the very late confirmation of these elections. The Director said that budgets were being closely managed to compensate for these pressures but there could still be a need for supplementary budget approval from the Speaker's Committee at some stage. Action: The Director of Finance and Corporate Services agreed to provide more information in future quarterly performance reports on the next steps of the projects detailed in slide 22 and 23 of this paper. Resolved: That the paper be noted. Schedule of Commission Board and Committee meetings 2020/21 (EC 60/19) Action: That the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee meeting proposed for 24 June 2020 be moved to 22 July 2020. Resolved: That, subject to the amendment above, the paper be agreed. Chief Executive's update (EC 61/19) The Chair invited the Director of Finance and Corporate Services to comment on the search for an effective formula for funding for the devolved legislatures in Wales and Scotland, given the need to make progress with this quickly. The Director noted that this was under consideration by finance officials in the devolved legislatures, and raised complex questions for them both about the source of the funding, and how it should be accounted for. He agreed that it needed constant and timely attention. The Board passed on their congratulations on the appointment of Cahir Hughes to the recently vacated position of Head of the Electoral Commission, Northern Ireland. The Board discussed the impact of an unscheduled UK Parliamentary General Election on the registration of new political parties. The Director of Regulation confirmed that party registrations were assessed on a first-come, first-assessed basis, and that given the multiple legal tests involved, a six-week notice period before a poll would likely be too short to register a party that applied only once an election was called. The Board noted the outcome of the recent court case regarding BeLeave, including costs associated with the case. Resolved: That the paper be noted. Forward plan of Board business 2019/20 (EC 62/19) The Chief Executive confirmed that the prosecutions policy discussion scheduled for December would be deferred for a short period to allow for a delay to the public consultation on this item in the light of the current uncertain political situation. The Board asked for further discussion of modernising voting registration to be scheduled for a future meeting. The members of the Audit Committee would discuss outside the meeting any contingency plans for the October 2019 Audit Committee. Resolved: That the paper be noted. Action tracker (EC 63/19) Resolved:

That the paper be noted. Chair and Chief Executive's meetings and meetings of note in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland (EC 64/19) Resolved: That the paper be noted.

Northern Ireland Assembly candidate spending 2021 Scottish Parliament candidate spending 2021 Senedd Cymru candidate spending 2019 UK Parliamentary general election candidate spending Overview There are limits on how much candidates can spend at an election, and controls on the sources of funding for that spending. After elections, candidates and their agents have to submit a candidate spending return to the Returning Officer at the local council. The spending return lists what the candidate spent during the election campaign and also any donations they received. For major contests, such as UK Parliamentary general elections, Returning Officers send copies of the candidate spending returns to us. We then make this data available for you to view. Although we look at the returns to monitor compliance with the rules, we can't take further action ourselves if we find inaccuracies. It is the responsibility of the police to deal with any allegations that a return is inaccurate. Spending limits The spending limit for candidates depends on the constituency they are standing in. The spending limit is calculated based on the number of eligible voters in a constituency. The more eligible voters there are, the higher the spending limit. This is why the spending limit can vary greatly between constituencies. The smallest constituency has around 20,000 eligible voters, whereas the largest has over 100,000. Candidates and their agents are responsible for calculating their spending limit, using estimated figures from the Returning Officer. Spending returns The candidate spending returns include the total the candidate spent, as well as a breakdown of how much they spent on things like advertising, transport and public meetings. They also include any donations the candidate received above £50. Explore the data Scottish Parliament elections Explore the candidate spending returns data and download the spreadsheet for the 2021 Scottish Parliament election. Senedd Cymru elections Explore the candidate spending returns data and download the spreadsheet for the 2021 Senedd Cymru election. UK Parliamentary general elections Use our tool to explore the data from the December 2019 UK Parliamentary general election. The tool uses data taken from the spending returns that candidates submitted to Returning Officers across the UK. We publish this information as it appears on the candidate's return so that there is an accurate record of what was reported. Information about candidates' share of the vote in each constituency has been taken from data provided by the House of Commons Library in January 2020. This data may not reflect any subsequent revisions or updates made by local councils. You can also download spreadsheets for the candidate spending returns data from the: 2017 UK Parliamentary general election 2015 UK Parliamentary general election If you would like further information about any of the data included in the tool or our spreadsheets, you can contact us. Reforming electoral law We don't have a responsibility to regulate or enforce candidate spending, and neither do Returning Officers. Although we look at the returns to monitor compliance with the rules, we can't take further action ourselves if we find inaccuracies. It is the responsibility of the police to deal with any allegations that a return is inaccurate. This is one area of electoral law that we want to see reformed. We are responsible for enforcing the rules relating to party and campaigner spending, but continue to recommend that we should also have the powers to enforce the candidate spending rules and to sanction breaches. Find out about other changes to electoral law we want to see. Related content Past elections and referendums Read our reports and view data about past elections and referendums Campaign spending: Political parties and non-party campaigners Find out about campaign spending for political parties and non-party campaigners Donations and loans Find out about

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Report: The costs of delivering the June 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union | Electoral Commission Search Report: The costs of delivering the June 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union You are in the EU referendum section Home EU referendum On this page Summary How the referendum was funded The cost of the referendum Electoral Commission costs Costs of mailings for the designated lead campaigners Regional Counting Officer and Counting Officer costs First published: 10 June 2019 Last updated: 30 July 2019 Summary On 23 June 2016 a referendum was held across the United Kingdom and Gibraltar about whether the UK should remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union. We had a number of specific responsibilities and functions in relation to the referendum, which included our then Chair, Jenny Watson, acting as Chief Counting Officer (CCO) with overall responsibility for the administration of the poll. The CCO appointed a Regional Counting Officer (RCO) for each of the eleven electoral regions in Great Britain. The local government Returning Officer (RO) for each local authority in Great Britain was the Counting Officer (CO) for that area. The Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland was the CO for the whole of Northern Ireland. We were also responsible for overseeing and accounting to the UK Parliament for the payment of fees to RCOs and COs for running the referendum and the reimbursement of the costs they incurred in doing so. About this report and about the referendum About this report This report sets out the operational cost of running the referendum. The objective of publishing this information is to ensure transparency and accountability in the use of public funds in the running of major polls. This report covers: the Electoral Commission's costs, including grants given to the designated lead campaigners the costs of mailings for the designated lead campaigners the costs of RCOs and COs Although we published a costs report following the last UK wide referendum in May 2011 (on the UK Parliamentary voting system), we haven't carried out comparisons between the costs of that poll in 2011 and the costs of the referendum in 2016. The referendum of May 2011 was held on the same day as a number of other elections, which meant that many of the costs incurred in running the referendum, such as the hire of polling stations and count venues, were shared with those other elections. As a result it is difficult to compare the figures in any meaningful way. We are publishing this report now as we have only recently settled the final claims from COs. Completing the claims process took longer than originally thought as the majority of claims were submitted close to the deadline and generated more queries than had been anticipated. As a result, our analysis of the claims was delayed. The announcement of the early UK Parliamentary General Election in April 2017 also exacerbated this as resources had to be diverted – by both local authorities and the Commission – to ensure the successful delivery of that poll. This report does not cover spending by campaigners or referendum campaign broadcast costs. Details of the expenditure of registered campaigners, including designated lead campaigners, are available on our searchable online database, PEF Online , and are discussed in more detail in our ' Report on the regulation of campaigners at the referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union held on 23 June 2016 ' (March 2017). About the referendum Our report on the EU referendum , published in September 2016, provides an analysis of the administration of the referendum. This included the experience of voters and campaigners, the management and delivery of the poll, the regulation of campaigners at the referendum and the provision of information for voters. At the referendum on 23 June 2016: a total of 46,500,001 people were registered to vote 33,577,342 electors cast a vote – a turnout of 72.2% 16,141,241 people voted Remain – 48.1% of all valid votes 17,410,742 people voted Leave – 51.9%

of all valid votes there were 25,359 rejected ballot papers 382 COs set up 41,050 polling stations 107,100 staff worked in those polling stations over 51,500 staff worked on verifying and counting the ballot papers over 8.5 million postal votes were issued to electors, representing 18.4% of the UK electorate, of which 7.3 million (87.6%) were returned there were 123 registered campaign groups, and two official lead campaign groups were designated by the Electoral Commission: Vote Leave Britain Stronger in Europe (Britain Stronger in Europe was the campaign name for The In Campaign Ltd) the Electoral Commission distributed 28 million information booklets to households across the UK View the local totals for all voting areas and the overall result . Referendum total cost and cost breakdown Cost of the referendum The total cost of the conduct of the referendum was £129.128m. Cost breakdown £7.998m in operating costs by the Electoral Commission, including: £1.642m direct staff costs £6.025m public awareness activity costs £0.331m costs of the administration of RCO and CO claims £26.589, relating to the designated organisations: £1.200m grants to Designated Organisations £25.389m in designated organisation mailings and other Royal Mail costs £94.541m in CO and RCO costs including: polling station costs postal vote costs poll card costs count costs fees for RCO and CO services A more detailed breakdown per category can be found in section 3: The cost of the referendum. How the referendum was funded The legislative framework Detailed information about how the referendum was funded Background Legislation enacted by the UK Parliament, the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA), sets out the legal framework for referendums and gives the Electoral Commission specific responsibilities. It also specifies that there will be a Chief Counting Officer (CCO), with overall responsibility for running a referendum. Before a referendum under this legislative framework can take place, specific additional legislation is needed, covering details such as: the date of the referendum the referendum question specific rules for running the referendum The UK Government was responsible for the detailed legislation for this referendum. The European Union Referendum Bill was introduced to Parliament on 28 May 2015 and passed into law on 17 December 2015. Several pieces of secondary legislation were also required before the referendum could take place. This included regulations to specify the detailed rules for the administration of the poll and to provide funding for the Counting Officers (COs) and Regional Counting Officers (RCOs) to deliver the referendum. Administration of the poll The European Union Referendum Act 2015 enabled the CCO to appoint an RCO for each of the eleven electoral regions in Great Britain. These regions were the same as those used for European Parliamentary elections. There were nine regions in England, with Gibraltar included in the South West electoral region, plus Scotland and Wales. Northern Ireland was a single voting area, with the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland as the CO. The European Union Referendum (Conduct) Regulations 2016, which were made on 25 February 2016, specified the rules for the administration of the poll and were largely modelled on those used for the May 2011 referendum on the voting system for UK Parliamentary elections. Funding of the poll The funding allocation for the EU Referendum followed the existing framework established by the UK Government for the funding of both UK Parliamentary and European Parliamentary elections. Under this framework the Cabinet Office calculated a Maximum Recoverable Amount (MRA) for each Counting Officer and Regional Counting Officer within which they could allocate resources as they saw fit, provided that sums spent were necessary for the efficient and effective conduct of the referendum. This calculation of the overall MRA by the Cabinet Office was based on the amount actually spent for the last relevant national poll, adjusted for factors such as inflation and other

increased costs. The European Union Referendum (Counting Officers' and Regional Counting Officers' Charges) Regulations 2016, which were made on 22 March 2016, set out how the MRAs RCOs and COs could recover for their costs in running the referendum. This included both their personal services in delivering those roles and the expenses they incurred in administering the poll. In addition, with the consent of the Treasury, we were able to authorise the payment of more than the MRA if we were satisfied that it was necessary to incur the expense for the efficient and effective conduct of the referendum and the charge for it was reasonable. Legislative requirements, along with directions issued by the CCO, determined some of the costs that needed to be incurred. These included the need to provide staff and venues, and the number that should be provided. COs were able to control other costs incurred by decisions taken locally. For example, some local authorities were able to negotiate costs for the hire of polling stations. We were given responsibility for administering the process by which RCOs and COs were paid their fees and reimbursed for their costs in running the referendum. We were also given powers to make regulations setting out the detailed procedures for that process. We did this in The Counting Officers', Regional Counting Officers' and Chief Counting Officer's Accounts (European Union Referendum) Regulations 2016. In March 2016 we published comprehensive guidance for RCOs and COs on how they should account for their expenditure, and to support them with the process of submitting their claims. In line with the UK Government's previous practice, once we had the statutory authority to do so, we paid COs an advance of 75% of their MRA from April 2016. The purpose of this was to allow COs to meet any immediate pre-poll costs and pay for staff, venues, equipment and other services immediately after the poll. That left the remaining 25% of the MRA for each CO to be reimbursed as soon as their claim was submitted and settled. Also in line with previous practice, we allowed COs who thought their 75% advance would be insufficient to meet their immediate costs to apply for an increased advance (up to 90% of the MRA in total). No CO took advantage of this facility.

Processing of claims As had been the case in 2011, we engaged the Elections Claims Unit (ECU), part of the Cabinet Office, as subject matter experts to receive and process claims from COs for reimbursement of their costs. The cost for ECU's services, which included staffing, accommodation and associated administrative costs, was £0.331m. COs were asked to submit referendum claims to the ECU within 6 months of the date of the poll. This made the deadline 23 December 2016. The ECU was then responsible for checking that: costs had been accounted for correctly the necessary supporting evidence had been supplied the items claimed were reimbursable in line with the guidance we had provided As part of this process the ECU was able to request additional information or evidence from COs and query items of expenditure. The ECU followed the model of three levels of scrutiny introduced by the Cabinet Office in 2014. The three levels were: plain accounts, light touch and full scrutiny. Each level of scrutiny had different requirements for supporting evidence. While in every category a Counting Officer was required to account for their expenditure, those in the Plain Accounts scrutiny category only needed to supply invoices etc. for IT services and payments to staff in excess of £2,500. Those in the Light Touch category had to supply the same information but additionally had to supply invoices/receipts, etc. for the costs of printing and postage. Counting Officers in the Full Scrutiny category were required to supply receipts/invoices, etc. for all their expenditure associated with the referendum. A risk based approach was adopted to selecting which category a CO would be placed in. This was supplemented by a system of random selection. View a full list of the category of scrutiny allocated to each voting

area. Any CO exceeding the MRA was automatically subjected to a full scrutiny review. Once the ECU had scrutinised a claim and all queries were resolved, we were responsible for approving the final settlement and raising the payment of the remaining balance to the CO, or requesting any reimbursement of funds that might be due. Where the final amount agreed was greater than the MRA, final payment was subject to approval by the Treasury.

The cost of the referendum The overall cost of the referendum was £129.128m. This includes:

- Electoral Commission costs
- costs of mailings for the designated lead campaigners
- Regional Counting Officer (RCO) and Counting Officer (CO) costs
- Electoral Commission costs

Breakdown of our role and funding Our role At a referendum held under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA), we are responsible for:

- commenting on the intelligibility of the referendum question
- registering organisations or individuals who want to campaign in the referendum
- considering and approving applications for designation as the lead campaign group for each referendum outcome
- making grant payments to the approved designated organisations monitoring spending on referendum campaigning, in line with the referendum spending limits imposed by PPERA
- providing advice and guidance on the rules to campaigners monitoring and securing compliance with campaign donation, loan and spending controls
- promoting public awareness of the referendum, its subject matter, and how to vote in it
- reporting on the administration of the referendum and referendum campaign spending

Ahead of the EU referendum, we ran a multimedia public awareness campaign to give people the essential information they needed to take part. Our activity, aimed at all voters, began on 15 May 2016. It included advertising, a voting guide, public relations and partnership activities. At the EU referendum, the Chair of the Commission was the Chief Counting Officer (CCO) with responsibility for the conduct of the referendum and for ensuring the accuracy of the overall result. The CCO's role involved:

- a power of direction over RCOs and COs relating to preparations for the referendum and the discharge of their functions
- certifying and declaring the total number of ballots counted and the total number of votes cast in favour of each answer to the question in the referendum
- Funding We are accountable to the UK Parliament for our expenditure. In accordance with PPERA, we are required to submit our budget in the form of a Parliamentary Estimate each financial year to the Speaker's Committee. After review, the Speaker's Committee lays the Estimate before the House of Commons. These Estimates are the means by which we seek authority from Parliament for our spending each year. In accordance with the EU Referendum Act 2015, we were also able to draw down funds for:
 - RCOs' and COs' expenses and services
 - the delivery of campaign information by the designated lead organisations
 - sweeps by the Royal Mail on polling day

These are all funded directly from the Consolidated Fund and are therefore outside the Commission's Estimate.

Breakdown of our total costs

Category	2015-16 (£m)	2016-17 (£m)	2017-18 (£m)
Total Lead campaigner grants	0.000	1.2000	0.000
EC public awareness (a credit is shown for public awareness in 2017-18 due to the receipt of a credit note from the advertiser)	0.802	5.252	-0.029
6.025 EC staffing and operational costs	0.287	1.463	0.223
RCO and CO fees and charges	1.973	0.000	25.389
Royal Mail costs	0.000	25.389	0.000
Total	1.089	127.845	0.94
129.128			

The Electoral Commission is not VAT registered therefore all costs shown are inclusive of VAT where applicable. Further details of our activity, performance and use of financial resources (including detailed financial statements) can be found in our Annual Report, which is published yearly.

Costs of mailings for the designated lead campaigners We had a statutory duty to appoint designated lead campaign groups for each side of the referendum campaign. We

could designate for one side of the debate only, or for neither side if we received no applicants for an outcome or if we were not satisfied that any of the applicants adequately represented those supporting a particular outcome. Registered campaigners could apply to be designated lead campaign groups. On 13 April 2016, we designated: The In Campaign Ltd (also known as Britain Stronger in Europe) as the lead campaigner for the Remain outcome Vote Leave Ltd as the lead campaigner for the Leave outcome

Lead campaign groups have certain benefits in addition to those given to registered campaigners, including the sending of a referendum address to each elector or each household in the referendum area. This is a statutory entitlement under Section 110(4) of PPERA. From the non-voted funds allocated for the EU Referendum, the largest actual expenditure we incurred, excluding RCOs and COs' fees and charges, was for the provision of mailings on behalf of the designated lead campaigners. This covered the cost of delivering campaign materials, not the cost of producing those materials, which the campaigners met themselves. The table below shows details of this cost by campaign group:

Designated lead campaigner	Number of deliveries	Cost (£m)
Vote Leave	44,936,142	12.942
Britain Stronger in Europe (Britain Stronger in Europe was the campaign name for The In Campaign Ltd)	40,760,719	11.739

Details of Royal Mail costs Royal Mail costs We used the services of Royal Mail Ltd as the universal service provider to deliver the designated lead campaigners' mailings.

Funding was provided from the Consolidated Fund for both the Leave and Remain designated organisations to exercise their statutory entitlement to send a referendum address to every household or elector. Final day sweeps and International Business Response Licences also incurred costs. Final day sweeps take place on polling day, when Royal Mail check their sorting offices for postal vote packs that have been posted very close to, or on, polling day. The sweeps ensure that those votes are delivered to the relevant CO before the close of the poll, so that they can be included in the count. The costs incurred in relation to the International Business Response Licence were to enable overseas electors to be able to return their votes on a "reply-paid" basis. The total cost amounted to £25.389m. The table below shows a detailed breakdown of this cost:

Description	Cost (£m)
Campaign mailings	24.681
Administration fee	0.444
Final day sweeps	0.202
International Business Response Licence (overseas voters)	0.063
Total	25.389

Regional Counting Officer and Counting Officer costs The role of Regional Counting Officers and Counting Officers Our Chair as CCO for the referendum appointed an RCO for each of the 11 electoral regions in Great Britain. Appointments were generally based upon officers who had been designated by the Secretary of State as Regional Returning Officers for electoral regions at the 2014 European Parliamentary elections. The RCOs were responsible for co-ordinating the planning and administration of the poll across their electoral region and for managing the collation of the local totals into a total for the electoral region. They were also responsible for reporting those totals to the CCO to feed into the UK-wide result. In Great Britain, appointment as Counting Officer flowed automatically from appointment as local government Returning Officer. Each local authority is required to appoint a senior officer who acts as the Returning Officer for local elections in that authority's area. For the purposes of the referendum in Great Britain, the local authority area was known as the voting area. Each local authority was a separate voting area. In Northern Ireland, the CO for the Northern Ireland voting area was the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland. COs were personally responsible for the conduct of the referendum. The role of the CO was to ensure that the referendum was administered effectively in their voting area. This included managing the conduct of the poll, counting the votes and

transmitting the local area totals to the RCO. COs and RCOs were also personally responsible for the expenditure incurred for the purpose of conducting the referendum in their voting areas, and for preparing and submitting the accounts relating to their own activities. Regional Counting Officers' costs The role of an RCO included planning and coordination at a regional level, managing the collation of regional count totals and reporting those totals to the CCO. The Charges Order (The European Union Referendum (Counting Officers and Regional Counting Officers Charges) Regulations 2016) specified that RCOs were entitled to a fixed fee of £12,000 for their services. All RCOs claimed the fee for their services in full at a total cost of £132,000. RCOs were also entitled to recover the expenses necessarily incurred in relation to their duties. The Charges Order specified the Maximum Recoverable Amount (MRA) which could be claimed by each RCO for expenses, £320,486 in total. Following scrutiny of all claims, the total cost for expenses was £259,445, an underspend of £61,041 (13%). Ten RCOs spent less than their allocated MRA and one RCO exceeded the MRA. Of the total cost for expenses, RCOs spent £151,303 on administering the regional element of the result collation and the remainder (£108,142) on other costs.

MRA Total cost Services £132,000 Expenses £320,486 £259,445 Total £252,486
£391,445 Counting Officers' costs The Charges Order listed what a CO could claim in respect of services and expenses. Overall, the total MRA which COs could claim was £2,078,342 for services and £99,649,604 for expenses, a total of £101,727,946.

Following settlement of all claims, the cost was £2,073,163 for CO services, with £5,179 CO fees unclaimed, and £92,076,530 for expenses, a total of £94,149,693. This represented an underspend of £7,578,253 (7%). MRA Total cost Services £2,078,342 Expenses £99,649,604 £92,076,530 Total £101,727,946 £94,149,693 287 COs spent less than their allocated MRA, 93 exceeded the MRA and two spent their exact allocation. 208 claims fell within a range of +/- 10% of the MRA, while 353 claims fell within a range of +/- 25% of the MRA. We will be undertaking some further analysis of spend compared to the performance of COs to try to ascertain if there is any discernible link between performance and expenditure. Our focus will be on count expenditure and will take into account factors such as: numbers of staff used numbers of ballot papers counted recorded times of key stages of the count process We intend to use this information to help us to identify and subsequently share examples of good practice to support the counting of votes at future electoral events.

Counting Officers' expenses The Order set a Maximum Recoverable Amount (MRA) for expenses for each voting area. An advance of 75% of the MRA for expenses was paid to each CO from April 2016, with the balance paid on settlement of their claim. CO expenses, covered by the MRA, included the costs of providing and paying staff, conducting the

referendum and the count and all the ancillary activities necessary to discharge the COs functions. Polling station costs Expenditure on polling stations includes: the costs of both permanent and temporary venues to house 41,050 polling stations across the UK and Gibraltar at the referendum (£8.308 million) the costs of equipment used in polling stations such as polling booths, ballot boxes, stationery and notices (£1.303 million) the costs of preparing and transporting equipment for use in polling stations (£3.487 million) the costs of printing ballot papers (£2.837 million)

payments made to the 107,100 polling station staff and staff who supervised polling stations (£23.521 million). This includes costs associated with training those staff in advance of polling day Description Cost (£m) Presiding Officers 8.901 Poll clerks 9.307 Supervising officers 1.323 Travel and subsistence 0.858 Training 3.131 Accommodation: permanent 6.455 Accommodation: temporary 1.854 Preparation and transport 3.487 Equipment 1.303 Printing ballot papers 2.837 Total 39.456 Postal vote

costs There were 8.488 million registered postal voters at the referendum. A total of 8.536 million postal ballot packs, including replacement ballot packs, were issued across the UK by COs. 7.476 million votes were returned. The total spent by COs on postal votes was £19.383 million. The average cost per postal voter was £2.28 and the average cost per postal vote returned was £2.59. Expenditure on postal votes includes: the cost of printing and postage (both outward and return – postal voters are given a pre-paid return envelope) (£13.904m) payments made to staff working on the issue, receipt and checking of postal votes, including training (£3.589m) the costs, where applicable, of venues used to house the postal vote operation (£0.913m) the costs of equipment used in issuing, receiving and checking postal votes such as insertion machines, letter openers and scanning machines for checking dates of birth and signatures (£0.977m) Description Cost (£m) Staff: preparation and issue 0.602 Staff: opening and verification 2.953 Training 0.033 Printing and stationary 5.672 Postage: outbound 4.624 Postage: inbound 3.609 Accommodation 0.913 Equipment 0.977 Total 19.383 Poll card costs Poll cards were issued to each of the 46.5 million registered electors at the referendum at a total cost of £15.485 million. Expenditure on poll cards includes: the cost of printing and delivering poll cards to all electors (£15.259m) the cost of payments to staff involved in this exercise (£0.161m) equipment costs (£0.065m) Description Cost (£m) Staff: preparation 0.161 Equipment 0.065 Printing and stationary 2.003 Postage or delivery 13.256 Total 15.485 Count costs The total spent by COs on the count was £12.557 million. The average cost per elector across the UK for administering the count was £0.27. This ranged from £0.20 in Wales to £0.47 in Scotland. Expenditure on the count includes: the costs of venues to house the counts, including venue security costs (£2.889m) the costs of transporting ballot papers from polling stations to count centres (£0.718m) the costs of equipment used at count centres (£0.666m) payments made to 51,000 count centre staff – this includes travel and subsistence and costs associated with training those staff (£8.283m) Description Cost (£m) Count staff 5.454 Supervising staff 2.552 Travel and subsistence 0.098 Training 0.179 Accommodation 2.583 Equipment 0.666 Transport 0.718 Security 0.306 Total 12.557 Other costs The total spent by COs on other costs was £5.195 million. This category includes: costs of staff employed on clerical and administrative support to the CO throughout the referendum period (i.e. not specifically related to the specific exercises covered above) costs of materials and services that could not be accounted for under other categories of expenditure, such as costs of printing statutory and other notices, general stationery, general postage, software licence fees, telephone bills and bank charges Description Cost (£m) General clerical 2.851 Travel and subsistence 0.036 Providing training 0.696 Materials and services 1.605 Nominations 0.000 Translation: Welsh 0.001 Legal advice 0.006 Staff superannuation 0.000 Total 5.195 Counting Officers' services The Charges Order provided for COs to recover an MRA for the services specified in the Order which included conducting the referendum, discharging the COs duties at the referendum and making arrangements for the referendum. The Maximum Recoverable Amount (MRA) was calculated based on the number of electors in the voting area for which the CO was responsible. We had the power to reduce or remit the fee of any COs if we considered they had not performed their services adequately. View our procedure for evaluating performance of services . Fees for services To ensure that payment was related to overall satisfactory performance of the duties by RCOs and COs, including timely submission of accounts, we made clear the separation between claims for expenses and claims for the fee for services. 75% of the CO's specified fee for their services was paid immediately following the poll. The remaining portion of each CO's

fee was paid after submission and clearance of their claim, subject to their satisfactory performance. No CO was considered to have performed unsatisfactorily and therefore none of the fees were withheld. Details of payments made to COs for their services can be found in Appendix B.

Superannuation

The regulations which govern superannuation payments are the responsibility of the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) in England and Wales and of the Scottish Government in Scotland. While fees paid to Returning Officers at elections are pensionable, currently fees for CO duties are not. The current regulations do not provide for superannuation payments to be made in relation to the fees of a CO at a referendum (as opposed to an RO at an election). Insurance and indemnity COs already had their own arrangements to insure themselves against any risks they face in taking forward their statutory duties at elections. In many cases the local authorities' own insurance arrangements for elections would contain provisions enabling cover to be extended to cover referendums. COs were therefore asked to check what cover they had in place. It was recognised that, while the local authority insurance may cover certain risks, COs may also be liable for claims of a type not covered by existing insurance policies. As a result we arranged through Parliament for a specific indemnity for the referendum to be provided to RCOs and COs to supplement any insurance policies that already existed locally. This indemnity would only come into force where existing insurance cover had been exhausted by the CO i.e. all claims should, in the first instance, be met by existing policies. In the event, no claims were made by RCOs or COs under the indemnity arrangement.

Lessons learned

We had hoped that the categorisation of claims and the associated levels of scrutiny would have enabled those COs in the lower categories of plain accounts and light touch, to submit their completed claims well in advance of the 23 December deadline. This would have enabled the ECU to start examining and processing larger numbers of claims much earlier than proved to be the case in practice. In fact, the ECU received the majority of claims in the last few weeks before the deadline. The calling of the early UK Parliamentary General Election for June 2017 also led to time being lost in considering claims. For the period before and immediately after that poll, COs and their key staff were necessarily involved in administering the election. We therefore asked ECU to pause their work in following up on observations and outstanding queries with COs during this period. The large number of claims that exceeded the MRA was another unforeseen factor that lead to a delay in completing the claims process.

Overall 94 claims out of 393 (24% of the total) were in excess of the MRA, requiring RCOs and COs to submit business cases to justify their expenditure. Each claim that exceeded the MRA immediately went into the full scrutiny category, requiring the provision of further evidence from RCOs and COs. Each claim then had to be presented for consideration to the Treasury prior to finally agreeing settlement. As a comparison, at the 2011 Referendum on the UK Parliamentary Voting System, only four RCOs and COs (1% of the total) submitted claims that exceeded the MRA. Although the overall settlement was close to the overall total MRA, the variances for individual COs suggests that further analysis needs to be undertaken by the UK Government to achieve a more accurate allocation of funding for future electoral events. We will review the processes involved in processing and settling claims now that all claims have been settled. We will feedback to Cabinet Office the lessons learnt from this review, to enable them to reflect these in the processes they follow for future elections.

Summary data

Region	Actual expenditure (£)	MRA (£)	Variance (£)
East Midlands	22,383.00	21,845.20	537.80
Eastern	22,670.00	21,845.20	537.80
Region	Actual expenditure (£)	MRA (£)	Variance (£)
London	22,861.00	21,845.20	537.80
Region	Actual expenditure (£)	MRA (£)	Variance (£)
18,137.42	21,845.20	537.80	22,670.00

4,723.58 North East 10,019.00 9,978.09 40.91 North West 55,910.00 45,177.33 10,732.67
Scotland 43,794.00 43,766.05 27.95 South East 36,520.00 19,900.95 16,619.05 South
West and Gibraltar 35,000.00 18,136.96 16,863.04 Wales 38,118.00 24,579.17 13,538.83
West Midlands 22,273.00 19,681.53 2,591.47 Yorkshire and the Humber 10,938.00
7,942.45 2,995.55 Total 320,486.00 259,445.15 61,040.85 Counting Officers' expenses
Counting Officers' expenses Region Funding allocation for expenses (MRA) (£) Actual
expenditure (£) + / - (£) East Midlands 7,170,798 6,524,485 646,313 Eastern 8,613,431
7,922,373 691,058 London 12,023,242 12,865,583 -842,341 Northern Ireland 3,292,686
2,579,076 713,610 North East 4,130,203 3,691,992 438,211 North West 10,937,858
9,661,359 1,276,499 Scotland 12,166,220 9,818,505 2,347,715 South East 12,220,262
11,923,666 296,596 South West 8,371,085 8,006,517 364,568 Wales 4,911,921 4,441,805
470,116 West Midlands 8,315,347 7,461,687 853,660 Yorkshire and the Humber 7,496,551
7,179,484 317,067 Total 99,649,604 92,076,530 7,573,072 Counting Officers' expenses
by category Region Polling stations (£000) Postal voting (£000) Poll cards (£000)
Count (£000) Other (£000) Total (£000) East Midlands 2,676 1,440 1,167 769 472 6,524
Eastern 3,460 1,701 1,451 902 408 7,922 London 5,955 2,346 1,794 2,138 632 12,866
Northern Ireland 1,142 62 422 493 460 2,579 North East 1,411 1,161 552 397 171 3,692
North West 3,926 2,232 1,753 1,311 440 9,662 Scotland 4,210 1,980 1,376 1,864 388
9,819 South East 4,817 2,645 2,325 1,463 674 11,924 South West 3,433 1,722 1,430 964
457 8,007 Wales 2,084 913 753 444 249 4,442 West Midlands 3,277 1,506 1,216 1,013 451
7,462 Yorkshire and the Humber 3,066 1,675 1,247 797 394 7,179 Total 39,456 19,383
15,485 12,557 5,195 92,077 Counting Officers' expenses per elector and votes cast Per
elector/vote costs by electoral region Region Total expenses (£) Electorate Votes
cast Cost per elector Cost per vote East Midlands 6,524,485 3,384,299 2,510,496 1.93
2.60 Eastern 7,922,373 4,398,796 3,331,312 1.80 2.38 London 12,865,583 5,424,768
3,781,204 2.37 3.40 Northern Ireland 2,579,076 1,260,955 790,523 2.05 3.26 North East
3,691,992 1,934,341 1,341,387 1.91 2.75 North West 9,661,359 5,241,568 3,668,627 1.84
2.63 Scotland 9,818,505 3,987,112 2,681,179 2.46 3.66 South East 11,923,666 6,465,404
4,963,110 1.84 2.40 South West 8,006,517 4,138,134 3,174,909 1.93 2.52 Wales
4,441,805 2,270,272 1,628,054 1.96 2.73 West Midlands 7,461,687 4,116,572 2,965,369
1.81 2.52 Yorkshire and the Humber 7,179,484 3,877,780 2,741,172 1.85 2.62 Total
92,076,480 46,500,001 33,577,342 1.98 2.74 Per elector/vote costs by category
Category Total cost (£m) Electorate (millions) Votes cast (millions) Cost per elector
 (£) Cost per vote (£) Counting Officer services 2.073 46.500 33.577 0.04 0.06 Polling
stations (Excludes electors registered to vote by post) 39.456 38.012 26.101 1.04
1.51 Postal votes (Only includes electors registered to vote by post) 19.383 8.488
7.476 2.28 2.59 Poll cards 15.485 46.500 33.577 0.33 0.46 The count 12.557 46.500
33.577 0.27 0.37 Other costs 5.195 46.500 33.577 0.11 0.15 Elector costs by category
Category Total cost (£) Electors (millions) Cost per elector (£) Poll cards
(printing) 2.003 46.500 0.04 Poll cards (delivery) 13.256 46.500 0.29 Ballot papers
(printing) 2.837 38.012 0.07 Postal ballots (printing) 5.672 8.488 0.67 Postal
ballots (delivery) 4.624 8.488 0.54 Postal ballots (return) 3.609 8.488 0.43
Breakdown of expenditure by each Regional Counting Officer and Counting Officer
Regional Counting Officers' data RCO RCO services Count costs Other costs East
midlands £12,000 £13,958 £7,887 Eastern £12,000 £15,750 £14,550 London £12,000
£11,387 £6,750 North East £12,000 £6,933 £3,045 North West £12,000 £33,671 £11,506
Scotland £12,000 £43,766 - South East £12,000 £1,570 £18,331 South West £12,000
£8,076 £10,061 Wales £12,000 £3,307 £21,273 West Midlands £12,000 £9,682 £10,000
Yorkshire and the Humber £12,000 £3,203 £4,740 Total £132,000 £151,303 £108,142
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What we do in elections | Electoral Commission Search What
we do in elections You are in the section Home On this page Before the
election During the election After the election First published: 31 May 2019 Last
updated: 15 September 2019 Overview of what we do in elections We make sure elections
are run well, and that people have all the information they need. We don't run the
polling stations, count the votes or announce the results at elections. The Returning
Officer at your local council does this if you live in England, Scotland or Wales. If
you live in Northern Ireland, the Chief Electoral Officer at the Electoral Office of
Northern Ireland runs the elections. We have a different role in referendums . Before
the election Before the election, we: give guidance and support to Returning
Officers, so they can run the election well give guidance to political parties and
people standing in the election, so they know what the rules are run campaigns so
people know when the deadlines are for registering to vote, and applying for postal
and proxy votes publish information about the donations political parties,
campaigners and other groups receive, and how much money they are spending During the
election During the election, we: look at how well the Returning Officers are doing,
and whether they are working to our performance standards make sure people have all
the information they need to vote, including how to find their polling station answer
the questions people ask us on polling day visit polling stations on polling day, and
observe how well run they are After the election After the election, we: publish
reports on how well-run the election was, and recommend what would improve future
elections publish information about the donations political parties, campaigners and
other groups receive, and how much money they spent publish electoral data including
the size of the electorate, turnout, the number of rejected ballot papers and
information on postal voting

In depth: campaigning at the 2019 UK Parliamentary general election | Electoral Commission Search In depth: campaigning at the 2019 UK Parliamentary general election You are in the UK general elections section Home UK general elections On this page Misleading campaign techniques risk undermining voters' trust The rules for campaigners need modernising for the digital age Tackling intimidation of candidates requires a holistic approach Steps taken to secure the democratic processes must continue What next First published: 21 April 2020 Last updated: 21 April 2020 Overview People were concerned about misleading campaign techniques from across the political spectrum, and bias in the media. We received a large number of complaints raising concerns about the presentation, tone and content of election campaigns Transparency about who is behind political campaigns online at elections is important for people in the UK. In our research after the election, nearly three quarters of people agreed that it was important for them to know who produced the political information they see online, but less than a third agreed that they can find out who has produced it A significant number of candidates who responded to our survey said they experienced intimidation, with a sixth experiencing significant levels. Online abuse was the most common activity mentioned by those who had experienced problems The UK Government and other bodies monitored digital campaigning during the election period for risks to democratic processes from foreign interference and organised disinformation. The UK Government has said that work to examine these aspects after the election is ongoing Misleading campaign techniques risk undermining voters' trust Democracies rely on campaigners being able to communicate with voters. In return, voters need to be able to trust the information that campaigners are giving them. Campaigning at the 2019 election At the 2019 general election, voters were concerned about the use of misleading campaign techniques by campaigners from across the political spectrum. During the campaign period, we reminded campaigners that voters are entitled to transparency and integrity, and called on all campaigners to undertake their vital role responsibly.

Voting at a polling station A voter casting their vote in a polling station Where voters got information Voters got information about candidates and parties at the election from a range of different sources. Over half the people who took part in our survey after the election said they saw campaign materials from parties and candidates. Around a third said they got information from the televised leader debates or online sources. 55% of people who took part in our research after the election said that they got information from leaflets/flyers 32% from a party leader debate on television 29% from newspapers or news websites 24% from social media posts and adverts by campaigners During the election period, voters raised concerns directly with us and other regulators about both printed and digital material that some campaigners were using at the election. They were concerned about the presentation, labelling or layout of campaign material that they thought was misleading, and also about the messaging and content of some campaigns. Public concerns about misleading campaign techniques Public concerns about misleading campaign techniques Some campaigners branded their social media pages in ways that meant it wasn't clear who was responsible for them, or used misleading website links to encourage people to visit their sites. Other examples used edited video clips to present their opponents negatively Information about who was responsible for printed campaign material wasn't always clear or easily readable. Some digital campaign material didn't have any information about its source at all Some leaflets were designed to look like local newspapers. Others used colours normally associated with other parties Some statistics were incorrectly quoted or presented in misleading

ways, and without important context Use of imprints s should include information about themselves – called an ‘imprint’ – on their campaign material. The law already requires them to do this for printed material in Great Britain, but not in Northern Ireland. At this election there were issues with some campaigners’ materials in Northern Ireland that didn’t say who was responsible for them. The UK Government should update the law so that election campaigners in Northern Ireland have to put imprints on their printed materials. There were also complaints from voters in Great Britain because some campaigners included imprints that were not clear on letters or leaflets. All campaigners should respect the spirit of the imprint rules and provide easily readable information about themselves. There is evidence from our research after the election that concerns about truthfulness and transparency are having an impact on public trust and confidence: More than half of people (58%) agreed with the statement that, in general, “campaigning online is untrue or misleading” A similar proportion (60%) disagreed that “information available online about politics is trustworthy” Overall, nearly one in five people (18%) said they were not confident the election was well-run, and of these people nearly half (49%) selected as a reason that “campaigning was based on incorrect information/made untrue claims” When we asked people to prioritise their concerns about the election from a list of issues, two thirds of people (67%) said “media bias” was a problem and half (52%) said “inadequate control of political activity on social media” was a problem We have signalled our concern about these issues before. If voters lose trust and confidence in political campaigning, democracy as a whole will suffer. s, candidates and parties themselves need to take greater responsibility for the presentation and content of campaigns they run and the impact of their activities on public confidence in elections. We cannot afford to miss the window of opportunity between now and the next scheduled general election. There needs to be real change to protect trust and confidence in campaigns at future elections and the integrity of our democracy. It will take governments, parties, campaigners, social media companies and regulators to work together to agree new laws or standards of conduct. We will support this work. The rules for campaigners need modernising for the digital age New digital tools and channels have changed the campaigning landscape in the UK significantly in the last decade. Digital campaigning can be a force for good, by encouraging political dialogue and debate. However, we are seeing evidence that concerns about transparency are beginning to overshadow these benefits. This is having an impact on public trust and confidence in campaigns. electoral law Election law books concerns about transparency Our research after the election confirmed that transparency about who is behind political campaigns online at elections is important for people in the UK: Nearly three quarters of people (72%) agreed that it was important for them to know who produced the political information they see online Less than a third (29%) agreed that they can find out who has produced the political information they see online Nearly half (46%) agreed that they were concerned about why and how political ads were targeted at them The imprint rules only apply to printed material and don’t cover digital material. This is a major gap in the rules that require campaigners to provide information about themselves on their campaign material. The UK Government has confirmed that it will consult on new rules for imprints on digital campaigning. We will help develop these new rules so they provide transparency for voters and are workable for campaigners. The social media companies should make it straightforward for campaigners to put imprints on both unpaid and paid digital material when it is a legal requirement. The UK Government should also set out plans to modernise the rules for campaigners to keep pace with the digital age. The law should tell campaigners

and digital platforms the amount and type of information they need to give to voters, the media, other campaigners and regulators, including to us. At this election, Facebook, Google and Snapchat published libraries and reports of the political advertising run on their platforms and channels during the election. They also required political advertisers to put 'Paid for by' disclaimers on their political adverts. These measures are a step in the right direction and they enabled us to see who is paying to place adverts. But they still don't provide enough information about digital campaigning. Limitations of social media transparency measures and ways forward Limitations of social media transparency measures and ways forward The social media companies each have different definitions of political advertising which do not completely align with election law. They should ensure their policies fit the legal definitions of election campaigning The 'Paid for by' disclaimers don't always make it clear who is behind advertising. Disclaimers should include the name of the person or organisation who authorised the election campaign advert, not just a campaign name or slogan The companies' policies don't require unpaid election campaign material to be labelled as political material, and this means they won't appear in the advert libraries. Their policies should cover unpaid election campaigning that campaigners publish to reach voters and to be shared by others Facebook and Google provide very broad information about where adverts were targeted. They should show which constituencies were targeted, if this is the case. This information should be embedded in the advert itself and in the advert libraries The advert libraries contain ranges of amounts campaigners spend. They should provide precise figures for amounts spent. Advert libraries These measures are voluntary, and not every company that runs political advertising has created special labelling or advert libraries. They should be a legal requirement so that we and voters can see more information about who is campaigning. Social media companies should be required to provide more detailed and accurate data about election campaigns and spending in their ad libraries so we and voters can see more information about who is campaigning. The companies themselves have said that they would welcome clear and consistent requirements for how they should deal with campaign material. The UK Government should set out how it might be possible to achieve this. For example, through the proposed new online harms regulatory framework. But it is not just social media companies that need to provide greater transparency about campaign spending at elections. s should also be responsible for increasing transparency about their campaigning. In 2018 we said they should have to provide more detailed information about their spending after an election. We continue to recommend this and will talk with campaigners about how it could work in practice. The UK Government should include proposals for implementing this recommendation in its planned consultation on electoral integrity to refresh our laws for the digital age. Tackling intimidation of candidates requires a holistic approach Open political debate is an essential part of elections, but there has been increasing concern at recent elections about intimidating and threatening behaviour towards candidates and campaigners. Police in a count centre Police officers in a count centre Responding to intimidation of candidates In response to these concerns, we asked candidates a wide range of questions about whether they had experienced, or had concerns about, threats, abuse or intimidation. This was the first time we have focused on this topic in our survey of candidates after the election. Some told us that they experienced significant and unacceptable levels of threats, abuse or intimidation. Online abuse was the type of activity most commonly mentioned by those who had experienced problems. We received feedback from 776 candidates, representing just under a quarter of the total who

stood for election. Only a quarter of those candidates who responded (27%) said that they had no problem at all with threats, abuse or intimidation More than half (54%) of those candidates who gave us feedback said they had concerns about standing for election that related to threats, abuse or intimidation Three quarters of respondents (73%) said that they had experienced some abuse, threats or intimidation, and a sixth said they experienced significant levels. Some candidates felt there was co-ordinated abuse and intimidation by supporters of other parties or causes The most common type of abuse, threats or intimidation was online (mentioned by 82% of people who gave us feedback), but we also heard reports of verbal abuse and printed material Nearly one in ten who said they had experienced abuse (9%) said it had included physical abuse Data provided by UK police forces after the election shows that just over half (54%) had received reports of threats, abuse or intimidation towards candidates or those campaigning on their behalf. Feedback from candidates "In order to protect our democracy we need to be much more visible in dealing with intimidation and show a zero tolerance for what is at the end of the day election interference and trying to influence the outcome of an election." "It's a more complex issue than it being 'someone's' fault or responsibility. It's a wider social problem encompassing democracy, respect for the democratic process and the undermining and constant hyena like obsession with finding fault and chastising those in public life." Feedback from candidates Candidate survey responses Many candidates told us that they felt supported by their political party or the police when it came to combating intimidation or abuse. The majority of respondents felt well supported by their political party (57%) and around two-fifths (43%) by the police. There was support to help candidates run respectful campaigns and to protect themselves from abuse online or at public events. This included guidance that we published jointly with the National Police Chiefs' Council Crown Prosecution Service and the College of Policing. There were also a number of initiatives that highlighted positive behaviours that candidates could pledge to contribute to a respectful election campaign. During the election, some of the social media companies also provided guidance for candidates about online safety and set up a reporting channel to flag intimidating content. Despite this, nearly seven in ten candidates (69%) said that they did not feel supported at all by social media companies. We agree with the conclusions of a review into intimidation in public life by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) which recommended in 2018 that tackling intimidation of candidates and others needs a holistic approach. It is up to everyone involved in the political process to consider the effects of their behaviour on UK democracy. Political parties must continue to work together with the CSPL on the Joint Standard of Conduct for parties and their members that they have developed with independent support from the Jo Cox Foundation. The UK Government should continue with measures to tackle intimidatory behaviour. It should set out how it intends to create an electoral offence for intimidation of candidates and campaigners, and confirm whether it will place a duty of care on social media companies through its proposed online harms regulatory framework Social media companies themselves should actively take steps to limit intimidatory behaviour online; this includes taking forward the actions for social media companies proposed by the CSPL Steps taken to secure the democratic processes must continue Many people and organisations were and remain concerned about the risks of foreign interference or organised disinformation. Several bodies monitored these risks during the election. What UK Government did in 2019 The UK Government put a coordinated structure in place to identify and respond to emerging issues and protect the safety and security of democratic processes, and

we took part in this group A number of academic researchers and groups studied how people accessed and shared news about the election on social media like Facebook and Twitter. This included monitoring for evidence of junk news or disinformation It is important not to be complacent about these risks and the UK Government has said that work to examine these aspects after the election is ongoing. In 2018, we identified areas where election law could be improved to strengthen protections against foreign interference at future elections. The UK Government should set out how it will take these recommendations forward as part of its planned consultation on foreign interference: The law should be clear that spending on election or referendum campaigns by foreign organisations or individuals is not allowed The controls on donations and loans for political parties and campaigners should be improved, building on approaches for enhanced due diligence and risk assessment used in financial regulation We will work with the government to consider how these proposed laws could be enforced and ensure they do not have a disproportionate impact on free speech. What next? What next? Read about how the 2019 general election was run Find out what we're doing to make digital campaigning more transparent Or, go back and read our overview Related content Report overview: 2019 UK Parliamentary general election Read our full report on the 2019 UK Parliamentary general election. Find out how it was run, voters' experience, candidates' experience, challenges faced, and how they'll be addressed In depth: delivering the 2019 UK Parliamentary general election Take an in depth look at how the 2019 UK Parliamentary general election was run. Find out about the experience for voters and electoral administrators Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run Results and turnout at the 2017 UK general election View the results and turnout at the 2017 general election

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11 October 2018 Minutes: Wales Electoral Coordination Board 5 March 2018 Minutes:
Wales Electoral Coordination Board 9 November 2017 First published: 28 November 2019
Last updated: 26 October 2021 Wales Electoral Coordination Board The Wales Electoral
Coordination Board (WEBCB) was set up as a result of our report on the National
Assembly for Wales elections in 2016. The Board co-ordinates the planning of all
Wales electoral events, activity, electoral modernisation and reform and helps
collaboration between Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and key
partners in Wales. Wales Electoral Coordination Board Read the terms of reference for
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Scottish Parliament Political Parties Panel Minutes: 22 January 2020 | Electoral Commission Search Scottish Parliament Political Parties

Panel Minutes: 22 January 2020 You are in the Party panels section Home How we make decisions Party panels On this page Minutes of previous meeting Feedback on the UK Parliamentary General Election Scottish Government update Scotland Office update Scotland Boundary Commission update EMB update All Scotland polling scheme Electoral Commission update Date of next meeting Action items First published: 19 June 2020 Last updated: 6 July 2020 Meeting overview: Date: 22 January 2020 Time: 2pm Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Scottish Green Party: John Hardy (Chair) Scottish Liberal Democrats: Paul Moat Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party: Matt Edmonds Scottish National Party: Scott Martin Scottish Labour Party: Michael Sharpe Scottish Boundary Commission: Isabel Drummond-Murray Scottish Government: James Newman Electoral Management Board for Scotland: Chris Highcock Scottish Assessors Association: Pete Wildman, Chair of the Electoral Registration Committee Scotland Office: Craig Chalcraft The Electoral Commission: Dame Susan Bruce, Electoral Commissioner, Scotland Andy O'Neill, Head of the Electoral Commission, Scotland Martin McKeown, Senior Adviser, Elections & Mette Christensen, Senior Policy Advisor Lindsey Hamilton, Business Support Officer (Minutes) Apologies for absence: Kate Crawford, Scottish Assessors Association Alasdair Morgan, Electoral Commissioner Maria McCann, Scottish Government Introduction: The Chairperson John Hardy (JH) welcomed those present to the meeting and introductions were made. Andy O'Neill (AON) intimated apologies from those unable to attend. Minutes of previous meeting The minutes from the previous meeting held on 7 June 2019 were approved. There were no action points outstanding. Feedback on the UK Parliamentary General Election The PPP discussed the conduct of the UK Parliamentary election held in December 2019. The aim was to identify areas where improvements might be made. The following areas were highlighted: Chris Highcock (CH) confirmed the recommendations the EMB made to Returning Officers with a view to achieving consistency in delivery and certainty for voters around e.g. dates for the publication of the notice of poll, issue of poll cards and postal votes; Scott Martin (SM) noted that the Early Parliamentary General Election Act 2019 had been amended to avoid any specific issues related to the St Andrew's Day Bank holiday in Scotland; (SM) commented that if the UK Parliamentary election had been held a week earlier, no delay to the publication of the electoral register would have been required. Pete Wildman (PW) replied that software very much drove what could be produced ahead of elections and this was a body of work to look at. Action 4.1 (SM) confirmed he would provide (PW) with information on this. CH noted that candidate meetings hosted by ROs had fewer attendees but felt this was due to experienced election agents. PW noted not as many calls had been received following the distribution of postal vote rejection notices after the election. CH advised that he had fed back from Police Scotland that their offer to hold security briefings for candidates had low uptake and this might have been because the offer was not made early enough. Permission from candidates had to be sought through ROs and it was suggested a form could be included in the nomination pack. The parties agreed this was a good idea. Action 4.2 AON advised that the Commission would look at including such a form in Nomination Packs for future elections if there was a demand for it; Matt Edmonds (ME) reported issues with delivery of election communication but said they would raise directly with Royal Mail. This was probably due to the level of mail already being handled at that time of year; SM advised that the Electoral Commission candidate spending form did not clarify a donation is over £50 (i.e. £50.01) and said some councils had been issuing old-style returns. SM agreed to email

the Electoral Commission on issues with the form. It was agreed that any actions for improvement be fed back and considered by relevant bodies. Scottish Government update James Newman (JN) provided updates on:- the passage of the Scottish Elections (Franchise and Representation) Bill including amendments accepted at Stage 2; the passage of the Scottish Elections (Reform) Bill which will have its Stage 1 debate on 6 February 2020; the imminent Royal Assent of the Referendums (Scotland) Act 2020; The laying of the Regulations in relation to canvass reform in Scotland, including regulations to facilitate data testing by EROs; Progress of the procurement exercise in relation to the e-counting solution for the 2022 Scottish Council elections. Scott Martin (SM) indicated that it looked as if the election return provisions of the Scottish Elections (Reform) Bill had been drafted on the basis that the election expenses section in the Local Electoral Administration and Registration Services Act 2006 had been commenced, when it hadn't. SM asked JN what the intentions were in relation to that. Noted. Action 5.1 (SM) confirmed he would email (JN) with further details on this. Scotland Office update Craig Chalcraft (CC) reported on the UK Government's legislative programme which includes various elements related to electoral law, including plans to repeal the Fixed Term Parliaments Act was being progressed and introduce an ID requirement for elections under the remit of the UK Parliament. Noted. Scottish Boundary Commission update Isabel Drummond-Murray (ID-M) updated on the boundary provisions in the Scottish Elections (Reform) Bill. These included number of councillors per ward which she and (SM) discussed. She commented that the proposal for 5 year electoral terms has implications for review scheduling. Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland were currently conducting a review of the Scottish Parliament constituency boundary between Glasgow Provan and Coatbridge and Chryston constituencies and the Scottish Parliament region boundary between Glasgow and Central Scotland regions at Cardowan by Stepps. (ID-M) reported it would go to the minister in the next couple of months. The proposed changes will allow the SP constituency and regional boundaries to be aligned with the council area boundary in time for the next Scottish Parliament elections in May 2021. Noted. EMB Update (PW) said the increase in the electorate was welcome but brought challenges and lessons learned included taking steps to ensure software could handle the increase. He reported the 5 year postal vote signature refresh had commenced on 20 January. Under the new canvass rules there would be only one communication to households where there were no changes and work was ongoing to allow foreign nationals to be able to register. CH reported the focus had been on the results rather than process. Referendum Bill – draft guidance for electoral administration was to begin shortly. Polling place and polling district reviews in the last 18 months. There were a few by-elections upcoming including Clackmannanshire and Dumfries and Galloway. The tender for e-counting had taken effort and mental space, particularly local government. Ensure in good position – potential change 2021 SP elections – complexity and constituency and regional element. Starting to work on comments. Matt Edmonds (ME) asked if the ready reckoner spreadsheet could be updated as the existing one was running out. Action 8.1 (CH) confirmed he would supply a new one. All Scotland polling scheme SM spoke to his papers which related to the potential development of an all Scotland Polling Scheme. (CH) and (PW) said they would discuss a bit more with relevant agencies to consider how to put in place and said there would be a bit of work involved in setting up, hosting and maintaining it. The other political parties felt it would be useful as discrepancies between Scottish Parliament, UK Parliament and local government boundaries exist. Action 9.1 (SM) would provide drafts of what it could look like. Electoral Commission update Andy

O'Neill (AON) said the Electoral Commission had been planning for 2021 Scottish Parliament elections. He referenced links to 4 reports which had been circulated prior to the meeting, in particular that of ballot paper ordering at Scottish council elections. He said concerns had been received from disability organisations and there was a desire for consistency of approach. Scottish Government had been looking at the merits of piloting ballot paper ordering and the Electoral Commission was ready to be asked to do something if required. Martin McKeown (MMcK) provided an update on progress made by the Commission to develop Codes of Practice on spending for candidates and political parties. Codes for elections under the remit of UK Parliament were submitted to the Cabinet Office and the Commission was considering feedback received. A consultation exercise on Codes for devolved Welsh elections was due to close shortly. Draft Codes for devolved Scottish elections will be drafted and a consultation commenced in due course. The intention is to have Codes in place for the 2021 Scottish Parliamentary elections and the Electoral Commission will work with Scottish Government to achieve this aim. SM suggested it might be possible to combine the candidate and party Codes. Mette Christensen (MC) advised that the Electoral Commission is looking at ways to improve the way that spending is reported at elections and referendums. This is following the recommendations for changes to the reporting rules that the Commission made in their Digital Campaigning report. The parties agreed that Commission staff could speak to them later this year in order to get their input on the recommendations. MMcK further provided an update on progress to redevelop the Commission's online portal to improve the user experience. The intention is to roll out the new system by January 2021. Training will be provided to users after summer 2020. MMcK provided an update on the publication of revised performance standards for electoral registration officers in Great Britain. The consultation closes on 31 March 2020. PPP members had been issued with a copy of the consultation documentation. Dates for meetings in 2020/21 Action 11 AON advised a list of dates would be circulated. Action items Action Items Owner(s) Deadline 4.1 Scott Martin ASAP 4.2 Andy O'Neill ASAP 5.1 Scott Martin ASAP 8.1 Chris Highcock ASAP 9.1 Scott Martin ASAP 11 Andy O'Neill ASAP

Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal three | Electoral Commission Search

Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal three You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 On this page Key achievements Performance measures First published: 30 June 2020 Last updated: 17 August 2020 Goal three To be an independent and respected centre of expertise, using knowledge and insight to further the transparency, fairness and efficiency of our democratic system, and help adapt it to the modern, digital age. This area of work focuses on innovation and strengthening our evidence base. Our expertise in policy, research and communications are core to enabling this work. Key achievements To contribute to innovation and strengthening our evidence base, we: reported on the three sets of elections and two recall petitions from 2019 and made recommendations to help improve future events reported on the accuracy and completeness of the electoral registers in the UK evaluated the UK Government's pilot schemes testing polling station voter ID in parts of England at the May 2019 local elections provided the Scottish and Welsh governments and parliaments with independent expert advice on legislative and policy changes arising from their respective electoral reform agendas assessed the impact on voters of any changes to the ordering of candidates on ballot papers for Scottish council elections, at the request of the Scottish Government published feasibility studies on options for modernising electoral registration provided oral evidence to three UK Parliament committees and written evidence to two House of Lords select committees provided written evidence to three National Assembly for Wales committees and gave oral evidence on two occasions provided written evidence on three bills to two Scottish Parliament committees and gave oral evidence on three occasions Performance measures Measures Performance Delivering a project to understand the landscape of public democratic engagement in the UK Achieved 1 Deliver a project to develop and explore the feasibility of proposals to modernise electoral registration and meet voters' needs and expectations in our digital society. Achieved Publish our evaluation and response to the 2019 voter ID pilots Achieved Work in support of the electoral law reform recommendations from the England and Wales, Scotland and the Northern Ireland Law Commissions Ongoing Innovation and strengthening our evidence base We provided expert advice and support to the Scottish and Welsh governments and parliaments, to help with their electoral reform agendas. This included extending the franchise for their elections to younger people in Wales and new categories of electors in both countries. We advised on proposals and draft legislation and our input helped to ensure these would work in practice. We evaluated the UK Government's ID pilots, which took place during the local elections in parts of England in May 2019. Our independent assessment will help the UK Government to assess the accessibility and security of different approaches, before introducing any requirement to show ID in polling stations across Great Britain. Our major studies into the accuracy and completeness of the electoral registers are the only UK studies on this topic. Many people use these findings and they provide evidence to inform the policy and legislative changes governments need to make to modernise our electoral registration systems. They are also a vital resource to inform our own and other organisations' efforts to target public awareness work to increase voter registration. The latest study found that while the proportion of people registered to vote remains largely stable, young people and private renters are still less likely to be correctly registered, and overall levels of accuracy and completeness remain in need of further improvement. We published feasibility studies that explore different ways public data could improve the registration system and how reforms to processes could work in

practice. This gives governments a starting point to make the types of changes that would address pressures on electoral administrators' resources as well as making it easier for individuals to register. We are using the outcomes from these studies to inform and encourage a wider policy debate about the future of electoral registration, and to support our own policy development work. In Scotland, we carried out research to assess the impact on voters of any changes to the ordering of candidates on ballot papers for council elections. Our final report to the Scottish Government provides it with an evidence base to consider the impact of any changes on voters, electoral administrators and political parties. We continued working to identify and make the case for ways to simplify, modernise and consolidate electoral law, including implementing the Law Commissions' recommendations, made initially in their 2016 report and given final weight in their closing report this year. We gave evidence to parliamentary committees to ensure our expert analysis about elections and regulation would inform their work. In the UK Parliament, this included the Digital, Culture, Sport and Media Committee inquiry on disinformation; the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee inquiry on electoral law; and the Exiting the European Union Committee on rules for any future citizens' assembly and referendum. We also gave evidence to the House of Lords select committees on Democracy and Digital Technologies and on the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013. In the National Assembly for Wales, we gave evidence to the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee on the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill, and to the Assembly Electoral Reform Committee's inquiry into electoral systems and boundaries, and the Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee on the Senedd and Elections (Wales) Bill. In the Scottish Parliament, we gave evidence to the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee on the Scottish Elections (Franchise and Representation) Bill and the Scottish Elections (Reform) Bill. We also gave evidence to the Finance and Constitution Committee on the Referendums (Scotland) Bill. Report navigation links Previous Next Performance analysis: Goal two Performance analysis: Goal four 1. We focussed on identifying gaps in youth democratic engagement initiatives. We delivered the project as we had scoped it and in 2020-21, we will start new projects based on the findings, including a project to develop education resources. ■ Back to content at footnote 1 Related content Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 Read our annual report and accounts for 2019/20, including key figures about the year at a glance. Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal one This is goal one of the performance analysis section of our annual report and accounts Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal two This is goal two of the performance analysis section of our annual report and accounts Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal four This is goal four of the performance analysis section of our annual report and accounts

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Any other business Date of the next meeting Actions First published: 29 August 2019
Last updated: 2 September 2019 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting
Conservative Party: Andrew Stedman, Compliance Manager Labour: Margaret Lynch,
Compliance Manager Mike Creighton, Director of Audit and Risk Management Liberal
Democrats: David Allworthy, Head of Compliance and Constitutional Support Darren
Briddock Plaid Cymru: Elin Roberts, Plaid Cymru Scottish National Party (Chair):
Scott Martin, Scottish National Party UK Independence Party: Matthew Richardson,
Secretary Electoral Commission: Peter Wardle, Chief Executive Andrew Scallan,
Director of Electoral Administration Alex Robertson, Director of Communications Bob
Posner, Director of Party and Election Finance and Legal Counsel Mazda Khatun,
Communications Officer Law Commission: Nicholas Paines QC Henni Ouahes David Connolly
Gethin Thomas Minutes, and actions of the meeting and matters arising (ECPPP
25/11/2014) The minutes from 25/11/2014 were agreed with no clarifications sought or
noted. There were no other matters arising from the minutes. Darren Briddock (DB)
asked for the Electoral Commission to check its mailing list for PPP members, as he
was not receiving messages or meeting invitations. Action: MK to check PPP members
mailing list and update as necessary. David Allworthy (DA) enquired about what had
happened with the Guide for Canvassers, discussed at the previous meeting. Andrew
Scallan (AS1) agreed to circulate the guide to PPP members. Action: AS to send Guide
for Canvassers to PPP members. DB also raised concerns that spending reports
submitted during the campaign period of Sundays to the Electoral Commission office
would not be passed on to the right team in time to ensure that they met the
deadlines. BP reminded the PPP that the online system is always available and gave
assurances that the Electoral Commission is confident that if documents are dropped
off at the Electoral Commission's reception, they are 'delivered to the Electoral
Commission' and will be passed on to the right team. BP also thanked all PPP members
for agreeing the dates of their Policy Development Grant audits now. Law Commission
consultation Andy Stedman (AS2) began by praising the Law Commission's consultation
paper on electoral law reform and asked about common data format which EROs use, but
would also be useful for political parties to have. Nicholas Paines (NP) noted the
remark and went on to outline the role of the Law Commission. He stated that the
electoral law reform project had begun in 2011 with scoping studies which concluded
that the project was necessary and that its focus would be on technical aspects of
law, rather than those matters such as franchise which are political matters. He
noted that the consultation ends on 31 March 2015 and urged PPP members to respond to
the consultation. He further stated that the hope was to have the new statutes on the
books by 2020 elections, which required the report and draft Bill to be published by
2017. Henni Ouahes (HO) then outlined some of the problems with the current
legislative framework e.g. its volume and fragmented nature. He stated that the aim
is to rationalise the law. He also raised the specific issue of regulation of
campaigners handling postal votes and urged PPP members to respond on this matter to
the consultation. Mike Creighton (MC) stated that current postal vote applications
are not sufficiently clear on how long the postal vote is valid or give options for
opting-in for a postal vote in all elections. The wording on the forms produced by
the Electoral Commission goes some way to assist voters but the legislative provision

of applications for a particular election rather than a particular day for non-permanent postal voters was the problem. Scott Martin (SM) enquired about whether a single Bill containing electoral law would work across devolved legislatures too. NP responded that there is no confirmed policy on this matter, but was something that the Law Commission was looking into. He stated that the project was sensitive to the opinions of the nations and started from a point of accepting devolved arrangements as a given which the project would not interfere with. HO confirmed that separate Bills reflecting the legislative competence of devolved legislatures, may well be the final position. IER AS1 highlighted that the Electoral Commission's analysis of 1 December 2014 registers in England and Wales had been outlined in the written update provided to the PPP. Alex Robertson (AR) added that political parties could get involved with the public awareness raising campaign and would receive more information on this. MC stated that a complaint had been made against the Labour Party to the police concerning their 'How Many of Me' website. He explained that they were confident that the website was an appropriate use of the electoral register as allowed by law. In response to a question about whether there would be regular updates on the quality of electoral registers AS1 said that the Electoral Commission's next report would be published in April 2015 and would be about registers in Scotland. The report on IER in Great Britain would be published in June 2015. He reiterated that issues with data about registers had precluded full analysis and that the data might be too unreliable to use as a basis for answering complex questions. He also said that the Cabinet Office was working differently with the Electoral Commission and the suppliers now, and the data will now go through a testing and development stage which should resolve the issues which had been encountered. PW added that although monthly updates on the register might be desirable, the risks of providing updates that might be based on unreliable data were not resolvable without a great deal of additional work, which the Electoral Commission was unable to carry out on a regular basis. He also said that EROs were working hard to register people locally, but if there were concerns about registers at a local level, then the ERO should be contacted. He noted that the Electoral Commission was monitoring the work of EROs e.g. making sure that the household notification letter (HNL) was being sent and that the HNL was already having a positive impact on registration as evidenced by what EROs were saying. SM enquired whether early data would be available for Scotland registers, before the April report. PW replied that interrogation of the raw data was needed before it could be reported on. MC raised concerns that data quality could be so bad, especially so close to the general election. PW assured MC that while the raw data may be unreliable, the Electoral Commission works on the data so that it is as reliable as possible once it is included in the reports and that these issues did not impact on the ability of people to register. AS2 noted that his experience this year was that registers had been supplied in a timely manner and there had not been a repeat of the delays which had characterised previous years. Postal vote sampling MC raised the issue of permissibility of postal vote sampling as outlined in Section 66 of the Representation of the People Act 1983. AS1 confirmed that the Electoral Commission had looked at its guidance in light of the request to do so by the Labour Party but in its view, the guidance was correct. He noted that there was an ongoing case in Scotland that police were looking into; Bob Posner (BP) stated that the police were looking at the evidence as a basis for their investigations. MC stated the Electoral Commission's guidance does not touch on sampling of postal votes and that it was the opinion of their legal counsel that sampling was not precluded by Section 66. He

urged the Electoral Commission to take action now to prevent the possibility of police being called to counts, as the Labour Party would not advise campaigners they should not undertake this activity which he believes is important for maintaining confidence in elections. AS1 responded that Electoral Commission guidance was based on considered legal opinion and that they could explain more fully why this line has been taken. MC stated that criminal law is not open to interpretation and focused on the wording of the law, and asked the Electoral Commission to look again at its guidance. PW said that the Electoral Commission would consider the parties' request for its guidance to be clearer in relation to sampling; and would share any updated guidance as soon as possible. He noted, however, that he could not offer the parties any comfort that the effect of the Electoral Commission's guidance would change as a result of this further consideration. However, he said that the Electoral Commission would explain its reasoning. Action: Electoral Commission will share with the parties the outcome of its consideration of the issue. Matthew Richardson (MR) asked whether political parties should seek further legal opinions on the matter, or seek a Declaratory Relief from the High Court. PW suggested that the first step should be for the Electoral Commission to follow up as set out above. As with all Electoral Commission guidance in this area, parties and Returning Officers were able to take their own advice and form their own view, and the Electoral Commission accepted this. However, the Electoral Commission aimed to produce definitive and clear guidance wherever possible. Mass mailings AS1 advised that if any parties intend to do mass mailings in a region or nationally, the Electoral Commission is available to review the materials to check content and formatting and encouraged them to make contact. Should parties seek to do these on a local basis, they are advised to contact the local ERO. International observers AS flagged that he had met with the OSCE-ODIHR which was considering whether to send observers to the general election. Third party campaigners DA said that the inter-action of the third party campaigning rules and Section 75 of the RPA 1983 is not clear. He asked whether the Lord Hodgson review would be covering this. BP responded that the terms of reference of the review do not seem to include this aspect and the PPP members may wish to flag this to the Cabinet Office. DA reported that breaches of Section 75 had already been encountered and that he had instructed people to report these instances to the Electoral Commission rather than the police. He raised concern that campaigners could be issuing materials without disclosing who they really represent. He also stated that in Somerset he had been told that one of the instances he had recorded there was no offence as it was not covered in legislation. AS2 also asked how the Electoral Commission was contacting third party campaigners to explain to them their responsibilities. BP reported that the Electoral Commission had undertaken a significant amount of activity on this point before the Act was implemented and that following the May elections the Electoral Commission would report on how the new regime had worked. DB further enquired as to whether small local organisations were likely to understand that they might exceed the spending limits and therefore should register with the Electoral Commission. BP responded that the Electoral Commission undertakes monitoring work but also relies on people to bring additional instances to its attention so that necessary action can be taken. DA asked whether further guidance could be issued so that it is clear what is relevant to candidates and what is not. Action: Electoral Commission to continue to use its bulletin to nonparty campaigners to remind on current issues. Any other business Campaign imprints MC reported that he had been told by the Met Police that they have a standard letter to caution those that have not adhered to law on campaign imprints and sought assurances

that the police and Electoral Commission would not take contradictory actions on cases, given that the Electoral Commission can issue fines to those who break the law. BP confirmed that the Electoral Commission can issue civil sanctions, and that it works with the police on cases. He noted that the Scottish Independence Referendum was the first time the Electoral Commission had this power and it worked well then. MC asked for further clarification that imprints on the same document for multiple candidates in a local area were permissible and that individual imprints on separate documents were not required. BP confirmed that this was the case.

Date of the next meeting The date of the next meeting is 2 June 2015 – Labour to Chair Actions Actions from March 2015 PPP meeting Action Owner Status Check PPP members mailing list and update as necessary. MK Completed Electoral Commission to send Guide for Canvassers to PPP members. AS1 Completed Electoral Commission to share with the parties the outcome of its consideration of Section 66 of RPA 1983. BP/AS1 Completed Electoral Commission to continue to use it bulletin to non-party campaigners to remind on current issues. BP Completed Related content Party registration decisions View our decisions on political party names, descriptions and emblems View current applications View the political party names, descriptions and emblems which we are currently considering as part of our assessment process Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Registers of unincorporated associations Download and view the registers of unincorporated associations

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Report on the May 2021 elections in Wales You are in the Senedd elections
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Summary In July 2020, during a time of rising concern about the coronavirus pandemic,
discussions began around the management and administration of the Senedd elections in
a pandemic environment. Whilst there had been speculation that the elections might be
postponed, in February 2021, the Welsh Government announced its firm intention that
the elections would go ahead as planned on 6 May 2021. The UK Government also
confirmed that the Police and Crime Commissioner elections postponed from May 2020
would take place on the same date. Rules for the Senedd election were made by Welsh
Government while rules for the Police and Crime Commissioner election were made by
the UK Government. This combination, which included the difference in voter
eligibility between the two sets of elections, together with the pandemic, resulted
in a high level of complexity for those administering the polls. However, people were
able to register to vote and take part in the elections. There were 51,500
applications to register made from 26 March to 27 April, and a total of 2.3 million
were registered to vote in the elections in Wales. For the first time 16 and 17 year
olds and foreign citizens resident in Wales were able to register to vote at the
Senedd elections. Turnout across the elections was similar to previous years,
suggesting Covid-19 did not stop voters from taking part. Voting by post or
appointing a proxy were highlighted as options for those who did not feel
comfortable, or safe, voting in person, and there was a small increase in the number
of people who applied to vote by post at these polls. Alongside the usual challenges
for Returning Officers and electoral administrators in running and overseeing
successful elections, there were a number of extra requirements imposed by Covid-19
to comply with public health guidance and regulations and ensure that everyone could
participate safely. The experience of these polls has again highlighted concerns
about the resilience and capacity of electoral administration structures in Wales,
which are coupled with the challenges of delivering elections within an outdated and
increasingly complex electoral law framework. For campaigners, the changing public
health regulations and restrictions caused uncertainty, and they had to adapt their
plans as official guidance changed before and during the campaign period. They were able
to communicate with voters using a number of methods including online, through
printed material and eventually face-to-face. However, feedback from candidates shows
that campaigning ahead of these elections was challenging. Digital campaigning was
particularly important to campaigners for the May polls and this trend is likely to
continue in future years. Transparency around who is responsible for producing
campaign material online remains of critical importance, and lessons from elsewhere
in the UK about digital imprint rules should be a consideration for future devolved
elections taking place in Wales. Overall, the evidence and feedback we have collected
indicates that the 2021 elections in Wales on 6 May 2021 were well-run and voters and
campaigners had confidence in the management of the polls, despite the difficulties
they encountered as a result of the Covid-19 restrictions Voting at the elections The
experience of voters at the May 2021 elections Most people were confident that the
elections were well-run, even though they took place in unprecedented and challenging
circumstances. People were highly satisfied with the process of registering to vote
and casting their vote. Changes that were put in place helped to support and reassure
voters. People were confident that they could vote safely at the elections, and the
overwhelming majority were able to vote using their preferred method. New rules

allowed people who were required to isolate to appoint a proxy to vote on their behalf as late as 5pm on polling day. This positive change helped to provide a safeguard for anyone whose circumstances changed close to the polls. Overview On 6 May 2021 an election took place to elect 60 members of the Senedd, 40 representing the constituencies of Wales and 20 representing the regions. The election was combined with the Police and Crime Commissioner elections, postponed from May 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In some constituencies, local authorities also held by-elections. The franchise for each election was different with 16 and 17 year olds and foreign citizens legally resident in Wales able to vote in the Senedd election for the first time. Two different voting systems were used: the Additional Member System in the Senedd election, and the Supplementary Vote for the Police and Crime Commissioner election. Returning Officers, consistent with Electoral Commission guidance, put in place new procedures in polling stations to comply with public health guidelines and to ensure that voters were confident that they could vote safely. To make sure everyone knew about the different voting options available to them and the safety measures in place, the Commission, along with local authorities, took a lead role in communicating these messages before the elections. Voters continue to have positive views about how elections are run Notwithstanding the challenges of a complex set of polls held during the Covid-19 pandemic, people had high levels of satisfaction with the process of registering to vote and voting, and thought they had enough information about the elections to enable them to take part. Our research showed that: 86% of people were satisfied with the process of registering to vote 95% of people who voted at the election were satisfied with the process of voting the vast majority (94%) of voters in Wales said it was easy to fill in their ballot papers for the Senedd election whereas only 83% of those who voted at the Police Crime Commissioner said the same first time voters were more likely to say they were dissatisfied with the process of voting (10%) and were significantly more likely to find the electoral system confusing compared to repeat voters (55% compared to 22%) Three-quarters of people said they were confident that the elections were well-run; however, at least one in 10 were not. This figure is lower than the proportion of people in 2016 who thought the elections were well run (83%). Reasons given by those who said they were not confident the election was well-run were: there wasn't enough information about the candidates (25%) did not think it was safe for people to vote at polling stations because of Covid-19 (22%) did not feel it was appropriate for the election to take place during the pandemic (20%) there wasn't enough information about the elections (20%) The pandemic does not appear to have stopped people from turning out to vote Turnout, at 46.8%, was slightly higher than at the 2016 elections (45.6%). Turnout among 16 and 17 year olds seems largely in line with other younger age groups and notably lower than turnout among the over 55s. Postal and proxy voting were highlighted as alternative ways of voting due to the pandemic and the number of voters choosing these methods did increase, although perhaps not as highly as some had anticipated in a pandemic environment, with 458,928 issued with a postal vote in 2021 compared to 395,878 in 2016 (19.2% compared with 17.6%). Turnout compared with other elections 2016 2021 Senedd election 45.6% 46.8% PCC election 45.2% 45.7% People were confident that they could vote using their preferred method Although public health restrictions were in place at the time of the elections, people had a choice of how to cast their vote. They could choose to vote in person at their polling station, by post, or by asking someone to do so on their behalf (proxy voting). 94% of people who voted said they were able to use their preferred method of voting. Voters using polling stations were confident that they

were safe places to vote Voters using polling stations were confident that they were safe places to vote overview Across Wales, measures were in place to make sure that voting at polling stations was as safe possible during the pandemic. To support and advise on what changes should be made to voting in polling stations, the Electoral Commission worked with public health experts across the UK to provide guidance for electoral administrators . The Wales Electoral Coordination Board also worked closely with the AEA Wales to set out a minimum safety standard which constituency Returning Officers should put in place at polling stations. The Commission also provided resources to local authorities designed to reassure voters that polling stations would be safe places to vote, including highlighting the other ways to vote, for those vulnerable or concerned and encouraging voters to start thinking about their preferred voting option early. Resources included material for use on social media, animated videos, posters and template press releases. Polling stations were set up and managed to minimise public health risks Almost all of the respondents to our research who voted in person said that they felt safe at a polling station with the provisions in place: 95% of electors who voted in person say that they felt safe at a polling station with Covid-19 safety provisions in place – with almost two thirds feeling very safe. Only a very small proportion of voters said that they felt unsafe nearly three-quarters of electors aged 35-54 and 55+ felt it was very safe compared to just over half (57%) of those aged 16-34 almost all (99%) polling station voters said that they noticed at least one of the various safety provisions that had been put in place People were most likely to notice People were least likely to notice Hand sanitiser provided on exit and entry Cleaning of pencils Staff wearing face coverings Cleaning of booths A one-way system with floor markings Polling station staff also felt that polling stations were safe places to work (90% of staff responding to our survey agreed) and that the safety of voters was adequately provided for by the changes introduced (91%). Candidates were also satisfied with Covid-19 safety measures in polling places, with three-quarters saying they were fairly or very satisfied. The new safety measures, including the limits on the number of people who could enter the polling station, meant that voting took longer for some people. The combination of polls, where voters had more than one ballot paper to complete, may also have contributed to this. Our research showed that: half of those people questioned said that voting in these elections took about the same time as usual despite the Covid-19 safety provisions being in place. However, 42% said it took longer 48% of electors who voted in person said they waited less than five minutes, 34% waited five to 10 minutes and 16% said they waited more than 10 minutes before they were able to vote There were reports of queues at some polling stations There were reports in the media on polling day of queues at certain polling stations and instances where voters felt unable to cast their vote as a result. To better understand the situation across Wales, we asked Returning Officers and electoral administrators to provide detail on the voter experience in their areas. All authorities responded and 10 reported receiving some complaints about queuing including: a small number (21) of people across Wales complained about being disenfranchised (11 in one authority area) the last polling stations to close were in Cardiff at 23:40, in Rhondda Cynon Taf at 23:20, and Newport at 00:45 the reasons cited for why queues formed were: adhering to Covid-19 guidance, and less availability of suitable buildings for use as polling station because of requirements relating to the pandemic This showed that while there were instances of queuing, it was not perceived by voters as a widespread problem in Wales. Generally, voters understood that Covid-19 procedures were being followed, and in most instances people

were prepared to queue. Electors appreciated the steps being taken to ensure their safety. Returning Officers felt that having polling station 'marshals' or 'greeters' worked well, and that these staff were able to direct and help voters, making the experience more 'welcoming', particularly for young and new voters. The Wales Electoral Coordination Board have concluded that this arrangement should be continued at future polls, resource permitting. People who didn't want to go to a polling station had options for voting remotely. People who don't want to vote in person at the polling station can apply to cast their vote by post or appoint someone to vote on their behalf, known as a proxy. If their situation changes close to an election due to work or disability, people can appoint an emergency proxy up to 5pm on polling day to vote on their behalf. The law was changed ahead of these elections so that so that anyone who had to self-isolate close to polling day because they had tested positive for Covid-19, or had been in close contact to someone who had tested positive, could also appoint a proxy. Most people knew what options they had if they didn't want to vote in a polling station. Our research showed that: 75% of people said that they found it easy to get information about the different methods of voting that they could choose from. Older voters were more likely than younger voters to say it was easy to get this information. One in five first time postal voters said they chose to vote that way because they were prompted by information sent by their local authority. A similar number (21%) said that they chose to vote by post because they saw advertising from the Electoral Commission over three-quarters (78%) of those electoral administrators that replied to our survey said that they had run a campaign about postal voting in their area. The majority of calls from the public to the Electoral Commission's public information helpline in Wales related to the postal voting process, with callers not having access to a printer in order to print off and complete the form, or being unclear about where to return their postal vote application form. Remote voting continued. People found postal voting straightforward. At these elections we saw a small increase in the proportion of voters choosing to vote by post, but the number of proxy voters remained at the same level: 2021 2016 % of postal voters 19.2% 17.6% % of proxy voters 0.14% 0.13% Of those who were first-time postal voters, half said they voted this way because of Covid-19 safety concerns, while 25% say it is more convenient. A third of electors who voted by post did so for the first time. An overwhelming majority (96%) said that it was easy to understand what to do in order to return their postal vote. First time voters (15%) and those aged 16-34 (14%) were more likely to say it was difficult. The most common reasons for saying it was difficult were receiving more ballot papers than they were expecting, not being clear which envelopes they should return the completed ballot(s) in and not being clear on what information they had to provide. Rates of postal vote rejections rose slightly. When a postal ballot pack is returned to the Returning Officer, the signature and date of birth (known as the personal identifiers) provided on the postal vote statement (PVS) are checked against those previously provided by the elector. Where either or both the signature and date of birth are missing or do not match, the postal vote is rejected and is not included in the count. This is a security measure to ensure that the ballot paper has been returned by the elector it was sent to. Data from electoral administrators shows that 13,695 (3.9%) of returned postal votes were not included in the count after the required checks on voters' personal identifiers. The rate of rejection is slightly higher than at the 2016 Senedd election where 9,291 (3.24%) postal votes were rejected as invalid. The most common reasons for rejection were mismatched identifiers (signature/date of birth), these account for 46% of rejections. Postal vote rejection rates. Most common reasons

for rejection % of postal votes rejected Mismatched date of birth Mismatched signature 2016 3.2% 20% 16% 2021 3.9% 28% 12% While the percentage of postal votes not included in the count is relatively small, it remains a matter of concern that some postal votes are not counted because voters do not complete the PVS correctly. The Electoral Commission will continue to work with Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers to support voter understanding of how to complete and return their postal ballot pack correctly. The postal vote stationery used plays an important role in aiding voter understanding with the application and voting process, and they should continue to review the information they provide to make sure it is as clear and helpful as it can be to voters. People who needed to isolate because of Covid-19 could appoint a proxy to vote on their behalf. Voters whose situation changes close to an election due to work or disability can appoint an emergency proxy up to 5pm on polling day to vote on their behalf. Changes to these rules in March 2021 gave voters the option to apply for an emergency proxy if they tested positive for Covid-19 close to polling day, or had to self-isolate due to someone close to them testing positive. Of all proxies appointed, 5% were emergency proxies and 2% were due to Covid-19. Recommendation 1: Retain an emergency proxy option for isolating voters. Legislation introduced for these elections to allow emergency proxy votes for anyone who tested positive for Covid-19, or had to self-isolate, helped provide a safeguard for anyone whose circumstances changed close to the polls and ensure that they were not prevented from participating. Although the provision was not widely relied upon in practice, it was nevertheless an important change to ensure that no one lost their ability to vote. We recommend that Welsh Government should ensure this option continues to be available if people are required to self-isolate as part of the public health response to Covid-19. Further education and engagement is required to support new voters to understand and participate in Welsh elections. The Senedd and Elections Wales Act 2020 extended the voting franchise for Welsh elections to 16-17 year olds and qualifying foreign citizens. This meant that approximately 100,000 new voters were eligible to vote for the first time in the Senedd election. To ensure new voters understood this change and knew how to register, the Electoral Commission worked with the Welsh Government, the Senedd Commission and partners across Wales including NUS Wales, the Welsh Refugee Council and the Trussell Trust to encourage registration and educate new voters about their vote. Further education and engagement is required to support new voters to understand and participate in Welsh elections. Breakdown Welcome to Your Vote - a new voter registration campaign In the run up to the election we ran a new voter registration campaign targeted at the newly enfranchised, titled 'Welcome to your vote'. This ran alongside our 'Got 5?' registration campaign, which targeted the whole of the electorate in Wales, but was more heavily weighted towards known under-registered audiences, such as private renters and those under 35. Alongside the campaigns, we sent a voter information booklet to all households in Wales containing key election messages including how to register, how to vote by post or proxy and what to expect when voting at a polling station. Earned press and media activity also helped us to spread these messages. During the campaign period a total of 71,562 people in Wales applied to register to vote, including 7,704 16-17 year olds and 935 qualifying foreign citizens. The foreign nationalities with the most applications were USA, Syria, China and Turkey. We worked with partners to reach under-registered groups. We also supplemented our campaigns with partnership work to fully explain the complexities of the election to new voters, and other groups who are typically under-registered or disengaged. We worked with local authorities and 33 different third sector and democratic

organisations on a number of initiatives. These included the provision of bespoke resources and 'train the trainer' sessions, and working with the Senedd Commission on joint activities for 16-17 year old voters during 'Welcome to your Vote Week'. A sub-group of the Wales Electoral Coordination Board was also established to specifically look at communication with these new audiences. This group will continue to operate moving forward towards next year's local government elections in Wales.

Partnerships case study: The Democracy Box In January 2021, as part of our partnership working ahead of the May elections the Commission became a collaborator on the Democracy Box project – a non-partisan research and development project looking at how young people can creatively inform and engage all generations in our UK democracy. The project's research found that many people do not have a sound basic understanding of UK democracy and how local, devolved and UK Governments all work together and why. The project's goal of informing and educating people about the different administrations, voting systems and democratic participation aligned closely to the goals of our own education work. 32 young people aged 16-30 from across Wales led the project as paid content creators, identifying how and where they want to see the educational content. To date they have produced a podcast , Instagram , TikTok and YouTube channels all exploring key themes like how to get in touch with your MP, how to vote and devolution. "It's a great opportunity to use my skill set in politics, technology, software, design and video editing. It's a fantastic chance to just do something completely positive, and help other people engage in democracy." Young Co-Creator aged 16 We supported the project via our education resources and attended feedback and brainstorming sessions with the young co-creators. This allowed us to gain valuable insight into the effectiveness of the resources and our 'Welcome to Your Vote' campaign. Further education and engagement is required to support new voters to understand and participate in Welsh elections continued Some new voters found taking part more difficult than returning voters Our research found that the majority of people were satisfied with the processes of registering to vote and voting. However, first time voters were more likely to say they were dissatisfied with the process of voting (10% compared to 3% of repeat voters) and were significantly more likely to find the multiple electoral systems confusing compared to repeat voters (55% compared to 22%). First time voters were also less likely than repeat voters to say that it was easy to get information on how to register (82% compared to 94%) and cast their vote (75% compared to 88%). Approximately 50% (32,121, of an estimated 70,000) of eligible newly enfranchised 16-17 year olds registered to vote in this election. There is insufficient data available to enable us to report on qualifying foreign nationals. More focus on political education is needed Last year the Commission published a new set of online resources to educate young people about the democratic process. The resources aimed to support young people, including those who were voting for the first time at the Senedd elections, and prepare educators to teach political literacy with confidence. We worked with our partners to promote and gain feedback on the resources, which were also published on the Hwb platform alongside resources from the Welsh Government and Senedd Commission. Covid-19 did impact both schools and colleges in being able to deliver political literacy training to students ahead of the Senedd elections in May. We plan to extend the reach and impact of our education programme ahead of the local government elections in 2022 and Senedd election in 2026. We want to build on the work already achieved by engaging further with young people and educators across Wales to identify more themes and topics our resources can address. We will work with all relevant partners in Wales, including the Welsh Government and Senedd Commission, to ensure that the Commission's focus in this area

is appropriate and effective. This could mean not only enhancing existing resources but also developing support programmes for those working with these groups as well as expanding networks with the groups themselves. Campaigning at the elections The experience of campaigning at the May 2021 elections s communicated with voters using a number of methods including online, through printed material, and eventually face-to-face. However, feedback from candidates shows that a sizeable amount said they could not campaign effectively with the Covid- 19 restrictions in place.

Communication about legislative changes and new restrictions was generally good; however, there was a sizeable minority of candidates who remained unclear about the changes. Transparency about who is responsible for producing campaign material online remains important for voters, and lessons from elsewhere in the UK about digital imprint rules should be considered for future elections in Wales. Campaigning at the elections overview Campaigning is an essential element of a healthy democracy. This includes publishing and distributing campaign material, sending election communications to electors, displaying advertising hoardings and banners, canvassing door to door, and speaking to voters on polling day. s had to adapt their activities due to the pandemic and there was a lack of certainty when planning for the elections which meant it was not straight forward for campaigners to plan and deliver their activities. Parties and candidates did not appear to be deterred from participating in the poll A total of 308 candidates stood for election across the 40 Senedd constituencies in 2021. The number of constituency candidates represents an increase from the 248 candidates who stood at the National Assembly for Wales election in 2016. In May 2021, a total of 326 candidates stood on a regional list at the Senedd elections. This again, was an increase from the 305 candidates that stood on a regional list in 2016. For the Police and Crime Commissioner elections, 21 candidates stood in May 2021, which was an increase from 19 candidates in 2016. The changing public health context caused uncertainty for campaigners Some changes to legislation were made close to the start of the election period Given the changing context of the pandemic, it was understandably more difficult for Welsh Government to ensure changes to legislation were in place at least six-months before campaigners or electoral administrators needed to comply with them. However some changes to help the nomination process were made very close to when they would affect campaigners, and this added to the uncertainty and risk for candidates and electoral administrators. Just over half of the candidates who responded to our survey (56%) agreed that they were well informed about legislative changes made as a result of the pandemic, however a sizeable minority (24%) disagreed. Official guidance on campaigning activities changed during the election period Under the public health restrictions during the campaign period, leafletting activities could not begin in Wales until 15 March 2021. Prior to this date, campaigning took place primarily online. Door-to-door canvassing was only a permitted campaign activity in Wales after 12 April and campaigners had to follow specific Covid-19 guidelines. Some changes to campaign-related rules came after the start of the regulated period, particularly the updates to Covid-19 restrictions for campaigning. Four in five (79%) candidates who responded to our survey said their concerns about the restrictions placed on campaigning impacted their campaign 'a lot'. Only 3% said it had no impact. It was very difficult to run a campaign. I had a lot of anxiety because of the uncertainty. We published guidance to support candidates and agents in these Covid-19 safe elections, informed by the latest expert advice from public health bodies. Of those who used it, 73% found the guidance clear and helpful. From December 2020, and on a rolling basis after each three week review by the First Minister, we also circulated to political

parties the latest guidance from Welsh Government that reflected changes to methods of campaigning allowed under the ‘stay local’ and social distancing Covid-19 rules. We were able to engage with voters while following public health regulations and guidance. We used a range of digital, print and in-person campaigning to communicate with voters. Despite the initial restrictions on in-person campaign activities in early 2021, people continued to receive information about candidates and parties at the elections from a range of different sources, and in a variety of formats. The most common ways voters reported seeing information on parties and candidates are shown in the following table:

Campaigning method	Percentage
Candidate/political party leaflet or flyer	52%
Another source	29%
Party leaders debate on TV	21%
On news websites	17%
In newspapers	16%
Posters or billboards	15%
TV advert or message	14%
On social media	14%
By word of mouth	14%
Party leaders debate on TV	21%

After the elections, we surveyed candidates about their campaigning activities. Some candidates told us that digital campaigning was particularly important during early 2021, when in-person activities were less manageable and they were unsure how voters would react to door-knocking and face-to-face campaigning. However, other candidates told us that relying on social media to campaign as a result of the pandemic restricted opportunities to get their views across to voters: Fewer hustings events with all candidates, and being mostly restricted to broadcasting our messages meant that there was little opportunity to listen to voters rather than just tell them what we think. Digital campaigning was an important activity for some candidates who responded to our survey. One in 10 (12%) estimated that over 75% of their campaign was digital activity, and 15% said digital made up 51-75% of their campaign. However, the largest segment of candidates who responded said that digital activity was not such an important part of their campaign: two-fifths of candidates (40%) said it made up less than 25% of their campaign and nearly a quarter (23%) estimated it was between 25-50% of their campaigning activity. Candidates told us they used more unpaid social media messaging on various platforms compared to paid-for adverts. Two-thirds (68%) of candidates who responded put posts about their campaign on social media and over half (53%) asked supporters to share their posts. Other popular methods were uploading videos to social media (44%), and emailing supporters (38%). Paying for ads on social media was the most popular method of paid digital campaigning (32%). Although campaigners used a variety of methods to put their message to voters prior to the election, our research shows that 57% of people responded saying that they had enough information to make an informed decision, which is down from 75% in 2016. Some candidates said they were not able to campaign effectively. Over half (55%) of candidates who responded to our survey said that they were unable to campaign effectively due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. A third (32%) said they were able to campaign ‘fairly effectively’ and only 5% said they could do so ‘very effectively’. The biggest impact on campaigning due to Covid-19 related to the opportunities for face-to-face campaigning. Almost nine in 10 (87%) said concerns about face-to-face campaigning impacted their campaign ‘a lot’. The election should have been deferred. We were not permitted to leaflet until far too late. By the time we were permitted to canvass it wasn’t a viable option as my campaign team was me. Every door knocked takes ten to twenty times as long as leafleting. I believe that failing to defer the election has benefited incumbent candidates and hamstrung the rest of us. We were unable to do full door to door canvassing because of time constraint/ limited number of volunteers due to anxieties regarding Covid-19. Transparency about who is responsible for producing campaign material online remains important. During the last

10 years, digital campaigning has become commonplace, and voters are now subjected to many political adverts on social media and via other methods online. Digital campaigning accounts for an increasingly large proportion of spending reported by campaigners after elections. An imprint on printed material, which includes details showing who has produced and paid for the material, is a legal requirement. We have long recommended that digital campaigning could be further improved for voters if the imprint rules were extended to cover all material from campaigners. This would help improve public trust and confidence in digital campaigns. Our research after the election confirmed that people continue to value transparency about who is responsible for political campaign activity online at elections with: a majority (69%) of people agreeing that it is important for them to know who has produced the political information they see online three in five agree (59%) they would trust digital campaigning material more if they knew who produced it At the 2021 Scottish Parliament elections, the requirement for imprints on digital campaign material was introduced for the first time in any election in the UK. The UK Government has also published a Bill that would introduce digital imprint rules for both UK Parliamentary general elections, and Police and Crime Commissioner elections taking place in Wales.

Recommendation 2: We recommend that the Welsh Government should legislate on a digital imprint law

We recommend that Welsh Government should legislate to ensure that a digital imprint is required for online campaign material for future Senedd and Welsh local government elections. Processes for submitting nominations prioritised access and safety Changes to nomination processes to minimise public health risks were welcomed and candidates agreed the process was well-run The publication of notice of election took place a week earlier than usual to allow for a longer period of time for candidates and parties to submit their nomination forms. Extended hours for submission were also introduced to help with the process of informally checking nomination forms and then formally submitting the paperwork. While completed nomination forms were still required to be submitted by hand, electoral administrators made changes to their processes to minimise the risk to those involved: a legislative change was made to allow the consent to nomination form to be signed and submitted electronically instead of by hand informal checking of nomination forms prior to submission was offered more frequently using email arrangements for safe hand delivery of nomination forms ensuring social distancing measures were in place candidate and agent briefing sessions were generally held via video conferencing Of the candidates who responded to our election survey, nine in 10 (90%) agreed that the nomination process was well run. Nearly three in five (58%) agreed that longer hours for delivery of nomination forms was useful. Four in five (80%) agreed that the electronic submission of consent forms was useful. Feedback from stakeholder groups in Wales was that digitisation worked well at these elections, improving the nomination process through online checks and increasing attendance by moving briefing sessions online. Embedding these changes for future elections has the potential to benefit both candidates and electoral administrators, as would further consideration of how electronic methods could improve the nomination process. Codes of practice provided clarity on spending New codes of practice on election spending were introduced to support candidates and parties Under electoral legislation, the Commission can prepare guidance on what is, and is not, included in the categories of campaign spending that appear on the spending returns for parties and candidates. For the Senedd elections, the Commission developed statutory codes of practice on election spending for both candidates and political parties taking part in the Senedd elections. The codes are the first statutory codes of their kind in the

UK. The codes help parties, candidates and agents meet their legal obligations and improve transparency for voters. The codes provide: clarity on campaign spending how this campaign activity should be reported whether the spending should appear in a candidate or party spending return give people confidence that election spending is reported correctly Of those who used them, two-thirds (66%) found the Commission's codes of practice clear and helpful. Regulators strengthened collaboration during the election period For the May 2021 elections, we worked with regulator partners to run an online public awareness campaign and encourage voters to find more information from a new section of our website . The campaign aimed to encourage people to think more carefully about political campaign adverts they see online, and it provided information about which regulators or other organisations they could contact if they had concerns. Evaluation of the campaign showed that over 7.6 million people across Britain saw our adverts on websites and social media platforms. The number of people who clicked through to find more information from the adverts was encouraging, and provides a good foundation for further awareness-raising activity at future elections.

Delivering the elections

The experience of electoral administration at the May 2021 elections The elections were well run, notwithstanding their complexities and challenges, due to the significant efforts of electoral administrators and Returning Officers over a prolonged planning period. Voters and campaigners reported high levels of satisfaction and confidence and there were only a small number of issues that had an impact on their experience in some areas. The particular circumstances that led to the development and introduction of legislative changes in February and March 2021 were unprecedented, but the timing of these changes close to the start of the election period created additional challenges and risks for the delivery of the elections. The experience of these polls has highlighted concerns about the resilience and capacity of electoral administration structures in the UK, coupled with the challenges of delivering elections within an outdated and increasingly complex electoral law framework. We will work in partnership with members of the Wales Electoral Coordination Board, the wider electoral community, Welsh Government, and local authorities to identify and implement solutions to develop and deliver more resilient electoral services.

Delivering the elections overview

Overall, our evidence shows that the polls were well-run. Voters and campaigners reported high levels of satisfaction and confidence, and there were only a small number of issues that had an impact on their experience. For Returning Officers and electoral administrators, however, these elections presented unique and difficult challenges and it was only thanks to their considerable effort and commitment that the polls were delivered successfully. Early planning helped in managing the elections Planning groups helped in decision making The elections that were postponed from May 2020 meant that the Senedd and Police and Crime Commissioner elections were combined across Wales. The establishment of the First Minister's Elections Planning Group in June 2020 provided a useful forum for discussion and early decision making. The group, which brought together political parties, Regional Returning Officers (RROs), Welsh and UK Government officials, the AEA and the Commission met regularly to consider the required changes to legislation to maximise democratic participation whilst also protecting public health. Welsh Government also established a Senedd Elections Operations Group which again provided a high level forum to discuss the management and operation of the elections during the pre-election period. The Wales Electoral Coordination Board played a valuable role supporting administrators and promoting consistency The Wales Electoral Coordination Board was established in 2017. The Board co-ordinates the planning for all Wales

electoral events, as well as activity related to electoral modernisation and reform, and helps collaboration between Regional and Local Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and key partners in Wales. The Board played a significant and important role in the planning and preparation for these elections, and in ensuring that the safety requirements could be effectively and consistently delivered across Wales. The Board was represented on the First Minister's Elections Planning Group and participated in the Senedd Elections Operations Group, providing a link between government and Returning Officers throughout the extended pre-election period. Key examples of the importance of this group included: The introduction of minimum safety requirements for polling stations and the count agreed through effective joint working between the Wales Electoral Coordination Board and AEA Wales advice given to Ministers and Welsh Government officials about proposed changes to the rules, including those aiming to ensure the elections were Covid-secure agreement on daytime counting across Wales the colour of the ballot papers We recommended in our May 2017 report on the local government elections that Welsh Government should consider how the role of the Board could be developed to support Welsh Government's overarching electoral modernisation programme. We also recommended that the Government give consideration to the Board becoming a statutory group, as is the case in Scotland. Four years on, this recommendation is now even more relevant, given that Welsh Government is responsible for legislating for elections in Wales and intends to bring forward a range electoral reforms in the coming years. Recommendation 3: Statutory role for the Wales Electoral Coordination Board The Wales Electoral Coordination Board is in a unique position to provide a link between governments and Returning Officers in Wales and to provide advice on the delivery of elections and introduction of electoral reforms. We continue to recommend that the Board should be strengthened and that it should have a statutory role, similar to the role of the Electoral Management Board in Scotland. The capacity and resilience of electoral administration teams and suppliers are significant risks for future polls The challenging circumstances of these elections exposed pressures on the capacity of local electoral services teams Electoral administrators' ability to plan and deliver their work for these elections was impacted by Covid-19 restrictions in the months leading up to them: 88% said that the Covid-19 restrictions had made their job more difficult, with 75% of respondents saying that their workload had increased because of the Covid-19 restrictions during the elections 63% said that they were concerned for their own health because of Covid-19 Some electoral administrators told us they had seen a significant impact on the capacity and wellbeing of their teams. Others told us that delivering the election had left them feeling totally overwhelmed and that they felt they had no choice but to put their work life before their family life. Support that would have been relied on at previous election from other parts of the local authority was unavailable due to Covid-19. ...well-run elections come at a cost and I think you will see a lot of elections officers leaving this role because we are worried about our health. Administrators also highlighted the difficulty they had finding suitable venues to use as polling stations. Covid-19 restrictions meant it was harder to contact people to make bookings, and in some venues there were issues with the facilities as they had been shut down for long periods in advance due to lockdowns. Temporary porta cabins were also difficult to secure as many were being used as vaccination centres. Lots of polling stations had been shut up in the last year – we had to carry out six chlorination processes as they had not checked water – all this had to be checked out. Finding staff to work on polling day was a key challenge for Returning Officers and their staff. The complexity of these elections

and the extra requirements that were needed in terms of Covid-19 restrictions placed added pressure on Returning Officers and electoral teams during the pre-election period and on polling day and throughout the counts. 76% of those who responded to our survey said they had difficulty recruiting polling station staff. Concerns were also expressed about the reduction in the number of experienced Presiding Officers and it was noted that poll clerks with several years' experience were reluctant to step-up. Recommendation 4: Build resilience and capacity for electoral administration We have repeatedly highlighted concerns about the resilience and capacity of electoral administration structures in the UK, which are coupled with the challenges of delivering elections within an outdated and increasingly complex electoral law framework. We will work in partnership with the Wales Electoral Coordination Board and the wider electoral community to develop and deliver proposals to support resilient electoral services for the future but this approach will need to be supported through appropriate resourcing. Late confirmation of legislation and interventions made it harder for Returning Officers to plan in some areas On 26 February 2021, Welsh Government confirmed that the Senedd election would go ahead on 6 May and provided £1.5 million to support Returning Officers to secure venues, staffing and run Covid-19 secure elections. Cabinet Office provided additional funds to support the running of the Police and Crime Commissioner election. The Coronavirus Act 2020 (Emergency Bill) was introduced on 16 March giving the Llywydd powers to postpone the election, in the event this was required in the interests of public health. The conduct order setting out the rules for the election did not receive royal assent until 18 March, only four days before the date for publishing the notice of election and seven weeks before polling day. In addition to our usual core suite of guidance and resources to support administrators with the delivery of elections, we also worked with public health bodies, the UK and Welsh Governments and the electoral community to develop and publish supplementary guidance to support the delivery of Covid-19 safe elections. This was issued on a rolling basis from September 2020, and was informed by both the requirements of administrators and the latest expert advice from public health bodies. It was kept under review throughout the election period, and was updated to reflect the legislative changes to the nominations and proxy voting process as a result of Covid-19. Many electoral administrators said they found that uncertainty about the elections made it difficult for them to plan effectively. Three-quarters of administrators (75%) who responded to our survey after the elections said that they felt the initial uncertainty about whether the elections would go ahead made it difficult for them to plan. The particular circumstances that led to the development and introduction of changes to electoral law ahead of the May 2021 polls were unprecedented. While the legislative changes due to Covid-19 were understandable they demonstrated, in practice, the risks and challenges of introducing late legislation. The timing of these changes created additional challenges and risks for the delivery of the elections. It affected when Electoral Commission guidance and resources to support the delivery of the polls, such as amended nomination forms, could be provided and when electoral administrators could implement them. Late confirmation of legislation and interventions made it harder for Returning Officers to plan in some areas breakdown New electoral reforms being considered very close to the election created additional pressures and uncertainty Welsh Government also considered introducing significant electoral reform for the Senedd elections in the final months before the poll. Potential changes included the introduction of early voting centres, and changes to the postal voting statement. Neither of these options were in the end introduced for May 2021, but the

discussions around these proposals resulted in confusion and introduced uncertainty and speculation during the election planning process, in what was already a highly pressured environment. This approach must be avoided for future national elections, and the agreed six month principle should continue to be applied when developing any new legislation. Early clarity of legislation, together with good communication and engagement, supports the effective preparation and the delivery of well-run polls. It also ensures that guidance and resources can be made available to electoral administrators and candidates and agents well in advance of the elections, and that complex planning is not disrupted by unforeseen change. It will also support the provision of early, clear information to voters, to help them understand what to expect and how they can take part in the elections. We call on Welsh Government to ensure that any legislation related to electoral reform or changes to the voting process is in place six months before the election and that Ministerial intent should be shared with the electoral community well before this time. Broad agreement reached on the timing of the count A national consensus on the timing of the count was reached by the Wales Electoral Coordination Board in early January resulting in a decision that the Senedd election count should take place the day after polling day and not overnight. This was necessary as the verification and count processes would require more staff and take longer to perform because of Covid-19 restrictions.

Whilst there was positive feedback from Returning Officers and electoral administrators on the approach to the timing of the count, we did gather some feedback from the political parties that suggested there were some reservations about adopting this approach at all future Welsh elections. Some political parties suggested that elections taking place outside of a pandemic situation should revert back to overnight counts rather than counting the next day, as candidates would prefer to know the outcome of the election as soon as possible. Also, there was a concern that not enough counting agents would be available to scrutinise the verification and count processes efficiently if polling day and the count were carried out across multiple days. The Wales Electoral Coordination Board should carefully consider all views, including those of political parties and candidates, ahead of any decision on timing for the 2026 elections. Voting processes generally ran smoothly despite challenging conditions The planning and preparation before the elections was shown to be worthwhile by the limited number of issues with the delivery of voting processes on polling day. Voting processes generally ran smoothly despite challenging conditions breakdown An error with the regional ballot paper in parts of North Wales affected the experience of voters In the North Wales region there was a local printing error which led to the name of an independent candidate not being included on the regional ballot paper issued in two North Wales constituencies. The error affected ballot papers issued both by post and at polling stations. It was detected during the second hour of polling and immediate action was taken to address the problem. While recognising the pressures faced by Returning Officers and their teams and the challenging circumstances of the elections, it is important that voters, candidates and political parties can have confidence in the election process and that the ballot papers they receive are accurate. After the polls, we considered the issue in line with our performance standards for Returning Officers and concluded that in both cases the Returning Officers did not fully meet those standards 1 . Both Returning Officers have agreed to surrender a part of the fee they receive for carrying out their role. Further work is also being undertaken by the Wales Electoral Coordination Board to develop a protocol and guidance to assist Returning Officers when ballot paper proofing in future elections. Election

teams updated count processes to support social distancing while maintaining transparency. Some authorities' usual count centres were in use as mass vaccination centres so alternative venues needed to be found which would be large enough to allow for social distancing of both count staff and observers. The minimum PPE requirements agreed upon by the Wales Electoral Coordination Board were implemented across all count centres in Wales. Count centres adhered to all social distancing measures set out in Welsh Government guidance and reflected the supplementary guidance published by the Commission. This included: prominent signage reminding people to keep a two metre distance apart ensuring everyone at the count wore a face covering at all times (unless exempt) one way systems and a separate entrance and exit using perspex screens to separate count staff from observer. Overall, new innovations introduced at count venues to address the need for social distancing were largely seen as a welcome addition to the process. For example, in Ceredigion County Council 2 in order to address the fact that a limited number of candidates and agents were able to be in the count centre, activities were live streamed to them in an adjacent hall within the count venue. A camera above each count table allowed attendees in an adjacent hall to have full sight of the verification and count process for each table. The candidates and agents were able to request that the angles be changed as required, and this was done remotely. Doubtful ballot papers were also placed on a visualiser and the images shown on screens for the candidates and agents to see. These measures helped ensure social distancing could be maintained, while also ensuring that the count remained open and transparent. Election teams updated count processes to support social distancing while maintaining transparency.

Observation and scrutiny of the count by candidates was affected by social distancing measures. Positive feedback has been received from candidates and agents regarding the arrangements that were put in place to ensure the integrity of the elections but also to keep all present as safe as possible. However, while the majority of candidates were confident that the elections were well run, fewer were satisfied with their ability to observe and scrutinise the count. Whilst 72% of candidates agreed that election staff made it clear what was happening throughout the count process and 75% agreed that the delayed/daytime count was acceptable for Covid-19 safety, only half (51%) agreed that it was possible to observe and scrutinise the count effectively, and over a third (38%) disagreed. Some parties have reported that due to the Covid-19 safety provisions in place at count venues, they were not permitted to appoint as many counting agents as they considered were needed to enable full scrutiny, and that layouts at some of the count centres were not clear and impeded proper observation of the verification and count processes. Positive work was delivered nationally and locally through good dialogue between the political parties and election managers and, whilst not always what we would expect in normal times, the arrangements were broadly effective in ensuring transparency in the circumstances. Regular and effective communication between Returning Officers and political parties and candidates through established forums such as the Wales Electoral Coordination Board should continue to ensure that any concerns of parties and candidates can be properly considered and acted upon.

Supporting Evidence Supporting Evidence Welsh Public Opinion Tables 2021 Senedd Elections Administrative data 2021 PCC 2021 electoral data including Wales 1. Gwynedd County Council and Isle of Anglesey County Council ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. Count centre for the regional Senedd election in Mid and West Wales and the Police and Crime Commissioner election for the Dyfed-Powys police area. ■ Back to content at footnote 2 Page history First published: 13 September 2021 Last updated: 20 September 2021 Related content Report: How the 2016 National

Assembly for Wales elections were run Read our report about how the 2016 National Assembly for Wales elections were run Results and turnout at the 2016 National Assembly for Wales election View the results and turnout at the 2016 National Assembly for Wales election Report: How the 2011 National Assembly for Wales elections were run Read our report about how the 2011 National Assembly for Wales elections were run Results and turnout at the 2011 National Assembly for Wales election View the results and turnout at the 2011 National Assembly for Wales election

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Declarations of interest Minutes and matters arising Annual report of the Audit Committee to the Commission Board Annual report of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee to the Commission Board Annual report Chief Executive's update Business items taken via electronic means since the previous board meeting First published: 29 July 2020 Last updated: 21 June 2021 Meeting overview Date: Wednesday 24 June 2020 Time: 9:30am to 12:40pm Location: by video conference Date of next scheduled meeting: Wednesday 22 July Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Holmes, Chair Alasdair Morgan Anna Carragher Elan Closs Stephens Joan Walley Sarah Chambers Stephen Gilbert Sue Bruce Rob Vincent (until 12 midday) Bob Posner, Chief Executive Craig Westwood, Director, Communications, Policy and Research Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services Amanda Kelly, General Counsel David Bailey, Head of Strategic Planning and Performance Madeleine Spink, Senior Advisor, Governance Apologies There were no apologies Declarations of interest There were no new declarations of interest. Minutes and matters arising (EC 53/20)

Action: The minutes be amended to clarify that decision making was via electronic means. Resolved: That the minutes be agreed, with the additional point above.

Annual report of the Audit Committee to the Commission Board (EC 54/20) Commissioner Sue Bruce introduced the report and presented a summary of the Audit Committee discussion on it to the Commission Board. The internal auditors had given a 'substantial' rating to the Commission, which was good and better than previous years. The National Audit Office (NAO) had also given an unqualified rating to the accounts. The independent advisor to the Audit Committee Paul Redfern had conducted an effectiveness review and concluded that the Committee was working effectively and robustly. The Committee was planning to make more deep dives into issues in the future, including risk management and investigations. Meanwhile the Committee was happy to support the draft Annual Report and Accounts. On outstanding audit recommendations it was noted that these had significantly reduced, and it was now intended by staff to complete the limited number remaining. The situation would continue to be monitored. The Chair picked up the suggestion in the Audit Committee report that the Board should commission the Committee to consider specific issues in detail on a more frequent basis. This was agreed. The Committee had already considered procurement in this way. It was suggested that the Committee should look at the implications of the coronavirus pandemic on Commission work delivery. The Board discussed the value of having legal cases presented in a tracker format, and the progress of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests.

Action: The Chair of the Audit Committee to give a verbal update to the Commission Board after each Committee meeting. Action: A legal case tracker to be established by the General Counsel and regularly provided to the Board for information. Resolved: That the paper be agreed, subject to these points.

Annual report of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee to the Commission Board (EC 55/20) The Chair of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo) introduced the report. The Committee Chair noted that the RemCo had met staff on two occasions, as well as their formal meetings. The new People Strategy was now an excellent basis for future work in the area of staff well-being. The Committee had already been looking closely at issues such as staff turnover and retention, where the recent trends were positive, as well as recruitment policy and the importance of diversity. The Board discussed the results of the Staff Survey, which had been positive overall

but revealed some areas where further efforts were needed. The Board discussed the importance of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) inclusion in the Commission. The Black Lives Matter movement had moved this issue to the fore and it was important for the Commission to take a further serious look at diversity and inclusion issues internally in relation to staff and externally around the face the Commission presented to the world. The Board discussed how the Human Resources team and other teams worked together, and the importance of managers taking responsibility for managing their teams, rather than relying too much on the Human Resources team. The Board noted that the annual review process reflected the number of meetings of the Committee, and that three meetings per year should be the norm, as well as engagement between meetings. Action: The Chair of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee to give a verbal update to the Commission Board after each Committee meeting.

Resolved: That the paper be agreed, subject to these points. Annual report (EC 56/20) The Chief Executive introduced the draft Annual Report, which Board members had seen and commented on before. The National Audit Office was content to endorse the accounts without qualification. Commissioners raised comments to ensure that external meetings and full Commissioner term lengths were recorded accurately. Otherwise the Board praised the effort which had gone into the content and format of the Report, and were content with it. Resolved: That the paper be agreed, subject to these points. Chief Executive's update (EC 57/20) The Chief Executive updated the Board on how the Commission was continuing to cope with the challenge of the coronavirus pandemic. Good progress was being made on all fronts. The Board discussed the upcoming review of the regulatory framework by the Committee for Standards in Public Life; plans for returning to more regular office-based working after lockdown; and ensuring that party registration processes were compliant with Welsh language requirements. The Board discussed the implications of the Coronavirus pandemic for by-elections and for the electoral registers to be used for the upcoming boundary review. It was noted that there was a different picture across the UK in terms of when by-elections could take place. In relation to the upcoming boundary review, the electoral register from 2 March 2020 would be used. It was noted that the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on these matters would be considered as part of items scheduled for the July and October meetings. The Board noted a delay in the UK Government's willingness to lay in Parliament the codes of conduct on candidate and party spending. The Government's priority was their planned bill on limited electoral law reform in line with their manifesto commitments. In Scotland and Wales work on equivalent codes was proceeding. In the UK wide and context, wording from the code of conduct would for the time being be reflected in Commission guidance. Resolved: That the paper be agreed, subject to these points. The Chair introduced a discussion on equality, diversity and inclusion, building on the earlier discussion under the RemCo item. The Chair emphasised the need for new and concentrated attention on these important issues, including in terms of diversity in our workforce, Board composition and our work to ensure that all communities could be fully engaged in the electoral process. The Chief Executive acknowledged that more could and should be done to improve diversity in the Commission. Some staff had formed a sub-group on BAME matters, which was welcomed. The Executive Team had encouraged dialogue and were working to promote an internal environment where people felt comfortable about speaking out. It was noted that the first step was to listen to peoples' experiences. The Board noted that 11% of the UK population are from an ethnic minority, and 9% of Commission staff had declared themselves to be from an ethnic minority, although not all were willing to complete such surveys. However, diversity is not consistent at

all levels of the organisation. The Board discussed how internal development and our approach to recruitment, including job specifications, could help to change this. Commissioners discussed specific methods to increase diversity through changed recruitment practices. The Board emphasised its commitment that outreach in electoral registration campaigns should include a greater focus on BAME communities. The Commission worked with a number of organisations in this area, and although the lack of grant funding restricted the potential for some possible partnerships, there was a willingness to look at how problems of this kind could be overcome going forward. The Board noted a desire to build on its knowledge of the experiences of BAME communities before offering suggestions or taking any specific decisions, including through engagement with more outside stakeholders through either one-off or ongoing advisory relationships. The Board also noted that equality, diversity and inclusion in its broadest sense included age, class, social background, geography and diversity of thought. This should be reflected in our approach. The Board acknowledged the lack of Commissioners from BAME communities, and the importance of doing something about this. The recruitment processes for Commissioners were in the hands of the Speaker's Committee, but the Commission should encourage further efforts to ensure a greater diversity of candidates. The Board agreed that there was a need to be ambitious and link up with the work of RemCo. Understanding of inequality should be embedded in engagement and partnership strategies. The Commission should be using best practice from other organisations. Business items taken via electronic means since the previous board meeting No matters were raised.

You are in the UK general elections section Home UK general elections In this section In depth: delivering the 2019 general election In depth: campaigning at the 2019 general election Overview This is a summary of our report on the 2019 UK general election. The report continues in two in-depth sections, covering delivering the election and campaigning at the election . Download the full report as a PDF Jump to

The election was well-run Challenges faced in running elections, and by new campaign techniques Actions and recommendations The election in depth Overview More than 40 million people were registered to vote in the 2019 general election. The turnout of registered voters was 67% The election was generally well-run, but there is new evidence showing challenges for the future The 2019 UK Parliamentary general election was held on Thursday 12 December. More than 40 million people were registered to vote, and the turnout of registered voters was 67%. There were high levels of satisfaction with the processes of registering to vote and voting. These were similar to other recent elections in the UK. Beneath this generally positive picture, however, we have also seen evidence about concerns and problems at this election.

Some people did not receive the service they should be able to expect, and many were not confident that the election was well run. Although more than two thirds of people said they were confident the election was well-run, a significant minority of nearly one in five people told us they were not confident. Many of these people selected reasons related to concerns about campaigning, or the media, to explain why they were not confident. Some people also selected concerns that related to the way the registration or voting process worked. Our report describes how the UK's electoral administration structures are operating under significant strain, and shows that people have growing concerns about some aspects of election campaigns. The report makes recommendations about how the running of elections may be improved. It precedes consideration of the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which is only beginning to be felt at the time of publication. There may be further recommendations to ensure the effective delivery of future elections. Challenges of delivering elections

Challenges of delivering elections Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) were under pressure from large numbers of applications to register to vote made close to the deadline. They had to spend time and effort at a critical point dealing with many duplicate applications Some overseas electors did not have enough time to receive and return postal votes before polling day, as has happened before, which meant their votes could not be counted The December timing brought specific challenges for Returning Officers (ROs), who found it harder to recruit staff and secure polling stations and counting venues Challenges from changing election campaign techniques Challenges from changing election campaign techniques Misleading content and presentation techniques are undermining voters' trust in election campaigns It is too often unclear who is behind digital election campaign material. Significant public concerns about the transparency of digital election campaigns risk overshadowing their benefits Some candidates experienced significant and unacceptable levels of threats, abuse or intimidation Addressing these challenges ahead of the next UK general election Many of the challenges described in this report are not new. We have seen similar issues arise at other recent elections in the UK. But the evidence we have seen after this election shows significant concerns from the public and electoral administrators. Opportunities There is an opportunity between now and the next scheduled general election to make real change. This will protect confidence in how elections are run and increase trust in campaigns. Action needs to begin now

to ensure confidence is not further damaged at future elections. Areas for improvement There are areas where governments, EROs, ROs, political parties, campaigners, social media companies, and regulators need to work together to agree new laws, processes or standards of conduct. We will support this work to ensure changes are workable, will benefit voters, and improve public confidence. Action needed Supporting EROs and ROs to meet voters' expectations The UK Government needs to identify improvements to the online register to vote service, electoral management software systems and the funding model for elections, to help EROs effectively manage large numbers of registration applications (including duplicate applications) ahead of major electoral events The UK Government should also explore reforms that would make it easier for people to register or update their details throughout the year, such as by integrating registration applications into other public service contacts The UK Government needs to consider innovative new approaches to improve voting for overseas electors, using evidence from other countries, particularly given its plans to increase the number of British citizens living abroad who are eligible to vote The UK's three governments need to set out how they will simplify and modernise electoral law, building on the comprehensive and well-supported recommendations by the Law Commissions Supporting trust and confidence in election campaigns s, candidates and political parties need to take greater responsibility for the presentation and content of campaigns they run and the impact of their activities on public confidence in elections The UK Government needs to make progress on its planned consultation on legislation to ensure campaigners have to include information about themselves on digital campaign material Social media companies need to provide more detailed and accurate data about election campaigns and spending in ad libraries on their platforms so we and voters can see more information about who is campaigning Supporting people who want to stand as candidates Political parties and other campaigners, the UK Government and social media companies should continue to take steps to tackle intimidation so that people are not discouraged from standing for election or campaigning because of the risk of abuse, threats or intimidation The election in depth Take an in depth look at the top issues faced at this election: How electoral registration officers and returning officers found delivering the election The challenges posed by campaigning Supporting evidence Supporting evidence Supporting evidence: main data tables for the 2019 UK Parliamentary general election Electoral data: 2019 UK Parliamentary general election Related content Report: Voting in 2017 Read our report about voting at the general election in 2017 Results and turnout at the 2017 UK general election View the results and turnout at the 2017 general election Report: Political finance regulation at the June 2017 UK general election Read our report about political finance regulation at the 2017 general election Report: Electoral registration at the June 2017 UK general election Read our report about electoral registration at the 2017 general election

2018 electoral fraud data | Electoral Commission Search 2018
electoral fraud data You are in the Electoral fraud data section Home Our
research Electoral fraud data On this page Case outcomes with convictions or cautions
Types of allegations Data by police force Types of allegations since 2010 First
published: 23 July 2019 Last updated: 31 March 2021 Overview There is no evidence of
large-scale electoral fraud relating to the 2018 local elections. Of the 266 cases
that were investigated by the police, four led to convictions and two suspects were
given police cautions. Outcomes of cases where the suspect was either convicted or
accepted a police caution A conviction for false information on a nomination paper
The Metropolitan Police received a report that a Conservative party election agent
(who also stood as a candidate) had submitted nomination forms with false signatures
for local elections in the London Borough of Hackney. The police investigation found
that a number of these forms contained the names and signatures of voters who had
either been misled into believing they were signing for a different candidate, or
where their name had been entered on the nomination form with someone else's
signature. Following a police investigation the suspect was found guilty on 11
September 2020 and: sentenced to 6 months in prison, suspended for 18 months ordered
to complete 200 hours of community service ordered to pay a £2,000 fine and court
costs A conviction for false information on a nomination paper In June 2018, the
Metropolitan Police received a report that a councillor elected in the May elections
for the London Borough of Redbridge had made a false declaration about his home
address on his nomination form. He did not live in the council area, but pretended he
did so he could run as a Labour councillor for the area. Following a police
investigation he was found guilty on 19 October 2020. On 24 November 2020 he was:
sentenced to 17 months in prison ordered to pay £18,368 compensation he received in
expenses as a councillor since May 2018, £10,000 towards the costs of running the by-
election in 2021 to replace him, and £10,000 towards prosecution costs barred from
standing for election for the next 5 years A conviction for false information on a
nomination paper Norfolk police received a report that a Conservative party election
agent for Norwich City council elections had submitted nomination forms that included
forged signatures. Following a police investigation the suspect was found guilty and:
fined £300 ordered to pay victim surcharge of £30 pay costs of £85 A conviction for a
nomination offence At the local elections in 2018, a Peterborough Green Party
candidate pleaded guilty to forging all signatures on his nomination form so that he
could stand in the election. When police questioned him, he admitted it and withdrew
his papers before the close of nominations. He didn't appear on the ballot paper. He
was sentenced to two months in prison, suspended for 12 months. He was also given 100
hours of community service, and a £200 fine. A caution for false registration and
voting (by post) more than once At the local elections in 2018, a Labour Party
candidate seeking re-election registered to vote at two different addresses in
Rochdale. He applied to vote by post at both addresses and voted twice in the
Rochdale council elections. It is an offence to vote more than once in the same local
election area. The candidate was interviewed by police and admitted he had voted
twice. He accepted a caution from police. A caution for using someone else's postal
vote by mistake West Yorkshire police received a report that a postal vote cast in
the 2018 local elections appeared to have been completed and returned by someone who
had died. Police interviewed the deceased elector's widow. She had been his sole
carer and often did his paperwork. It appeared to be a genuine mistake in the midst
of grief. The widow accepted a conditional caution and wrote a full letter of apology
to the Returning Officer. An unsuccessful election petition An election petition is a

legal challenge to the result of an election. An unsuccessful candidate at the local elections claimed that the successful candidate had accused him of being a liar and had circulated election material without an 'imprint' - details about the printer, promotor, or publisher on election material. There wasn't enough evidence to prove the imprint allegation, or that the election material had been produced by the candidate. False statements about a candidate must relate to the personal character of the candidate and not their political character. This allegation was based on a difference of opinion and not related to the candidate's personal character or conduct.

Outcome of all reported cases

Outcome	Number
No further action	204
Locally resolved	57
Conviction	4
Caution	2

Types of electoral fraud allegations

Type of offence	Number
Campaigning	128
Voting	57
Nomination	41
Registration	39
Administration	1

Allegations data by police force

Police Force	Number of Allegations
2018	Use this table to search for data from specific police forces, by category of offence or outcome.

Electoral fraud cases - 2018

If you require this information in another format, please contact us

Types of electoral fraud allegations since 2010

Letter: Response to Recommendation 5 of the Child Sexual Abuse Westminster Investigation Report | Electoral Commission Search Letter:

Response to Recommendation 5 of the Child Sexual Abuse Westminster Investigation Report You are in the Key correspondence section Home Key correspondence First published: 3 July 2020 Last updated: 6 July 2020 Summary of the letter Date: 3 July 2020 To: Martin Smith, Solicitor to the Enquiry, Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse Address: PO Box 76107, London, SE1P 6HJ From: Amanda Kelly, Interim General Counsel Format: Sent by email Full letter Dear Martin I am writing in response to your email of 25th February 2020 drawing my attention to Recommendation 5 of the Inquiry's Westminster Investigation Report. I will set out the recommendation in full. 'All political parties registered with the Electoral Commission in England and Wales must ensure that they have a comprehensive safeguarding policy. All political parties must also ensure that they have procedures to accompany their policies, in order that politicians, prospective politicians, staff and volunteers know how to enact their party's policy, which must be published online. All political parties must update their policies and procedures regularly, and obtain expert safeguarding advice when doing this. The Electoral Commission should monitor and oversee compliance with this recommendation.' You asked me to draw this recommendation to the Commission's attention and provide its response to you in due course. We have now had an opportunity to discuss it internally. First, it may be helpful to provide some detail about the Electoral Commission and its role. The Commission was set up by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act (PPERA) 2000. It is an independent body directly accountable to Parliament. While the Inquiry's recommendation is primarily addressed to political parties in England and Wales, the Commission's remit extends to the whole of the United Kingdom. It: oversees electoral matters including elections, registration and referendums registers political parties and regulates compliance with the financial regime set out in PPERA, and, publishes details of where parties and other campaigners get money from and how they spend it. Therefore, its regulatory remit is as a financial regulator of political parties, election and referendum campaigners and elected representatives. The Commission fully supports the work of the Inquiry and the recommendation that political parties should have high quality safeguarding and child protection procedures, that these are disseminated throughout the party and its membership and that senior officials understand how to respond properly to allegations. As safeguarding and child protection is so important, we understand why the Inquiry concluded that compliance should be monitored and overseen by an appropriate body Although the Commission maintains Registers of Political Parties for Great Britain and Northern Ireland, registration is not a compulsory part of UK politics. Indeed parties can only register if they intend to field candidates in a UK election. It is always possible for candidates who are not members of a registered party to stand as independents. The main benefit of registration is that the party's name, description and emblem can appear on the ballot paper. The main consequence of registration is that political parties must submit annual accounts, quarterly reports of donations and loans and reports on election spending. Accordingly, the statutory registration process involves consideration of these party identity marks and is relatively restricted to assessing proposed names, descriptions and emblems against the statutory tests in PPERA and reviewing the constitution and financial scheme. The Commission's compliance processes are focused on verifying that parties submit accurate financial records on time and that their declared donations and spending comply with the controls set out in PPERA. Given the current statutory scope of the

Commission's remit, introducing a requirement that we should monitor and oversee compliance with the Inquiry's recommendation on the safeguarding policies of political parties would require a change in the law. Furthermore, while the Commission has experience and expertise on financial regulation, it does not have experience and expertise in child protection matters. I am sure that the Inquiry envisages a robust approach to monitoring and compliance with appropriate scrutiny of relevant policies and procedures and how they are disseminated and implemented within the party. This requires skills that the Commission does not currently possess. There are other organisations which have that experience and expertise and which are therefore much better placed to evaluate the quality of procedures and how they are implemented. We would suggest that it would be more appropriate for this recommendation to be directed toward one of these organisations. Obviously, the Commission would be happy to work with that organisation and furnish it with its registers. While the Inquiry is considering who would be best to carry out this work, it might also wish to consider the how the recommendation about political parties would work in the context of the diversity of such bodies. PPERA distinguishes between 'political parties' that are registered to contest all types of elections, and so called 'minor parties' that are registered simply to contest parish and / or community elections in England and Wales. There are currently 344 parties on the Great Britain Register of political parties, and 325 can contest elections in either England or Wales. There are also 23 minor parties registered to contest parish and / or community elections in England and Wales. This means that in practice any safeguarding policy and process, as well as monitoring and oversight, has to be suitable for, or differentiate between, the smallest party run by two volunteers operating occasionally from their home(s) through to the UK's major parties with many paid officials and members. I hope that this letter is helpful. Although we do not believe that the Commission could have a lead role in this important initiative, I would like to emphasise that the Commission is supportive of the recommendation and the importance of the work involved in implementing it. We are of course very willing to provide whatever assistance we can consistent with our statutory role, and the resources we have at our disposal. The Inquiry has also asked the Commission to publish its response within six months and so we will be putting this letter on our website. Please do not hesitate to contact me again if I can be of further assistance.

Board minutes: 24 January 2018 | Electoral Commission Search
Board minutes: 24 January 2018 You are in the Electoral Commission Board section
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Declaration of interests Minutes of 13 September 2017 Draft Corporate Plan 2018-19 to
2022-23 Main Estimate for 2018/19 Chief Executive's Update for January Appointment to
Committees Forward Plan of Board Business 2018-19 Decision/Action tracker for January
Chair's and Chief Executive's meetings, and meetings in devolved legislatures
Commissioner wash-up First published: 23 July 2019 Last updated: 23 July 2019 Summary
Date: 24 January 2018 Time: 9:30am to 12:20pm Location: Boothroyd Room, 3 Bunhill
Row, London Date of next scheduled meeting: Wednesday 13 March Who was at the meeting
Who was at the meeting Sir John Holmes (JEH) Chair Sue Bruce (SB) (by v/c) Anna
Carragher (AC) Elan Closs Stephens (ECS) John Horam (JRH) David Howarth (DH) Alasdair
Morgan (AM) Bridget Prentice (BP) Rob Vincent (RV) Claire Bassett (CB) Carolyn Hughes
(CH) Ailsa Irvine (AI) Robert Posner (RP) Craig Westwood (CW) Katharine Sparrow (KS)
Polly Wicks (PW) Katy Thomas (KT) Louise Footner (LF) Apologies There were no
apologies. The Board noted the vote in the House of Commons the previous evening
rejecting the appointment of Professor Sir Ian Kennedy as Commissioner. JEH noted he
had been in contact with the Clerk to the Speaker's Committee. The Committee
coincidentally had a meeting later that day where they would be discussing the next
steps. Declaration of interests All the nominated Commissioners had stood for
election, and been nominated as Commissioners by political parties that had contested
recent elections and also registered as campaigners in the EU Referendum. AC was a
member of the Board of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland (which received money
from the EU Peace 3 Programme, and the Corners programme for individual artists). A
Trustee of the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, a recipient of EU funding, she had now
returned to that role at the conclusion of the Referendum. AC declared her sister was
Head of BBC News in Northern Ireland. DH in 2008 drafted and put forward in
parliament an amendment to the then European Union (Amendment) Bill, proposing an EU
referendum in the terms 'Should the United Kingdom remain in the European Union?' DH
had stood for election on a manifesto supporting an in-out referendum on the European
Union. DH was a council member of Justice, an organisation which had in the past
received EU funding. DH reported that the European Parliament subsidised a regular
annual visit by his Public Policy students to Brussels. DH declared that he had been
awarded a research grant of over €40,000 from the European Parliament. DH declared
that he had been at university with Jon Lansman, but had no current contact with him.
JRH was a member of the pro-Europe Conservative Europe Group, the parliamentary group
Conservative European Mainstream, and of the all-party parliamentary group on Reform,
Decentralisation and Devolution Group, chaired by Lord Foulkes. CB noted she had
joined the Board of the Internet Watch Foundation. Minutes of 13 September 2017
Agreed: with an amendment to correct the date, that the minutes of the Commission
Board meeting held on 6 December 2017 be approved as an accurate record and the Chair
be authorised to sign them. Draft Corporate Plan 2018-19 to 2022-23 CB introduced the
paper noting it was an evolution of the previous Plan that the Board had approved
last year. Unfortunately this plan had not been reviewed and signed off by the
Speaker's Committee due to the calling of the UK Parliamentary General Election. CH
reminded the Board that once any comments and amendments suggested by the Board had
been incorporated, the Plan would be presented to the Speaker's Committee along with
the Main Estimate and a Value for Money Study from the NAO around the end of March.
KT noted that a key change to the Plan was the addition of a new goal, which covered
value for money and best use of resources. This ensured all work of the Commission

was covered and meant all staff could see where they were contributing to the work of the Commission. KT explained that the Plan included planning for a European Parliamentary election, but this would be kept under review and updated as and when changes were known. The funding for this area of work would be kept separate and returned if it was not required and this would be explained in the narrative accompanying the budget. The Plan also highlighted the Commission's work across the UK and noted that changes in accountability were due to be implemented over the next couple of years. The Board agreed it was a strong Plan with a good narrative and clear sense of direction. During discussion it was suggested that the Plan should be more explicit about the Commission's relationship with the voter and its work around regulating political spending and parties. CB agreed that while the plan did cover these areas it could be clearer, and thought the regulation side would probably come across more strongly once the Forewords had been written. A section specifically about voters could be added. It was agreed more could be included about the work the Commission was already doing to develop the skills and capability the organisation would require to deliver its future work as a centre of expertise on all matters electoral. The changes in devolved accountability were discussed along with what this might mean for future plans, but it was noted that until there was more clarity it was difficult to go much further on the specifics. A question was asked around the provisions for the Local Government Boundary Commission for England pensions. CH explained that advice at the time of the separation of the two organisations was that the provisions had to remain with the Electoral Commission. However, this was something that could be investigated again to establish if there had been any changes. In response to a question as to whether the Budget was flexible enough to deal with any unplanned electoral events, CB said that it should be, and if necessary the Commission would go to the Speaker's Committee with a Supplementary Estimate. Contingency planning was regularly reviewed so the organisation had a clear idea of the likely costs, so we would be able to move quickly should the need arise - once a significant, unplanned electoral event was announced a supplementary estimate could be prepared very quickly. In response to a question about a contingency provision only being included for the first year, CB explained the assumptions underlying the five year budget and how it attempted to cover planning for unknown circumstances the organisation might need to deal with. She said overall the organisation was taking a relatively cautious approach over the longer term, but the Speaker's Committee agreed one year's funding at a time. If circumstances were to change this could be reflected in future Main Estimates along with explanations for any changes. CH updated the Board on the NAO's Value for Money Study which would be a short guide to the Commission, similar to what they had done for other organisations. Agreed that with the amendments, changes and additional suggestions, the Draft Corporate Plan was approved. Amendments agreed were: Addition of a section on voters The foreword/introduction to pull out key issues such as workload in PFR and devolution Further information about skills and capacity development to be added Agreed to review provision arrangements for Boundary Commission pensions and whether these could be changed Main Estimate for 2018/19 CH introduced the paper, noting it brought together the budget for the work the Board had been discussing over the last year. KT highlighted that the Capital budget was higher than in previous years; this was mainly a result of a lot of planned project activity originally scheduled for 2017 having to be paused and postponed as a result of the UK parliamentary general election in June. CB also highlighted the revised approach to contingency for the coming year which she hoped would give more flexibility to the budget overall. In

response to a question about how the assumptions and explanations would be presented to Speaker's Committee, CH said that a detailed covering letter would be sent alongside the Main Estimate. CB gave some additional reassurance to the Board around the discipline behind the planning for the project work and capital spend. Agreed that subject to suggested amendments the Main Estimate for 2018/19 was approved.

Chief Executive's Update for January As noted in the Update CB confirmed Kieran Rix would be joining the Commission as the new Director of Finance and Corporate Services, on 1 March. AI said preparations for the May 2018 polls were going well across the organisation. Orders for four of the five Cabinet Office Pilots had been signed. However as yet we had not received details for the postal and proxy voting pilots due to take place in Tower Hamlets, Peterborough and Slough. The pilots had not been explicitly designed as comparator studies, but she noted that further pilots were expected in 2019 so there should be an opportunity to learn lessons from this round. AI said planning for any unscheduled electoral events was being kept under review. She noted that the uncertainty around the potential for a Northern Ireland Assembly election had led the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland to push back the introduction of on-line registration. The Commission was working closely with the Cabinet Office and others to try and identify options for improvements to the canvass process that could be implemented through secondary legislation. AI noted the scope for change was limited, but that the Commission was working to ensure any changes were a stepping stone for the longer term changes we wanted to see implemented. At the first meeting of the Commission's Modernising Registration Steering Group the following week they would be reviewing and agreeing a set of key principles that could then underpin all the Commission's work around electoral registration. AI updated the Board on the Delivering Modern Guidance Project which had recently completed its first phase of work. This had found that the Commission's suite of guidance was comprehensive, thorough and well respected, but difficult to navigate and maintain. The Project Board had taken the decision that it should move to an online web based system, and was now developing a delivery plan for implementation. Subject to a gateway review in the summer, the delivery phase would commence in the autumn. CW updated the Board on development with the public awareness and voter registration campaign for the May polls. The team were currently finalising detailed media plans which would specify where and when the advertising would appear. The creative approach for the new campaign had also been signed off and would be moving into production in the next couple of weeks. On the recently approved fraud campaign the team were working with the project's partners at the Cabinet Office, CrimeStoppers and key local authorities to ensure the messages were appropriate, would translate well and would be useable in as many different authorities as possible. CW said his team were also providing expertise to the Cabinet Office for the public awareness plans for the pilots. CW said planning was also underway for the public information support for the May polls, which including looking at some quick fixes to pick up the increasing number of queries through social media. He said this would be something that would be looked at more thoroughly after May. RP updated the Board on work to draft Codes of Practice to further define the split between candidate and party spending. RP updated the Board on themes that were starting to emerge as the major party returns from the General Election were examined. RP updated the Board on some of the work the Party Registration Team were dealing with, including a new party that a group wanted to register in Tower Hamlets. The Northern Ireland Transparency Order was still waiting for a date for the debate in the House of Lords. If this didn't take place till late February it would mean another

publication date would go by where the Commission was not able to publish details of donations and Loans in Northern Ireland. Noted. Appointment to Committees Agreed That: ECS would take up the vacant position on the Audit Committee RV would become Chair of the Remuneration and HR Committee AC's membership of the Remuneration and HR Committee would be extended Forward Plan of Board Business 2018-19 Noted. Decision/Action tracker for January It was agreed the first action could be made clearer. The Board reviewed the allocation of Commissioners to the different Steering Groups. Modernising Registration: BP and RV Modernising Elections: AM and SB Regulatory New Commissioner – to be kept under review Digital and Infrastructure: AC Noted Chair's and Chief Executive's meetings, and meetings in devolved legislatures Noted. Commissioner wash-up

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Parliamentary Parties Panel minutes: 4 July 2017 You are in the Party panels
section Home How we make decisions Party panels On this page Minutes of the last
meeting and actions arising (ECPPP 21/02/2017) Experiences of the May and June
elections Post-election regulatory assurance plans Delivering Modern Guidance Project
Commission Update Report Any other business Actions First published: 4 July 2017 Last
updated: 2 September 2019 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Conservative
Party: Andrew Stedman (AS) Megan Tucker (MT) Democratic Unionist Party: Christopher
Montgomery (CM) Labour: John Stolliday (JS) Andrew Whyte (AW) Liberal Democrats:
David Allworthy (DA) Darren Briddock (DB) Scottish National Party: Scott Martin (SM)
Electoral Commission: Claire Bassett, Chief Executive (CB) Craig Westwood, Director
of Communications & Research (CW) Melanie Davidson, Head of Support & Improvement,
(MD) Louise Edwards, Head of Regulation (LE) Tom Hawthorn, Head of Policy (TH) Ben
Wilkinson, Head of External Communications (BW) Carol Sweetenham, Head of Guidance
and Strategy, (CS) Cary Mitchell, Communications Officer (CM1) Minutes of the last
meeting and actions arising (ECPPP 21/02/2017) The minutes from 21/02/2017 were
agreed. SM raised that 'Guidance and support for Returning Officers' had been agreed
at the last meeting as a future agenda item for this meeting but that it did not
appear on the issued agenda. MD clarified that due to the unexpected general election
this project had been delayed and had been included in the update report circulated
before the meeting. CB said feedback would be welcomed from the Panel to support the
project to evaluate and improve the performance standards frameworks for ROs and
EROs. DA noted that, when recently surveyed, ROs did not see political parties as
part of their customer base and stated his opinion that ROs often see parties as
problems to be dealt with. CB committed to involving political parties in the
consultation process when creating new guidance on RO's performance standards. SM
suggested the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) be involved to help provide
guidance. CB suggested the ICO should be invited a future Panel meeting in December
and it was agreed that a request would be made. Experiences of the May and June
elections SM suggested covering this item in a series of subjects including electoral
registration; nominations; postal votes; polling day; election counts; campaigning;
integrity issues. SM said the main focus was likely to be the UKPGE rather than local
elections and asked whether there were any matters to raise that were not covered in
this list. DA said there were some issues relating to the local elections in May,
mainly to do with commonwealth and EU citizens and their rights to vote but that he
intended to raise the cases by email with relevant persons. DA also raised an
inconsistency in law with an issue where a candidate who was registered anonymously
on the electoral register was able to be nominated to stand in the UKPGE without
releasing her address but her address was made public in her nomination to stand in
local elections. SM mentioned Perth & Kinross Council's approach to Notices of Poll,
which was to publish a redacted version online which did not include candidates'
addresses. He noted that the full version was still available upon request. AS asked
whether the Electoral Commission could provide template certificates for EROs to use
to provide proof of permissibility for donations as some local authorities'
certificates are too vague. MD indicated that this would be looked into. SM asked
whether there were any problems to be reported around electoral registration. CW
responded that the problems had already been reported and in the public domain and
there was not anything further to report to the Panel. He noted the Commission's
reports on the administration of the elections were currently being drafted and that
(on the issue of duplicate registration applications) we will be reviewing messaging

around registrations and working with the Cabinet Office on our recommendations for improvements. SM asked about the idea of a system to allow voters to check their registration status online and CW confirmed that although the Cabinet Office has reiterated that the Government does not intend to pursue this, it remains a Commission recommendation, that it would support a number of positive innovations in the administration of elections. SM asked whether anyone had anything to raise regarding candidate nominations. DA raised commonly used names and the particular case of Elizabeth Evans, a candidate in Ceredigion. DB explained that the RO would not accept her nomination as Elizabeth is her middle name but they would accept her nomination as Liz. He said it seems to be a particular problem in Wales as similar names are very common. CB agreed the Wales office would look into the issue. JS raised the issue of deposits and said many ROs refused to accept deposits paid by certified cheque because the legislation uses the wording 'banker's draft'. He said that although the Electoral Commission provided guidance to help, the short timescale for this election meant many candidates decided to pay the deposit in cash from their own pockets. DB agreed that this was a common issue. CB said we would take another look at our guidance on this subject to see if it was possible to make it clearer for ROs. SM asked whether there were any issues around postal voting to be discussed. DB noted that secrecy requirements at postal vote openings were being interpreted by ROs more rigorously at each election and there were cases where agents were not even allowed in the same room as the opening and therefore could not perform their function of observing that postal vote packs were being opened correctly and checked according to the rules. DA explained that candidates have a right to object if agents cannot see the process but that some ROs did not seem to understand that this right existed. MD said we are more than happy to address the issues if specific examples are provided and we would look at the guidance on this matter. SM asked if anyone had any issues to raise about polling day. DB said Sutton council had issued 'emergency regulations' to ban tellers from talking to voters on their way into polling stations in the borough and was concerned that this caused confusion and made it difficult for tellers to do the task as many voters discard their poll cards once they vote. CB asked whether there had been an incident that led to the council's decision and DB said the RO cited past incidents but did not give any specific examples. MD confirmed that we would look into this with the RO and clarify our guidance. SM said there should be proportionality and that restrictions should only be used if there is a history of issues at a particular location. SM, moving on to election counts, raised that he felt there was a general feeling that there should be more guidance on recounts and potentially even a number when recounts should take place. He suggested a difference of 50 votes between the leading candidate and the one with the next most votes. DB said the doubtful ballots guidance issued by the Commission for recent elections has been incredibly successful and that more guidance around recounts would be welcome. He also suggested guiding ROs on a time at which it was expected that the count would be adjourned to start again the following day, preferably with a fresh set of counting agents, if no result had been reached. DA and DB pointed out that nobody operates well if they are tired whether they are counting or scrutinising or making decisions. SM suggested that there equally needs to be finality, particularly where successive recounts came to the same figure, and that multiple recounts should be avoided where possible. AS returned to the suggestion of a number at which a recount is expected and suggested that 50 was too low as 50 votes could easily be lost when ballots are counted in bundles of 100. SM said that a suggested figure for re-counts would depend on whether there had been a bundle check in front of agents.

SM noted that at the North East Fife count, the RO had switched to counting in 20s, which was a good method of dealing with very close contests. DA noted that he would like to see guidance that specifies the candidates' right to request bundle counts and that this does not constitute a recount. SM noted that the next subject is campaigning but suggested that could be covered later unless any of the panel had anything they would like to raise. DA mentioned an incident where a candidate was refused entry to their count because they did not have photo ID and was only allowed entry when a copy of the candidate's leaflet was produced. Post-election regulatory assurance plans LE introduced the item and explained we will be conducting assurance work to reassure voters that they can be sure campaign spending and political donations are transparent and that our regulations are clear. She explained we will be looking at spending by non-party campaigners, spending on digital campaigning and spending on and services received from non-UK companies and that these areas have been chosen not because we expect anything against the rules has occurred, but because they are areas that are in the media and public interest, and where we might be able to reassure the public that the rules were being followed. LE asked the Panel to feed back whether they think these are the right areas to be looking at and to help feed into the work itself. DB said he would like to share how difficult it is for parties to complete their spending return given the large numbers of volunteers and temporary staff involved in collecting the required information. LE said she would be happy to meet with DB to go through the process used in his party, and hear his perspective. AS agreed that the number of staff and volunteers increases during election periods and JS explained that often these people leave as soon as the election is over, often leaving invoices and important information locked in their temporary email accounts. AS asked for more information about the mention of overseas companies and LE explained that we were not responding to particular concerns. Instead, we wanted to ascertain what if any such spending took place, how it was recorded and what was reported. CB suggested that there was a perception about what has been called 'dark money' in the media and that we were looking to reassure voters on this. DA mentioned 'dark ads' which he said are so-called because they are targeted and not everyone is supposed to see them. LE replied that this is another thing we hope to address in this work, to explain to voters that just because something is targeted it does not make it illegal. AS raised that often non-party campaigners are not fully aware of all the rules and DA mentioned that he had found it useful to remind parties that had withdrawn candidates that they still had spending limits. SM questioned why splitting spending between national and local campaigns had not been included on the list of issues given the media and public interest in this. DA said he found the Commission's guidance really useful, and that it was particularly helpful to meet with the Commission at an early stage in the campaign to discuss the issue. This helped the party make decisions during the campaign. LE said she was glad to hear it was useful and that we would repeat the early meeting at future elections. SM raised regulated periods and the fact that the unexpected UKPGE meant that spending incurred a year before the election now needs to be included in spending returns. There is also the added factor that local elections had recently taken place and spending for those campaigns falls within the UKPGE regulated period. DB noted that the issue for them is they need to be able to clearly tell their volunteers in the field exactly what they need to tell the central party about and JS concurred that the task of coordinating information gathering from local parties is complex. LE explained that the law set out what was and was not party campaign spending. However, we would look at whether we could provide assistance on

the factors parties might want to consider when taking decisions and what had to be reported in spending returns this year. DB asked whether LE would be available to meet with each party to provide advice on spending returns and LE confirmed that we were already intending to meet with each of the Panel on our assurance work. CB said our preference is to meet early in the process to make sure everyone has the understanding to get it right. SM raised concerns about the fact that local election campaigns incurred spending before the UKPGE announcement without authorisation for national spending from central parties but the back-dated regulated period for the general election means that some of that spending that was not authorised in advance must be included in national spending returns. AW agreed and suggested an element of pragmatism from the Commission would be welcomed as it would not be ideal to have to issue a blanket authorisation to all local parties to incur national spending. LE agreed to look at our position on this. SM said that there were questions over whether the 365 day regulated period of UK Parliamentary general elections remained appropriate and fit for the purpose. DB pointed out that regulated period for EU elections is just four months. SM raised the issue of spending limits for Scotland. All current party spending limits are based on the estimated party spending at the 1997 General Election, so are now 20 years out of date. The figure for Scotland was originally calculated based on 72 MPs. There are now 59, and this is set to be reduced again. The spending figures for Wales will be considerably reduced if the boundary review is implemented. The fixed costs for high cost items such as PEBs and PPBs can be absorbed in the much higher England figure, but now less easily in the figures for other nations, which have separate parties and a practice of UK parties producing nation-specific broadcasts in Scotland and Wales. The Scotland figure has become a pinch point in spending and there is no longer any reflection of these fixed costs (as there was in 2000 when there were 72 MPs in Scottish constituencies, which was more MPs than population share). Delivering Modern Guidance Project CS introduced the project. The aim is to make it easier for people to navigate and use our guidance as well as making it easier for us to produce and amend it. We are planning, for example, to identify what is redundant, what needs to be added and what can be removed or simplified. We are also looking at the online presentation of the guidance. Initial decisions are likely to be taken around the turn of the year. CS asked Panel members to help by joining groups or participating in individual interviews to aid our evidence gathering and assist with user testing. DA suggested this project would benefit from a wider perspective of how parties actually use the guidance. He explained that party candidates are generally unlikely to go direct to the Commission's guidance: they are usually directed to candidate or agent handbooks produced by the party that incorporate it but put it in the context of the party structure and campaign. AS agreed that this was common practice and CB suggested that it would be useful for us to see copies of party handbooks to understand how we can produce guidance in the most useful way. DA also suggested that his preference is to have one manual to refer to that can be annotated and entries found quickly, rather than the current guidance provided in a number of separate PDF documents. DB commented that it is currently difficult to be sure that you have the most recent version and older versions often remain available online. This point was echoed by MT. DB also expressed a preference for guidance to be provided as a Wiki, to allow easier searching and make sure old guidance can be completely removed. CB thanked the Panel for their feedback and said it is important for us to understand how the guidance is actually used. DA suggested independent candidates and smaller parties should also be involved in the project as they may use guidance differently. CS

confirmed that we will be seeking discussion with independent candidates. DA and AS confirmed they would be happy to take part and provide feedback and user testing. DB noted the quick turnaround of guidance produced by the Commission for the snap general election. Commission Update Report SM asked whether anyone had anything to raise from the update report circulated before the meeting. AS asked for parties to be involved in reviewing performance standards for ROs and CB agreed. DA mentioned that ROs often seem to perceive party campaigning to sign voters up for postal votes as an interference in the registration process rather than parties helping to increase voter turnout. Any other business There was no other business. Actions Action Owner Status Invite ICO to December PPP meeting. CM1 Complete Electoral Commission to contact RO in Ceredigion to clarify commonly used names guidance. MD Complete Electoral Commission to contact Sutton RO regarding guidance for tellers at polling stations. MD Complete Electoral Commission to meet with parties to provide advice and guidance on the spending return process for the UKPGE. LE Incomplete Related content Party registration decisions View our decisions on political party names, descriptions and emblems View current applications View the political party names, descriptions and emblems which we are currently considering as part of our assessment process Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Registers of unincorporated associations Download and view the registers of unincorporated associations

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Commission Board section Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On
this page Apologies and introductions Declarations of interest European Parliamentary
Elections decision-making discussion (EC 23/19) Update on recruitment of new Chief
Executive First published: 26 July 2019 Last updated: 26 July 2019 Meeting overview
Date: 9 April 2019 Time: 9am to 10am Location: Boothroyd Room, 3 Bunhill Row, London
Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Holmes, Chair Alasdair
Morgan (Videoconference) Alastair Ross (Teleconference) Anna
Carragher (Teleconference) Elan Closs Stephens Joan Walley Rob
Vincent (Teleconference) Sarah Chambers (Teleconference) Stephen Gilbert Bob
Posner, Chief Executive Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance
Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation (Videoconference) Craig Westwood, Director,
Communications and Research David Meek, Senior Adviser, Governance Jennifer
Hartland, Head of Human Resources Apologies and introductions Sue Bruce sent her
apologies. Declarations of interest No new declarations of interest. European
Parliamentary Elections decision-making discussion (EC 23/19) Bob Posner explained
that the Government had confirmed that the European Parliamentary Election would be
held on 23 May 2019, unless an agreement had been reached for the UK to leave the
European Union and the polls were consequently cancelled. We were therefore preparing
for these elections on the assumption that they would go ahead on this day. Craig
Westwood introduced the paper setting out options for the proposed registration
awareness raising campaign related to the European Parliamentary Election, with
different spending plans attached to each. The Commission had a statutory duty to
conduct such campaigns, but there was also an obvious need for a proportionate
campaign, given the relatively short period available on this occasion, and the need
to ensure that any budget spent could achieve a significant impact. The Commission
would also be working with our usual partners, including local authorities, which
provided a lot of extra impact without requiring extra spending. The Board was
assured that, if it became clear at any stage that the European Parliamentary
Election would probably or definitely not go ahead, spending on the registration
campaign could and would be delayed/paused or – ultimately – cancelled, to the extent
possible. The Board discussed the targeting of the campaign funding and noted the
clear evidence base that existed relating to under-registered groups. There was also
a discussion of the duties and obligations on the Commission during election periods.
Anna Carragher left the meeting at 9.40. Resolved: That the Commission should mount a
campaign on the lines recommended, up to a maximum spend of £500,000. Update on
recruitment of new Chief Executive Officers were asked to leave the meeting, except
for Jennifer Hartland, who took the official note for this item. John Holmes recalled
the note from the recruitment panel that he had sent to Board members the previous
day and provided an oral update. The Board noted the rigour of the selection process,
involving an outside recruitment agency and an interview panel including an
independent outside member, and the high calibre of the candidates under
consideration. The Board discussed the selection and adopted the panel's
recommendation. Resolved: That Bob Posner be appointed to the post of Chief
Executive.

Consultation: Draft performance standards for Returning Officers and updated performance standards for Electoral Registration Officers | Electoral Commission

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Overview We have the power to set, monitor and report on performance standards for Returning Officers (ROs), and have done so since 2009. The performance standards framework for ROs was last updated in 2013. Together with our guidance and resources, the performance standards form an important part of our package of support for ROs in planning for and delivering elections across Great Britain. The introduction of the Elections Act has provided a timely opportunity to review the RO framework. We want the standards to provide a robust framework for the delivery of well-run elections, to support the effective and consistent implementation of legislative changes, and to enable transparent reporting on how elections have been delivered at a local level and across Great Britain. The changes arising from the Elections Act will also impact on the role of Electoral Registration Officers (EROs), and we have identified a number of areas where the current ERO framework, which was last reviewed in 2021, will need to be updated to reflect these new responsibilities. We want to hear your views on the draft standards, how they should be used and whether they will support the achievement of these aims.

How to respond The consultation has now closed. The feedback provided during this consultation will be used to inform the final standards ahead of them being laid in the UK, Scottish and Welsh Parliaments and published by the end of this year. Alongside the final standards we will also publish a response to this consultation, showing the feedback we received and how we have addressed it.

Meetings Throughout the consultation period we will attend scheduled meetings - such as Association of s (AEA) branch meetings - and will also be discussing the standards at meetings with individual stakeholders. We will take these opportunities to get views on the draft standards and how we use them. We are happy to consider meeting with any other groups or interested individuals on request. We have also scheduled a series of virtual drop in sessions which any groups or interested individuals can join to ask questions and provide feedback. These will be held on 29 June, 21 July and 5 August. Please email us at performancestandardsinbox@electoralcommission.org.uk if you wish to attend a session.

How we developed the new standards How we developed the new standards We started developing the new RO performance standards last autumn, using the ERO performance framework structure as our basis. The ERO framework was last updated in June 2021 and focuses on outcomes rather than the processes that have been followed. We have informally discussed the approach with a number of ROs from across Great Britain to get their input at an early stage, and their feedback has helped shape the draft we are now consulting on. This has included discussions with small groups of ROs across England, as well as engagement with the Wales Electoral Coordination Board and the Electoral Management Board for Scotland. The draft standards have also benefitted from input from the Association of s, at an official level as well as through discussions around the high-level approach with members at their regional branch meetings. The draft standards have also been discussed with government officials and the elections leads at the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (Solace). About the draft standards The proposed new standards are focussed on the outcomes that should be delivered, rather than the processes that are

followed, with the objective of helping ROs and their teams to understand and demonstrate the impact of their election activities. This should help ROs to make informed decisions on what activities are undertaken, how these activities are carried out and how their limited resources can be deployed efficiently and effectively. There are four proposed new standards which are focused on the following outcomes: Electoral services are robust and support the delivery of well-run elections Everybody who is eligible and wants to vote is able to do so and has confidence in the voting process Everybody who is eligible and wants to stand for election is able to do so and has confidence in the process Everyone can have confidence that the election process is well managed and in the accuracy of the results The four draft standards are designed not only to support ROs in the delivery of well-run elections but also to cover the ongoing planning and preparations that are needed to be ready to deliver polls whenever they may take place. Performance standard one is focused on ensuring that ROs have the structures and resources in place to enable and support their teams to deliver elections in practice, and can be used throughout the year to support and challenge performance. Performance standards two, three and four then focus on the operational delivery of elections, ensuring that all involved in the process can take part and have confidence in the results. Although these are more operational, they have been designed to ensure ROs are focussed on the outcomes that should be achieved for the various participants in the electoral process - namely voters, candidates and campaigners - rather than simply covering the activities to be carried out. While the standards will be kept under review and further updates made if necessary, the framework has been designed to give some flexibility to accommodate future legislative change, with the accompanying guidance being the vehicle for outlining the detail of what ROs should be doing to ensure they meet the standards. For example, we recognise that further legislative change is expected over the next few years, particularly in the devolved nations where the Scottish and Welsh Governments have each stated that they intend to bring forward their own reform legislation over the life of the current parliaments. The changes in the Elections Act will impact on the role of EROs as well as on ROs, and we have identified a number of areas where the current ERO performance framework will need to be updated to reflect these new responsibilities, which we are also seeking views on through this consultation. The draft amendments reflect our current understanding of how the changes in the Act will impact on the role of EROs but given much of the detail on how these provisions will work in practice is still to follow in secondary legislation, the precise content may be subject to further change. What the draft standards comprise of What the draft standards comprise of We have used the framework created for the ERO performance standards as our starting point for the RO standards. This framework is comprised of the following elements: An outcome: This states the broad goal that ROs should be seeking to achieve. What inputs are needed? This sets out the resources that will need to be put into the service to enable the necessary activities to be delivered. What activities are being undertaken? This does not provide an exhaustive list of activities, but instead summarises the headline activities that ROs are likely to need to undertake to be able to meet the outcome. Our guidance and resources for ROs will support them in determining the specific activities that will need to be carried out. What information is needed to understand the impact of the activities? This highlights the data and qualitative information which will help to demonstrate the impact of the activities and which should form the basis of how ROs and the Commission can determine the success of their work. Again this is not an exhaustive list and the information listed may be supplemented by

additional data or information that is relevant to their performance. What difference is being made? This summarises the combined effects that the activities should have and which, taken together, would contribute to the delivery of the overall outcome. How can we determine the success of the work? This sets out measures that will help to demonstrate what difference the work is making. In some cases the difference will not be straightforward to quantify or otherwise measure, and so an aggregation of several measures may be relied upon to demonstrate what the work is achieving.

Questions Questions Are the standards focussed on the right outcomes? If not, what outcomes should be reflected? Do the draft standards demonstrate a clear link from inputs through to the overall outcomes? Do the standards focus on the right activities? If not, what activities should be included? Do you have any thoughts on the measurability of the impact of the activities set out in the draft standards? Do the standards cover the full range of responsibilities of the RO? Are there any gaps, or is there anything included in the standards that shouldn't be there? Do the standards provide sufficient flexibility to accommodate future legislative change?

Using the standards The standards will be used in three main ways: to support and challenge the performance of ROs; to support the effective and consistent implementation of legislative changes; and to report transparently on RO performance and how elections are delivered. Support and challenge The standards, alongside our guidance and advice, form a central part of the Commission's work to support and challenge ROs in the delivery of well-run elections. The new framework has been designed to be used not only in the period leading up to polls but throughout the whole year. The first of the standards in particular aims to provide a basis for year-round engagement between the Commission and ROs and their teams, including in relation to local structures and approach to elections delivery. The intention is that this will help with identifying and addressing any issues further out from elections and with ensuring readiness for polls, whenever they may take place. This will complement the work we are taking forward as part of our strategy to support increased local authority capacity and resilience, to develop a range of tools and resources to support local authorities with designing and managing their electoral services. Taken together, we will use these to offer tailored advice, support and resources which will help local authorities to develop the resilience and capacity to deliver well-run elections in their own specific circumstances. The second aspect of our support and challenge is focussed around targeted engagement in the period leading up to and during an election. This builds on our already-established process, where we undertake risk assessments to inform how we prioritise our engagement. These risk assessments take into account a range of factors, including the experience of the RO and their team, any staffing changes, demographics of the area and electoral fraud risks. While we aim to engage with all ROs with elections, we have more frequent and deeper engagement with those we have identified as being at greater risk of not being able to deliver well-run polls. The framework of the standards will be used to support structured conversations with ROs and their teams. This will enable us to understand more about the preparations that are being made, to challenge where things are not progressing as we would expect, and to provide support and advice to help refine the arrangements. The intention is that the new standards can be used by ROs, alongside our guidance, to plan for and deliver consistent and high quality experiences for all who are involved in the electoral process. The information and data set out in the standards will be used to shape the structured discussions. We may not work through it all in all cases, but we would expect ROs and their teams to be using the information and data themselves anyway to help them to understand the

impact of their activities - so they can identify what works, what doesn't, and where improvements can be made - so we would hope it should be straightforward to make it available and go through it with us on request. Our emphasis in each case will be dependent to some extent on our rationale for engagement: so, for example, if there has been a previous issue around counts, we would expect to focus in particular on those aspects of the standards in our discussions. Alongside this, we will also collect management information from all ROs, which aligns with the information and evidence outlined in the standards. As well as giving us an important source of information to analyse and use to inform engagement with local ROs, it also provides a picture of progress at a national level and gives us data we can use proactively and reactively to tell the story of how the elections are being managed. We don't plan to collect significant amounts of information routinely, with our focus instead being around key information during an election period which would provide an overview of the key preparations that have been made (for example, around polling station venues and staffing, count venues and timing, and postal vote despatch arrangements). Questions Questions Will the proposed approach to how the Commission will use the standards to engage with ROs enable the identification and provision of effective support and challenge? Is there anything more or different the Commission should be using the standards to do? Do you think the standards will support ROs to provide a consistent, high-quality experience for voters, candidates and agents? Do you think the standards, alongside our guidance, will be effective in supporting ROs with planning for and delivering elections? Are there any other tools and guidance that would help to support ROs in using the standards to understand and improve their performance? Supporting consistent implementation of legislation Along with our guidance and advice, the standards will also play an important role in supporting the effective and consistent implementation of legislative changes, including the significant changes resulting from the Elections Act. Our approach to supporting and challenging ROs, as outlined above, will have a particular emphasis on helping to ensure the necessary arrangements to deliver the range of changes are in place ahead of the May 2023 and May 2024 polls, and the data and information we collect will also help to inform our evaluation and reporting. For example, for the changes relating to accessibility – where the legislation now provides flexibility for ROs in what arrangements they put in place to support disabled voters in the polling station – the framework will be used to support the structured conversations with ROs around the adjustments they propose and how these take account of those recommended in our guidance, and to help ensure appropriate arrangements are in place. We will also be able to collect the listed information to illustrate what adjustments were made by ROs, which will support us in meeting our statutory duty to report on this after the polls. In relation to the ERO standards we have made some changes to cover the new responsibilities relating to applications for voter cards, and we have also added additional detail to cover the extension of the franchise for overseas electors and the introduction of changes to the absent vote application process. We expect to monitor and report on the operation and impact of the new and changed provisions arising from the Elections Act as part of our existing statutory powers and duties to keep electoral law under review and to report on elections. Our wider engagement with ROs and EROs, underpinned by the standards frameworks, will enable us to develop a deeper understanding of the challenges and successes around implementation of the Act, which will inform this reporting. Questions Questions Do the standards, including the updates to the ERO standards, appropriately reflect the range of changes being introduced as a result of the Elections Act? Do you think the

standards, along with our guidance, will help with the consistent implementation of the legislative changes introduced? Do you think that the data and information set out in the standards covers the right areas and will provide robust evidence to inform our reporting on the implementation of the Act? Reporting When issues arise during the conduct of polls, our immediate priority is to support ROs and their teams with guidance and advice to help them address the issue and mitigate the impact of any issues on voters and campaigners. We then work with them after the polls to support them as they learn lessons and help them identify and take forward any actions required to help ensure that the issue does not happen again. However, we also need to ensure that where issues have arisen, we are transparent about these, being open and clear about what has happened, the impact, and the learning. To this end, the standards play an important role in enabling us to report on the administration of elections. The standards should also help ROs to demonstrate, and report locally on, the impact of their election activities. Where issues arise, the relevant pieces of data and information listed in the standards are collated and analysed to enable us to reach an assessment about whether or not the relevant aspects of the standards have been met in practice. We have an established process for doing this which includes consultation with a panel of Electoral Coordination and Advisory Board members (i.e. senior ROs from across the UK) to gather their feedback on the evidence, impact and provisional assessment of performance, before a final decision is taken. As well as highlighting areas where there have been issues, we will also use our reporting to highlight examples of good practice. This will be particularly important as we gather examples of new processes to support implementation of legislative changes, which we can then share with other local authorities to help inform their local arrangements. The information we gain through our engagement with ROs and their teams will not only provide us with an understanding of local performance but will also help us to build up a picture of how the system is working more generally. By capturing and collating the key points from our individual discussions with ROs we can identify emerging themes and issues, which can in turn inform our reporting and recommendations after elections. Questions Do you think the proposed approach to reporting would support transparency, promotes confidence that elections are well-run and enable the sharing of good practice? Is there anything more or different the Commission should be doing to support ROs and their teams when issues arise? What happens next? The feedback provided during this consultation will be used to inform the final standards ahead of them being laid in the UK, Scottish and Welsh Parliaments and published by the end of this year. Alongside the final standards we will also publish a response to this consultation, showing the feedback we received and how we have addressed it. We are also undertaking work to update our guidance and resources to support ROs and EROs in England, Scotland and Wales with delivering elections and electoral registration services, including to reflect the changes to processes that will be required as a result of the Elections Act. These updated materials will provide more detailed information to support EROs and ROs with delivering against the objectives set out in the standards. Draft performance standards for Returning Officers Draft Returning Officer Performance standards framework 2022 Draft performance standards for Returning Officers Outcome 1: Electoral services are robust and support the delivery of well-run elections What inputs are needed? RO understanding and delivery of role and responsibilities – management and oversight of the delivery of elections, including the range of statutory functions of the RO, and an understanding of the strategic landscape, including any legislative changes that will impact on delivery.

Stakeholder engagement – establish and maintain strong relationships with key stakeholders. Planning – maintain plans for the delivery of elections, scheduled and unscheduled, ensuring they are kept under review. Resources – identification and allocation of budget and permanent staffing; and management of contractors and suppliers. What activities are being undertaken? Understanding of statutory responsibilities Polls are delivered in accordance with legislation, guidance and directions (where issued). RO knowledge and understanding of role and responsibilities is developed and maintained, including through training. Formal appointment of deputies, ensuring clear delegations in place and roles are allocated and understood. Development and maintenance of robust delivery plans Establish project team to support preparations for and delivery of elections Clear plans in place, with objectives and success measures Contingency planning to ensure readiness for unscheduled events Business continuity planning Risk register in place, with risks monitored and mitigations identified and implemented Recruitment of necessary staff and identification of training needs Robust arrangements in place for managing issues Appropriate funding is accessed from the local authority Working with contractors and suppliers Identification of external services required of services Contract development and management of delivery Maintaining effective relationships with key stakeholders Engagement with key stakeholders on plans Ongoing engagement with stakeholders throughout the delivery of the polls Coordination and management of the poll (by ROs with a power of direction) Work across local authority boundaries with other ROs to develop guidance and issue directions where necessary to support consistent delivery of polls Engage with local Returning Officers on the arrangements they have in place to deliver the elections in their area What information is needed to understand the impact of our activities? Understanding of statutory responsibilities Awareness of guidance and legislation Records of training/meetings attended Evidence of quality assurance of the whole electoral process Notification of appointment of deputies Development and maintenance of robust delivery plans Clear agendas for and records of project team meetings, to support focus on outcomes Project planning documentation which is kept under regular review Evaluation of previous events and identification of lessons learned Analysis of wider context within which polls are being conducted Succession plans which are regularly monitored Training needs analysis and records of training Reconciliation of project costs against available budget Working with contractors and suppliers Records of formal procurement decisions Contracts in place with all suppliers, with mechanisms to manage and monitor performance Contract monitoring tools and escalation mechanisms, including supplier issues logs and risk registers Service level agreements Details of supplier business continuity plans Maintaining effective relationships with key stakeholders Minutes of meetings with stakeholders Consultation with and feedback from local stakeholders on plans and election arrangements Assessment of local accessibility requirements and demonstrated understanding of needs Records of issues or concerns raised by stakeholders and resolutions implemented Coordination and management of the poll (by ROs with a power of direction) Plans for communication with local ROs Plans for coordinating and delivering public awareness activity and engaging with electors across the electoral area Arrangements for the collation of results Records of any guidance issued and whether and how the power to issue directions has been used Analysis of post-election feedback What difference is being made? A consistent high-quality experience for electors, candidates and agents Public confidence in and satisfaction with election processes Teams delivering electoral services are supported to effectively deliver electoral processes The RO has the

right skills, knowledge and influence to support the effective delivery of the polls How can we determine the success of our work? Events are delivered in accordance with legislation Elections delivered without legal challenge Analysis of team resilience, capability and capacity Analysis of feedback on the delivery of polls and any complaints received Performance against measures and objectives set out in your project plans Outcome 2: Everybody who is eligible and wants to vote is able to do so and has confidence in the voting process What inputs are needed? RO understanding and delivery of role and responsibilities - management and oversight of the delivery of elections, including the range of statutory functions of the RO Planning – maintain plans for the delivery of elections, ensuring they are kept under review and actively used to support delivery Resources – identification and allocation of budget and temporary staffing; and management of contractors and suppliers. Training – identification and delivery of training to meet the needs of both permanent and temporary staff What activities are being undertaken? Providing information to ensure voters understand how they can take part Develop and deliver a public awareness strategy, ensuring that electors are provided with the information they need to understand how they can take part Ensure all required election materials are accurate and made available as soon as practicable Production of election materials Production and publication of election notices Production and delivery of poll cards Proof-checking of election materials Production of ballot papers Managing absent voting Production and delivery of postal ballot packs Opening and processing returned postal votes Managing voting in person Identifying and booking suitable polling stations Assessing accessibility of polling stations Identifying and providing equipment to support voters with accessibility needs Ensuring appropriate staffing levels at polling stations Providing training for polling station staff What information is needed to understand the impact of our activities? RO understanding and delivery of role and responsibilities - management and oversight of the delivery of elections, including the range of statutory functions of the RO Analysis of different communication methods, to support targeting of messaging Evidence of working with partners to deliver public awareness Ballot paper rejection rates and postal vote rejection rates, contributing to an understanding of whether voters have been able to follow the instructions Feedback from polling station staff and data relating to those who were unable to vote due to not having appropriate identification (at relevant polls) (Wales only) Plans in place to ensure all information for electors is provided equally in English and Welsh, including all election materials Planning – maintain plans for the delivery of elections, ensuring they are kept under review and actively used to support delivery Accuracy of statutory notices Information on method and timing of delivery of poll cards and postal ballot packs Accuracy and timeliness of election materials: Record of arrangements for any outsourcing of production and delivery of poll cards, postal votes and ballot papers Record of proof checking processes Examples of election materials Record of data protection processes Resources – identification and allocation of budget and temporary staffing; and management of contractors and suppliers. Accuracy and timeliness of postal ballot packs: Record of arrangements for any outsourcing of production and delivery of postal ballot papers Audit trail of issuing of postal votes Record of checking processes Accurate records of postal vote openings including audit trails of postal votes opened, verified and rejected Training – identification and delivery of training to meet the needs of both permanent and temporary staff Evaluation checklists for polling stations to demonstrate suitability for use Polling station layout plans Approach taken to allocating electors and staff to polling stations

Checklists of required polling station equipment Analysis of voter needs informing decisions about equipment to be provided to support voting Feedback from voters and local interest groups on equipment provided to support voting Guidance/training provided to polling station staff Records of those refused a ballot paper, by reason Records of postal votes handed into polling stations What difference is being made? Voters understand the different ways in which they can cast their vote Voters are able to cast their vote using their preferred method Voters are able to cast their vote in secret at polling stations Barriers to voting are minimised How can we determine the success of our work? Evaluation of public awareness activities Analysis of feedback and complaints from eligible voters, staff, candidates and agents Analysis of available data relating to voters who have not been able to cast their vote (for example, due to not having appropriate Identification (at relevant polls)) No voters are prevented from casting their vote due to inaccessibility of polling station arrangements Outcome 3: Everybody who is eligible and wants to stand for election is able to do so and has confidence in the process What inputs are needed? RO understanding and delivery of role and responsibilities - management and oversight of the delivery of elections, including the range of statutory functions of the RO Planning - maintain plans for the delivery of elections, ensuring they are kept under review and actively used to support delivery Stakeholder engagement – establish and maintain strong relationships with key stakeholders Training – staff understand their responsibilities in relation to the processes to be followed for candidates seeking to stand for election What activities are being undertaken? Providing information to support anyone wishing to stand as a candidate in understanding what they need to do Ensuring accessibility and awareness of electoral processes Provision of information and guidance to parties, candidates and agents, including in relation to election spending rules Briefings offered to candidates & agents Gathering feedback from attendees to inform continuous improvement Administration of the nominations process Provision of informal checks Determination of nomination papers Close of nomination processes Ensuring accurate ballot papers Management of access to electoral processes to ensure transparency and enable scrutiny Receipt of notifications of appointment of polling, postal voting and counting agents Provision of information relating to polling stations, postal vote opening sessions and the count (layout plan, process documents, etc.) What information is needed to understand the impact of our activities? Providing information to support anyone wishing to stand as a candidate in understanding what they need to do Records of attendance at briefings Records of enquiries received from candidates and agents Evaluation of feedback from candidates and agents on the information/briefings provided to those wanting to stand for election Analysis of process queries from candidates and agents to support provision of relevant information Number of nomination papers rejected by the RO, by reason Administration of the nominations process Records of arrangements in place for candidates to have their nominations informally checked Timeliness and accuracy of publication of the statement of persons nominated Accuracy of the ballot paper Assessment of GDPR requirements and records of management of personal data received as part of the nominations process Management of access to electoral processes to ensure transparency and enable scrutiny Record of those entitled to access election processes Information provided to attendees What difference is being made? Candidates are aware of the process they need to follow to stand for election Nominations are accurately processed and everyone who is validly nominated is included on the ballot paper Candidates and appointed agents are aware of their entitlement to attend electoral processes and are able to carry out their scrutiny role effectively How can

we determine the success of our work? No errors on the statement of persons nominated or ballot papers Analysis of feedback and complaints from candidates, agents or parties Outcome 4: Everyone can have confidence that the election process is well managed and in the accuracy of the results What inputs are needed? RO understanding and delivery of role and responsibilities - management and oversight of the delivery of elections, including the range of statutory functions of the RO Planning - maintain plans for the delivery of elections, ensuring they are kept under review and actively used to support delivery Stakeholder engagement – establish and maintain strong relationships and manage communications with key stakeholders Resources – identification and allocation of budget and staffing Training – identification and delivery of training to meet the needs of both permanent and temporary staff What activities are being undertaken? Postal vote opening Accurate processing of returned postal votes Verification of postal vote identifiers Managing the verification and count Development of venue layout and processes to ensure an accessible and transparent count Managing attendance at the verification and count Managing the verification and count processes Managing media liaison Managing the declaration of results Declarations are accurate and accessible Publication of results is timely and accurate Maintaining electoral integrity Ensuring the security of election materials Engagement with local SPOC Develop a fraud/integrity plan and work with the appropriate authorities to support the investigation of any allegations of electoral fraud/integrity issues What information is needed to understand the impact of our activities? Postal vote opening Audit trail of receipt and opening of postal ballot packs Arrangements for the secure storage of returned postal votes Number of postal vote rejections, by reason Postal vote opening venue layout information Records of those entitled to attend Managing the verification and count Evaluation of previous count venues and processes Assessment of access needs, with actions taken to address any issues Count venue layout information Audit trail of receipt and opening of ballot boxes Audit trails of count processes Number of rejected ballots for each contest, by reason Strategy for dealing with both proactive and reactive communication with the media Managing the declaration of results Processes in place to quality assure results Accurate declarations of results (in Wales, in both and Welsh) Audit trails of verification and count paperwork Statement of results (in Wales, in both and Welsh) and where they are published Maintaining electoral integrity Risk register showing security risks and associated mitigations Fraud/integrity plan, including risk assessments and mitigations Allegations of electoral fraud/integrity issues referred to the police What difference is being made? Voters have confidence their vote will be counted in the way they intended Candidates and agents have confidence in the accuracy of the result All those who have observed the election have confidence in the conduct of the election Voters can easily access the results of the election Voters have confidence their vote is secure How can we determine the success of our work? Elections delivered without legal challenge Analysis of feedback and complaints from candidates, agents and other observers Election results are accurate and readily available Analysis of police data relating to allegations of electoral fraud/integrity issues Draft updated performance standards for Electoral Registration Officers Performance standards for EROs 2022 Draft updated performance standards for Electoral Registration Officers Outcome 1: Electoral registers are as accurate and complete as possible, ensuring that everyone who is eligible and wants to vote is able to do so *denotes updated text What inputs are needed? ERO understanding and delivery of role and responsibilities – management and oversight of delivery of the electoral registration service, including the

statutory functions of the ERO, and stakeholder engagement Planning – maintaining a plan for registration throughout the year, ensuring it is kept under review and evaluation is undertaken, with lessons learnt fed back in, and a risk and issues register, identifying any risks to the effective delivery of your registration plan and corresponding mitigating actions Resources – identification and allocation of budget and staffing for electoral registration activities Training – identification and delivery of training to meet the needs of both permanent and temporary staff What activities are being undertaken? Identification of those not registered, including hard to reach groups Using available data and information sources, identify those not registered, including hard to reach groups Develop and maintain a public engagement strategy, ensuring planned activities are tailored to meet the needs of different groups of electors Undertaking year-round registration activity Maintain the property database Contact potential eligible electors, including carrying out work to target hard to reach groups Ensure those no longer entitled to be registered are identified and removed Develop and implement processes to identify and address potential integrity issues Manage special category electors Administering the canvass Using available data and information, identify the most appropriate method to canvass properties in your area Make arrangements to deliver the planned canvass activities Undertake the planned canvass activities Administering the voter card process* Develop and maintain an engagement strategy for those less likely to hold a required form of ID on how to obtain a voter card* Process voter card applications* Manage production and distribution of (temporary) voter cards* What information is needed to understand the impact of our activities? Identification of those not registered, including hard to reach groups Analysis of the scope and usefulness of data and information Ward level analysis of the registration area Identification of priority areas to target registration activity Evaluation of communications channels and approaches, including cost / benefit analysis of previous activity, supporting development of engagement strategy and activities Undertaking year-round registration activity Number of properties with UPRN/as a percentage of properties Analysis of any issues reported with the allocation of properties to polling districts to reflect relevant electoral boundaries The accuracy and usability of data sources used Analysis of response rates by channel, to understand impact of different approaches Number of ITRs sent (by channel) Number of ITRs followed up Number of ITRs not responded to after the reminder and personal visit stages Number of electors whose identity has not been verified and have yet to provide documentary evidence by type e.g. ordinary electors, overseas electors, etc.* Number of registration applications received by type e.g. ordinary electors, overseas electors, etc.* Number of additions to the register by type e.g. ordinary electors, overseas electors, etc.* Number of reviews of registration and number of deletions as a result Number of deletions not as a result of a review, by type Number of registration applications referred to the police Number of renewals sent by elector type* Number of special category elector applications (both new and renewals) processed, from different elector groups (overseas, service etc.) Number of special category electors renewed by elector type* Administering the canvass The accuracy and usability of local data sources used Results of data matching (national and local) Number of households intended for each route Analysis of available communications channels (e-communications, telephone, mail, etc.), to inform contact with individual properties Number of households canvassed, by route and channel Number of communications sent, by route and channel Number of responses by route and channel Assessment of success of canvass communication channels used Number of canvassers recruited and trained Evaluation of

canvasser performance Administering the voter card process* Identification of those less likely to hold a required form of ID, supporting targeting of activity*

Evaluation of communications channels and approaches, supporting development of engagement strategy and activities* Number of voter card applications received by channel* Number of voter card applications received and processed by type (i.e. temporary/permanent)* Number of voter card applications rejected by type* Number of voter cards issued by type* What difference is being made? The demographics of the registration area and the needs of groups of electors within it are understood, enabling services to be targeted and designed to meet the needs of residents Barriers to registration are minimised, enabling all eligible individuals, including those from different elector groups, to register Potential new electors are identified and are given every opportunity to register to vote Changes in the registration status of individuals are captured and applied to the register in a timely manner Elections are effectively supported by the register Voters without one of the required forms of ID are able to obtain a voter card to enable them to cast their vote in person* How can we determine the success of our work? Performance against the KPIs/objectives set out in your registration plans Evaluation of public engagement activities undertaken, including of changes made to the register as a result of the activity Changes in levels of registration within and across the registration area, both generally and within identified under-registered groups An assessment of levels of additions and deletions, during the canvass and throughout the year. A year-on-year analysis of additions and deletions Assessment of the numbers of eligible electors who tried to vote on polling day but were unable to do so as a result of not being registered to vote or who were unable to vote due to not having appropriate identification (at relevant polls)* Outcome 2: Absent voting is accessible, ensuring that everyone who is eligible and wants an absent vote is included on the relevant absent vote list *

denotes updated text What inputs are needed? ERO understanding and delivery of role and responsibilities – management and oversight of delivery of the absent voting function, including the statutory responsibilities of the ERO, and stakeholder engagement Planning – maintaining a plan throughout the year, including arrangements for managing the absent voting process, and a risk and issues register, identifying any risks to the effective delivery of your plan and corresponding mitigating actions. Resources – identification and allocation of budget and staffing for absent voting activities Training – identification and delivery of training to meet the needs of both permanent and temporary staff What activities are being undertaken? Supporting electors to engage with the absent voting process Develop and implement a communications plan to ensure that electors are aware of the absent vote options available to them Ensure that all electors can access the absent vote process Administering absent vote processes Process new applications Process requested changes to absent voting preferences Maintain absent vote records and lists Undertake postal vote refresh process* Develop and implement processes to identify and address potential integrity issues What information is needed to understand the impact of our activities? Supporting electors to engage with the absent voting process Evaluation of information made available to electors on the absent voting process to help them understand the options available to them Number of absent vote applications from different elector groups (overseas, service etc.), by type (postal or proxy) Number and type of complaints received about ability to access the absent vote process from different elector groups (ordinary, overseas, service etc.) Administering absent vote processes Number of absent vote applications received by channel* Number of absent vote applications received by type (postal or proxy) Number of absent vote

applications rejected Number of absent vote confirmations sent Number of changes to voting arrangements processed Number of absent vote refresh notices sent, followed up and responses processed by type (e.g. ordinary elector, overseas elector, etc.)* Number of postal vote applications for postal votes to be redirected to one address Number of postal applications from one address Number of proxy applications from one address Number of emergency proxy applications by type Number of applications referred to the police for investigation What difference is being made? Electors are able to make an informed decision on what voting method is best for them Barriers to absent voting are minimised, enabling all eligible individuals, including those from different elector groups, to apply Changes to voting arrangements are captured and applied in a timely manner The integrity of absent voting records and lists is maintained How can we determine the success of our work? Performance against the KPIs/objectives set out in your plans Analysis of complaints and feedback received about ability to access the absent voting process Assessment of the numbers and types of errors in the absent voter lists Related content Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run Report: The costs of delivering the June 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union Read our report about the costs of delivering the 2016 EU referendum 2017 electoral fraud data about electoral fraud in 2017 and view the data Draft guidance for Returning Officers: Assistance with voting for disabled voters (statutory consultation)

National estimates of accuracy and completeness | Electoral Commission Search National estimates of accuracy and completeness You are in the Accuracy and completeness of electoral registers section Home Our research Accuracy and completeness of electoral registers On this page Overview Breakdown by area First published: 2 September 2019 Last updated: 26 September 2019 Overview This chart shows the accuracy and completeness estimates for England, Scotland and Wales for both the parliamentary and local government registers published in December 2018. In England, the local government registers were found to be 89% accurate and the accuracy of the parliamentary registers also stood at 89%. The local government register was 83% complete, while the parliamentary register was slightly more complete, at 85%. In Wales, the accuracy of the registers was similar to Great Britain as a whole with the local government register 89% accurate and the parliamentary register 88% accurate. The completeness of the local government and parliamentary registers was a little lower than the Great Britain average (81% and 82% respectively). In Scotland parliamentary registers were 87% accurate and the local government registers were 86% accurate. Completeness was close to the Great Britain average at 83% for local government registers and 84% for the parliamentary registers. Breakdown by area England The results for England in December 2018 show that: Parliamentary registers were 85% complete and 89% accurate Local government registers were 83% complete and 89% accurate The findings lead to an estimate of between 7.0 to 8.1 million people in England who were eligible to be on the local government registers but were not correctly registered and an estimate of between 4.0 and 4.8 million inaccurate entries on the local government registers in December 2018. Completeness Region There is some variation in completeness by region, with completeness ranging from 76% in London to 91% in the North East. Local government register completeness by region, England, December 2015 and 2018 Region December 2015 December 2018 England 84% 83% North East 78% 91% North West 84% 85% Yorkshire and the Humber 82% 87% East Midlands 83% 83% West Midlands 88% 86% East of England 85% 79% London 81% 76% South East 87% 84% South West 84% 84% Urban/rural In England the local government registers in 2018 were: 84% complete in rural areas 83% complete in urban areas Length of residence Previous research into the registers has found a connection between home movement and completeness: as registration is residence-based, greater mobility is associated with lower levels of completeness, while the longer an individual has been resident at their property, the more likely they are to appear on the electoral register. As these figures demonstrate, this pattern continues in the local government registers for England, with completeness at: 36% among those who have lived at their address for up to a year 83% for those who have lived at their address for two to five years 90% for those resident between five and 10 years 88% for those living at their address for 10 to 16 years 92% for those resident for more than 16 years Tenure In England, homeowners (both those who own their home outright and those buying on a mortgage or shared ownership) are more likely to be registered than people in other types of tenure. Completeness was highest among those who own outright (91%) compared to those in households buying with a mortgage (85%), social renters (83%) and private renters (58%). Variations in completeness by tenure are closely linked to length of residence, with private renters much more likely to have lived at their address for a shorter period of time than those living in other tenures. Age Levels of completeness were found to vary by age group, with older groups more likely to be registered. This is a finding that has been consistent throughout our research. Completeness stands at 72% for those aged 18-34, while it is higher for those aged 35-54 (85%) and those aged 55+ (93%). Summary of completeness

measures This table provides a summary of the level of completeness across all key measures and a number of other measures associated with completeness, such as socio-economic group and nationality. These are also compared to the figures for Great Britain as a whole. Summary of completeness measures, England and Great Britain, 2018

	England	Great Britain	Urban	Rural	84%	85%	Gender	Male	82%	83%	
Female	83%	83%	Age 18-34	72%	71%	35-54	85%	86%	55+	93%	93%
Mortgage/shared ownership	91%	91%	Tenure	Own outright	91%	C1	84%	84%	C2	80%	80%
Rent-free/other	71%	69%	Socio-economic group	AB	86%	86%	DE	79%	80%	80%	80%
80% Adults in household	1	86%	86%	2	84%	84%	3 to 5	81%	81%	6+	79%
Length of residence	Up to 1 year	36%	36%	Between 1 year and 2 years	70%	71%	Between 2 and 5 years	83%	84%	Between 5 and 10 years	90%
years or more	88%	88%	16 years	90%	90%	Between 10 and 16 years	88%	88%	16 years	92%	
Nationality	UK and Irish	85%	86%	EU	54%	54%	Commonwealth	62%	62%	92%	

Accuracy This table shows the types of error found on the December 2018 local government registers. As for Great Britain overall, the most significant proportion of major errors - those which would prevent someone from voting, or incorrectly allow someone to vote – relate to entries that refer to individuals who no longer live at the property (10%). In England, 9% of entries contain minor errors, which would not prevent them from voting. This is the same proportion as in Great Britain as a whole.

Accuracy errors, England and Great Britain, 2018

	England	Great Britain
Major errors total	10.9%	11.2%
Major errors-(a)	10.1%	10.4%
No corresponding name taken at address		
Major errors-(b)	0.5%	0.4%
First name and/or surname wrong on register	0.3%	0.3%
and/or surname missing on register	0.0%	0.0%
UK/Irish/Commonwealth marker present		
Major errors- (c)	0.2%	0.2%
Name on survey corresponds to ineligible name on survey	0.2%	0.2%
Attainers- DOB missing or wrong	0.1%	0.1%
EU citizens marker missing	0.2%	
Accurate with minor errors	8.9%	9.1%
First name and/or surname on register misspelled	1.3%	1.2%
First name/surname on register incomplete	0.5%	0.5%
Middle name missing from register	6.1%	6.4%
Middle name or initials misspelled or incomplete on register	0.0%	0.0%
Middle name or initial wrong on register	0.1%	0.1%
Person does not have a middle name but middle name on registers (respondents only)	1.3%	1.3%
Surname is/assumed to be previous surname	0.5%	0.5%
First/middle/surname in different order on register	0.1%	0.1%
DOB earlier on register for attainer	0.0%	0.0%
Scotland The results for Scotland in December 2018 show that: Parliamentary registers were 84% complete and 87% accurate Local government registers were 83% complete and 86% accurate The findings lead to an estimate of: between 630,000 and 890,000 people in Scotland who were eligible to be on the local government registers but were not correctly registered between 400,000 and 745,000 inaccurate entries on the local government registers in December 2018 Completeness Urban/rural In Scotland, the local government registers in 2018 were: 89% complete in rural areas 82% complete in urban areas Length of residence Previous research into the registers has found a connection between home movement and completeness. As registration is residence-based, greater mobility is associated with lower levels of completeness, while the longer an individual has been resident at their property, the more likely they are to appear on the electoral register. This chart shows that this pattern continues in the local government registers for Scotland, with completeness at: 32% among those who have lived at their address for up to a year 84% among those who have lived at their address for two to five years 91% for those who have lived at their address between five and 10 years 95% for those living at their address for 10 to 16 years 94% for those living at their address for more than 16 years Tenure In Scotland, homeowners are more likely to be registered than people in other types of tenure. Completeness was highest among those who own outright (95%), compared to those in		

households buying with a mortgage (87%), social renters (81%) and private renters (49%). Variations in completeness by tenure are closely linked to length of residence, with private renters much more likely to have lived at their address for a shorter period of time than those living in other tenures. Age Levels of completeness were found to vary by age group, with older groups more likely to be registered.

This is a finding that has been consistent throughout our research. Completeness stands at 68% for those aged 18-34 while it is higher for those aged 35-54 (87%) and those aged 55+ (92%). Summary of other completeness measures The table below provides a summary of the level of completeness across key measures, and a number of other measures associated with completeness, such as socio-economic group and nationality.

These are also compared to the figures for Great Britain as a whole. Summary of completeness measures, Scotland and Great Britain, 2018 Scotland Great Britain

Urban/rural	Urban	82%	83%	Rural	89%	85%	Gender	Male	85%	83%	Female	82%	83%	Age	18-34																											
68%	71%	35-54	87%	86%	55+	92%	93%	Tenure	Own outright	95%	91%	Mortgage/shared ownership	87%	86%	Social renter	81%	83%	Private renter	49%	58%	Rent-free/other	73%																				
69%	Socio-economic group AB	88%	86%	C1	85%	84%	C2	80%	80%	DE	78%	80%	Adults in household	1	79%	86%	2	84%	84%	3 to 5	85%	81%	6+ - 78%	Length of residence	Up to 1 year	32%	36%	Between 1 year and 2 years	65%	71%	Between 2 and 5 years	84%	84%	Between 5 and 10 years	91%	90%	Between 10 and 16 years	95%	88%	16 years or more	94%	92%
Nationality	UK and Irish	85%	86%	EU	58%	54%	Commonwealth	58%	62%	Accuracy	This table shows the types of error found on the December 2018 local government registers.																															

As for Great Britain, the most significant proportion of major errors which would prevent someone from voting, or incorrectly allow someone to vote, relate to entries that refer to individuals who no longer live at the property (13%). In Scotland 11% of entries contain minor errors which would not prevent someone from voting. This figure is close to that for Great Britain (9%). Accuracy errors, Scotland and Great Britain, 2018 Scotland Great Britain Major errors total 14.0% 11.2% Major errors-(a) 13.1% 10.4% No corresponding name taken at address Major errors-(b) First name and/or surname wrong on register 0.3% 0.4% First name and/or surname missing on register 0.0% 0.0% UK/Irish/Commonwealth marker present 0.4% 0.3% Major errors- (c) Name on survey corresponds to ineligible name on survey 0.1% 0.2% Attainers- DOB missing or wrong 0.2% 0.1% EU citizens marker missing 0.2% 0.2% Accurate with minor errors 11.2% 9.1% First name and/or surname on register misspelled 0.9% 1.2% First name/surname on register incomplete 0.3% 0.5% Middle name missing from register 9.3% 6.4% Middle name or initials misspelled or incomplete on register 0.0% 0.0% Middle name or initial wrong on register 0.0% 0.1% Person does not have a middle name but middle name on registers (respondents only) 1.3% 1.3% Surname is/assumed to be previous surname 0.5% 0.5% First/middle/surname in different order on register 0.0% 0.1% DOB earlier on register for attainer 0.0% 0.0% Wales The results for Wales in December 2018 show that: Parliamentary registers were 82% complete and 88% accurate Local government registers were 81% complete and 89% accurate The findings lead to an estimate of between 410,000 and 560,000 people in Wales who were eligible to be on the local government registers but were not correctly registered. There were an estimate of between 200,000 and 330,000 inaccurate entries on the local government registers in December 2018. Completeness Urban/rural In Wales, the local government registers in 2018 were: 82% complete in rural areas 81% complete in urban areas Length of residence Previous research into the registers has found a connection between home movement and completeness. As registration is residence-based, greater mobility is associated with lower levels of completeness, while the longer an individual has been resident at their property, the more likely they are to appear on the electoral

register. This pattern continues in the local government registers for Wales, with completeness at: 30% among those who have lived at their address for up to a year 83% for those who have lived at their address for two to five years and between five and 10 years 88% for those who have lived at their address for 10 to 16 years 91% for those who have lived at their address for more than 16 years Tenure In Wales, homeowners are more likely to be registered than people in other types of tenure. Completeness was highest among those who own outright (91%) compared to those in households buying with a mortgage (78%), social renters (81%) and private renters (60%). Variations in completeness by tenure are closely linked to length of residence with private renters much more likely to have lived at their address for a shorter period of time than those living in other tenures. Age Levels of completeness were found to vary by age group, with older groups more likely to be registered. This is a finding that has been consistent throughout our research. Completeness stands at 67% for those aged 18-34 while it is higher for those aged 35-54 (84%) and those aged 55+ (95%). Summary of completeness measures This table summarises the level of completeness across key measures, and a number of other measures associated with completeness, such as socio-economic group and nationality. These are also compared to the figures for Great Britain as a whole. Summary of completeness measures, Wales and Great Britain, 2018 Wales Great Britain Urban/rural Urban 81% 83% Rural 82% 85% Gender Male 80% 83% Female 82% 83% Age 18-34 67% 71% 35-54 84% 86% 55+ 95% 93% Tenure Own outright 91% 91% Mortgage/shared ownership 78% 86% Social renter 81% 83% Private renter 60% 58% Rent-free/other 51% 69% Socio-economic group AB 87% 86% C1 82% 84% C2 82% 80% DE 76% 80% Adults in household 1 82% 86% 2 83% 84% 3 to 5 77% 81% 6+ - 78% Length of residence Up to 1 year 30% 36% Between 1 year and 2 years 68% 71% Between 2 and 5 years 83% 84% Between 5 and 10 years 83% 90% Between 10 and 16 years 88% 88% 16 years or more 91% 92% Nationality UK and Irish 82% 86% EU 57% 54% Commonwealth 59% 62% Accuracy The table below shows the types of error found on the December 2018 local government registers. As for Great Britain overall, the most significant proportion of major errors which would prevent someone from voting, or incorrectly allow someone to vote, relate to entries that refer to individuals who no longer live at the property (11%). In Wales, 10% of entries contain minor errors, which would not prevent someone from voting. Accuracy errors, Wales and Great Britain, 2018 Wales Great Britain Major errors total 11.7% 11.2% Major errors-(a) 10.8% 10.4% No corresponding name taken at address Major errors-(b) First name and/or surname wrong on register 0.3% 0.4% First name and/or surname missing on register 0.0% 0.0% UK/Irish/Commonwealth marker present 0.0% 0.3% Major errors- (c) Name on survey corresponds to ineligible name on survey 0.3% 0.2% Attainers- DOB missing or wrong 0.0% 0.1% EU citizens marker missing 0.3% 0.2% Accurate with minor errors 9.7% 9.1% First name and/or surname on register misspelled 0.8% 1.2% First name/surname on register incomplete 0.6% 0.5% Middle name missing from register 8.1% 6.4% Middle name or initials misspelled or incomplete on register 0.0% 0.0% Middle name or initial wrong on register 0.0% 0.1% Person does not have a middle name but middle name on registers (respondents only) 0.6% 1.3% Surname is/assumed to be previous surname 0.3% 0.5% First/middle/surname in different order on register 0.0% 0.1% DOB earlier on register for attainer 0.0% 0.0%

Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal one | Electoral Commission Search

Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal one You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 On this page Key achievements Performance measures First published: 30 June 2020 Last updated: 26 August 2020 Goal one To enable the continued delivery of free and fair elections and referendums, focusing on the needs of electors and addressing the changing environment to ensure every vote remains secure and accessible. This goal captures our role in overseeing the delivery of elections across all parts of the UK and focuses on three areas: delivering well-run electoral events, maximising and modernising electoral registration, and tackling electoral fraud. Key achievements To help deliver well-run electoral events, we : supported the elections in May 2019: local government, local Mayoral and combined authority Mayoral elections across parts of England, Northern Ireland local government elections, and European Parliamentary elections supported the UK Parliamentary general election in December 2019 worked with organisations supporting people with a disability to raise awareness of how to take part in elections and what support they can expect to receive worked with the National Police Chiefs Council, CPS and the College of Policing to provide new guidance for candidates and campaigners on recognising and reporting intimidation prepared for the scheduled, but then postponed, May 2020 elections: Mayor of London and London Assembly elections, local government elections, local Mayoral and combined authority Mayoral elections in parts of England, and Police and Crime Commissioner elections across England and Wales published guidance and resources, and provided support to electoral administrators, candidates and agents for the scheduled elections in May 2020 To help maximise and modernise electoral registration, we: supported the implementation of a reformed annual canvass in Great Britain, making better use of local and national data, including advising on proposals and producing new guidance for Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) and forms for the public carried out a consultation on new performance standards for EROs advised on proposals from the Northern Ireland Office and the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland to run their electoral registration canvass, now expected to take place in 2021 To help tackle electoral fraud, we: worked with the police and local authorities to provide training and review integrity plans to help prevent electoral fraud published data on alleged cases of electoral fraud reported during 2019 worked with partners to run campaigns to raise awareness of electoral fraud, timed with elections in May and December 2019 Performance measures Measure Performance We publish 100% of guidance products relating to electoral registration on time with no substantive errors 100% Achieved We provide accurate advice to Returning Officers (ROs) and EROs within three working days of receipt of the request. (Target 100%) 99.7% Achieved (Within tolerance) Additions to electoral registers during our public awareness campaigns meet or exceed our targets (specific targets agreed ahead of each poll) 100% Achieved We review 100% of integrity plans from local authorities identified to be at a higher risk of fraud 100% Achieved We publish 100% of our reports to planned deadlines 60% 1 Achieved We comment on 100% of relevant legislation and policy proposals 100% Achieved Delivering well-run electoral events Since 2017, we have developed and continuously reviewed contingency plans so we would be ready to support elections called at short notice. We saw the benefits of this in 2019, when we worked quickly to support two UK-wide polls. Despite the tight timescales and pressures on those involved in running elections, our research shows voters thought all polls were well-run. We delivered public awareness campaigns ahead of each poll and provided guidance to electoral administrators, parties, candidates and campaigners, to help them fulfil

their roles. In addition, we published financial information to help the public understand where parties got their money from and how they spent it. Two recall petitions took place in 2019, which we supported by providing guidance to those campaigning and by observing the administration of the process. We then reported on how the petitions were run, identifying practical ways to improve these in the future. Maximising and modernising electoral registration We have done a lot of work to support annual canvass reforms in Great Britain. The new process will give EROs access to robust national-level data about the resident population, to identify addresses where there is likely to have been a change in the people who are eligible to register to vote. This will allow EROs to focus their resources in areas of greatest need. Our support for these reforms included commenting on proposals; providing advice on the legislation; writing guidance to help electoral administrators understand their new responsibilities; and producing new forms for the public. These forms include versions for Wales, Scotland and England to reflect different franchises for elections in each country. Our input helped to ensure the proposals would make it easier for electoral administrators to run the canvass and for the public to respond to it. We see these reforms as an important step towards improving our electoral registration system and look forward to seeing outcomes from their first implementation in 2020. Our scrutiny of proposals from the Northern Ireland Office and Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland to run a canvass of electors – originally planned for 2020 but now scheduled to take place in 2021 – ensured plans would be workable and help to improve registration levels in Northern Ireland. This work is important as our most recent research found that one in four eligible electors in Northern Ireland were not registered correctly at their current address. Tackling electoral fraud We provided guidance and advice to support EROs, ROs and the police to deal with electoral fraud. In 2019, for the third year in a row, we worked with the City of London Police Economic Fraud Academy to host and contribute content to three training courses for police. We also jointly hosted the 15th Annual National SPOC (Single Point Of Contact) seminar in Birmingham with the National Police Chiefs' Council, supported SPOC seminars in Scotland and Wales, and provided dedicated election briefings for new SPOCs. Throughout the year, police forces across the UK sent us data about allegations of electoral fraud that they received and investigated. Every year we report on the number, type, and outcome of these allegations, to understand what has happened and how cases are resolved. For the early May and December polls in 2019, we worked in partnership with Crimestoppers and Cabinet Office to run our 'your vote is yours alone' campaign. This aims to help voters understand what constitutes electoral fraud and how to raise concerns. Our campaign contributed to more than 10,000 visits to the Crimestoppers website, where people could find out more information and report any concerns. Crimestoppers passed on 30 pieces of actionable information to the police. Report navigation links

Previous Next Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 Performance analysis: Goal two 1. We published five reports, two of them a month late. This was because data collection and analysis for the European Parliamentary elections report took longer than expected, particularly to ensure we had data on EU citizens who could not vote. This had a knock-on impact on the recall petition report. ■ Back to content at footnote 1 Related content Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 Read our annual report and accounts for 2019/20, including key figures about the year at a glance. Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal two This is goal two of the performance analysis section of our annual report and accounts Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal three This is goal three of the performance analysis section of our annual report and accounts

Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal four This is goal four of the performance analysis section of our annual report and accounts

Scottish Parliament Political Parties Panel Minutes: 29 September 2020 | Electoral Commission Search Scottish Parliament Political Parties

Panel Minutes: 29 September 2020 You are in the Party panels section Home How we make decisions Party panels On this page Who was at the meeting Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising Preparations for the Scottish Parliament Election 2021 Scottish Government The Electoral Commission Scottish Government update Scotland Office/Cabinet Office update Scottish Boundary Commissions update Royal Mail update EMB update The Electoral Commission update Dates of future meetings First published: 15 December 2020 Last updated: 16 December 2020 Meeting details Date: Tuesday 29 September 2020 (by video conference) Time: 11:00am Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Rachel Palma Randle, Scottish Liberal Democrats (Chair) Gordon Dickson, Scottish Green Party John Hardy, Scottish Green Party Matt Edmonds, Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party Michael Sharpe, Scottish Labour Party Scott Martin, Scottish National Party Isabel Drummond-Murray, Scottish Boundary Commissions Penny Curtis, Scottish Government Maria McCann, Scottish Government James Newman, Scottish Government Iain Hockenhull, Scottish Government Chris Highcock, Electoral Management Board for Scotland Pete Wildman, Scottish Assessors Association (Chair of Electoral Registration Committee) Eleanor Tankard, Office of the Secretary State for Scotland Rachel Winham, Royal Mail Scott Forsyth, Royal Mail The Electoral Commission: Dame Susan Bruce, Electoral Commissioner, Scotland Alasdair Morgan, Electoral Commissioner Andy O'Neill, Head of Electoral Commission, Scotland Sarah Mackie, Manager, Electoral Commission, Scotland Martin McKeown, Senior Adviser, Elections & s, Scotland Catherine Heggie, Partnerships and Information Officer Mairaid McMahon, Manager, Electoral Commission, Northern Ireland Lindsey Hamilton, Business Support Officer (Minutes) Apologies Malcolm Burr, Convener Electoral Management Board for Scotland Paul Moat, Scottish Liberal Democrats Welcome and introductions Rachel Palma Randle (RPR) welcomed those present. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising The minutes of the previous meeting held on 29 April were approved. On matters arising, Scott Martin (SM) confirmed that he had sent an email on the 80% cut-off for the e-Counting screens updating. It was confirmed that this and any other larger policy issues in relation to the e-Counting system would be brought back to the meeting at an appropriate time. Preparations for the Scottish Parliament Election 2021 The Panel received updates on preparations for the Scottish Parliamentary election in 2021. Scott Martin asked if the Electoral Commission had ever refused a request to give advice to governments. Andy O'Neill (AON) advised that the Commission had never refused such a request. Scottish Government Iain Hockenhull (IH) reported that the Scottish Government expected the Scottish Parliament election would go ahead on 6 May 2021. Ministers were working with representatives from political parties, Scottish Parliament officials, The Electoral Management Board (EMB) and the Electoral Commission on contingency plans for running the May 2021 polls in the context of Covid-19. (IH) advised that ongoing discussions had identified the need for further legislation this autumn to mitigate the effect of any postponement to the poll. Measures under consideration included: Modifying the provisions on dissolution and the date Parliament meets for the first time following the vote; Providing for the selection of the new Presiding Officer; Polling over multiple days (Thurs/Fri more desirable and to avoid bank holiday on Monday 3 May 2021); Providing the Presiding Officer with power to delay the poll by up to six months; Steps required to avoid Parliament not being able to sit; Moving the deadline for postal vote applications as massive increase in uptake was likely Scott Martin (SM) asked what changes would be made to the election expenses provisions given that they currently relied on the date

of dissolution. (IH) replied that the aim was for it to be functionally the same. The Electoral Commission Andy O'Neill (AON) reminded the Panel that The Electoral Commission would produce relevant guidance for any changes made and understood this was required sooner rather than later. Martin McKeown (MMcK) advised that core guidance would start to roll out early to mid-October but would have to be updated in coming months to reflect future legislative provisions coming forward. There would likely be regular updates towards the end of the year. (SM) asked about the format of the Electoral Commission guidance, MMcK said he would check and later confirmed it would be in the existing .pdf format. Scott Edgar (SE) provided an overview of the research commissioned by the Electoral Commission in to public attitudes to holding elections in the context of COVID-19. The survey asked eligible voters in Scotland about their attitudes towards voting in the 2021 Scottish Parliament election. SE pointed out that the survey took place 3-7 August 2020 and reflected how people felt at that time. The findings of the survey, therefore, should be treated as an indicative snapshot of views, not a prediction of voter behaviour. Many of the views expressed may also be weakly held and subject to significant change depending on the wider context. However, the findings do highlight the potential implications of the impact of Covid-19 on resourcing and processes for the delivery of the 2021 Scottish Parliament elections if voters' attitudes remain unchanged ahead of the poll. The preferred method of casting a vote if an election were to take place at that time was at a polling place with appropriate hygiene measures. The survey also found that the preferred method of casting a vote if an election were to take place now was at a polling place with appropriate hygiene measures in place (54%). 38% said they would prefer to vote by post and 1% by proxy. A further 3% said they would prefer to vote another way. According to the Commission's own analysis, 20% of those who generally vote at a polling place said that if an election were to take place now they would prefer to vote by post, indicating a potential increase in the use of postal voting. These figures should not be taken as reliable predictions of behaviour in May 2021. However, for context, if this did happen it would mean approximately 350,000 who would have voted at a polling station opting to vote by post. (SM) commented it would be interesting to gauge postal voting uptake at the up-coming by-elections and compare the levels with those run under non-Covid-19 conditions. (AON) said the Electoral Commission was sending representatives to observe the up-coming by-elections so they could feed back centrally should there be any lessons to be learned or unusual patterns of applications for postal votes shared. Pete Wildman (PW) remarked that one Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) had reported an increase in applications for postal votes. Whilst the annual canvass was an initial indicator of trends, whole households had been seen to apply for postal votes. He advised the challenge would be if people left it late to apply; typically half the applications came in six months and the final half in the last month. Sarah Mackie (SMA) outlined the Electoral Commission's campaign targeted at all foreign nationals with leave to remain who had been enfranchised by the Scottish Parliament from 3 August 2020. They had worked in partnership with agencies such as the Refugee Council to get information out and encourage voter registration. She advised the paid advertisement would run for a further month and would be used in the run up to the 2021 Scottish Parliament election. The branding 'Welcome to your vote' also works for 16 plus year olds. The voter registration campaign was scheduled to begin 3-4 weeks before the electoral registration deadline and would target under registered groups. (SMA) introduced Catherine Heggie (CH), the Electoral Commission's Partnerships and Information Officer who is tasked with leading on our work to develop partnerships

with under-registered groups and those who face particular barriers to voting, including disabled people. Due to the complexity of messages next year (SMa) advised that communications around Covid-19 would start earlier for certain audiences (e.g. those in care homes, people shielding and the vulnerable) to give warning about shifting their route of voting and avoid a last minute rush. This would be rolled out just as soon as information was settled by Government, parties and administrators. (SM) asked if there were plans for holding hustings in prisons. (SMa) replied that was a matter for the Scottish Prison Service and other groups advocating for prisoners. The Commission would work with the Scottish Prison Service Education Service to educate eligible prisoners about voting, however, the matter of hustings was out with the Electoral Commission remit. Maria McCann (MMcC) said preparation of the Scottish Parliament (Elections etc.) Amendment (No.2) Order 2020, for next May's Scottish Parliament election was at an advanced stage and was expected to be laid before the Scottish Parliament in late October 2020. She expressed gratitude for the comments received from panel members. (IH) said most sections of the Scottish Elections (Reform) Act 2020 would be commenced on 1 October 2020 including the switch to five year terms as well as the provisions relevant to the Electoral Commission. (SM) enquired about the imprints provisions in the draft Amendment Order. (MMcK) confirmed that as currently drafted, the Order provided for a minimum font size of 11 point size as measured in Times New Roman with 3mms between each line space. (SM) thought that was not a good final policy and felt that a better solution would have been legibility backed with guidance rather than something as strict as a specific point size, which does not work particularly with survey cards. (MMcC) said they had received a wide range of opinions on this which were listened to and which she would share soon. Guidance Development – (MMcK) advised that the Electoral Commission's core guidance for the Scottish Parliament election 2021 had two sides; electoral administration and candidates and agents. He confirmed again that core guidance would start rolling out in October and the Candidates and Agents part would cover the usual areas related to qualifications, standing as a candidate, spending and donations and post-election requirements. He said that in addition to the core guidance The Commission would be issuing supplementary guidance to cover Covid-19 related advice which electoral administrators might wish to factor into their planning. Chris Highcock (CH) said much of the Electoral Commission guidance was working around some Electoral Management Board guidance for this year's by-elections; safe nominations, conducting the postal vote opening process safely and to deliver a count which preserved the safety of stakeholders whilst preserving the transparency of the processes. Scottish Government update (MMcC) referred the Panel to the tabled update and invited questions. The Panel requested a list of up-dated by-elections and it was agreed the Electoral Commission would circulate the EMB web page link. Scotland Office/Cabinet Office update Eleanor Tankard (ET) spoke to a previously circulated written update. She highlighted the following areas: the current advert for a new member of the Boundary Commission for Scotland; the Parliamentary Constituencies Bill had completed House of Commons stages on 14 July and the Lords Grand Committee on 15 September. The Government amendment on using electoral data from March 2020 rather than December 2020 for the next boundary review, due to the potential impact of Covid-19 on the canvass; the Government-backed amendment to create an additional protected constituency for Ynys Mon (Anglesey) were both successfully passed during Commons stages. Scottish Boundary Commissions update Isabel Drummond-Murray (ID-M) advised that she was closely following the Parliamentary Constituencies Bill for the next review of the Westminster constituencies and thought the data might be published

in October but said the Bill needed to complete its passage. She commented that it would be a good time for a new Commissioner to start as it would be at the beginning of the next review. In relation to Local Government Boundary Commission work, she advised that the Islands review would be finished as soon as possible and this covered Argyll and Bute, North Ayrshire and Highland council areas. The Commissioners would consider their responses before the consultation in early November and remarked that this was running behind due to Covid-19. She said a commitment had been made to submit to the Scottish Government next May recommendations for all six council areas.

The Scottish Elections (Reform) Bill had a number of potential implications for the LGBCS including a name change to Boundaries Scotland and the introduction of the use of two and five member wards next spring. The draft Scottish Parliament Order to amend Cardowan has been laid before the Scottish Parliament. Royal Mail update Rachel Winham (RW), through Lindsey Hamilton, provided an update on the following areas:

Next week we will start looking at the Candidates' Mail SLA with the Scottish Government Any candidate or political party wishing to submit artwork for pre-checking of Candidates' Mail is welcome to do so at any time At the request of Scotland election bodies we are looking at a contingency plan for the return of postal voting. Over the coming months they would be ramping up their service and working with candidates and parties and Local Authorities and their print partners to develop individual mailing plans. They were also interested to know how they could provide better support in the May 2021 election and any further contingency planning they were required to be party to. EMB update Chris Highcock (CH) informed the Panel of their preparations for the 13 by elections which had either been postponed from earlier dates, having been reassessed on risk or subsequently arisen. He said a number of Returning Officers were reassessing proposed dates and could be subject to further postponement. He mentioned the supplementary guidance for delivering safe events and advised that this was being maintained as draft guidance to be fed into planning for the Scottish Parliament election. As all Returning Officers are asked to review their polling places in general, issues around capacity and physical distancing were under consideration as was implementation of regular cleaning throughout the day. Policy ideas being considered were a two day poll which would allow the volume of electors to spread over two different days; early voting which could cope with fewer polling places but spread over a number of days. The usual pinch points which occurred around 8 am and 5:30 to 7.30pm might not be so relevant if the majority of people would be working at home. Pete Wildman (PW) reported the annual canvass had started slightly later due to the franchise change and the majority of people had received a single communication. He said that the practice of house to house enquiry may or may not happen with each ERO deciding on that but there was the opportunity to delay publication of the electoral register until 1 February 2021 if the unexpected happened. There would be a review at the end to assess what had and had not worked. A flyer highlighting the change to the franchise for foreign nationals had been included with the canvass and we could see how many had actually applied once the register was published. He said EROs would be writing to prisoners inviting them to register. (SM) remarked that prison registers by their nature were very fluid and asked if there would be more regular correspondence coming out from prisons. (PW) replied that updates would be received from prisons every three months and lessons would be learned as the process progressed. He reminded the panel that prisoners are registered at their home addresses. The Electoral Commission update Sarah Mackie (SMA) advised the Panel that the Electoral Commission welcomed the Commission on Standards in Public Life review of their regulation of elections which

had taken place over the summer and said it was right the work of the Commission was reviewed. The Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC) has also announced an enquiry into the work of The Electoral Commission. (SMa) advised that the consultation was due to close on 16 November. Again The Commission welcomed the scrutiny of their work. (SMa) Late last week the Electoral Commission produced and circulated a list of objectives to support the delivery of successful elections a week or two ago. She invited feedback on the list of objectives. The Commission's Annual Report and Accounts 2019-20 had been laid in the Scottish Parliament. The Commission was now accountable to The Scottish Parliament and would shortly lay estimates for 2021/22 before the Scottish Parliament for the costs in delivery of their devolved functions. The Commission looked forward to reporting on a formal basis from now on. (MMcK) advised that the Commission welcomed the two SSIs published by the Scottish Government in the last week which introduced controls around online campaigning at Scottish Parliament and Scottish Council elections by requiring an imprint to be included on all online campaign material and publications. The new provisions would be reflected in Commission guidance. (MMcK) also advised on the UK Government consultation on imprints which runs until 4 November 2020. The Commission will await the outcome of that consultation. (SM) expressed his surprise at not being told about these instruments in advance. The power had been on the statute book for 20 years, partly because the issue had always been in the detail – particularly twitter character restrictions. He was only able to see them now by accessing the UK legislation database online during the meeting. The Cabinet Office consultation had identified a number of issues which, on a brief reading of the two SSIs, did not appear to be addressed and which would have been if subject to proper discussion and consultation. (MMcC) assured (SM) that she would take back the fact that there had been no prior discussion about the SSIs with parties. (RPR) suggested that the issue be dealt with separately from the meeting by email. (MMcK) thanked those who had responded to the Electoral Commission's consultation on draft Codes of Practice on Spending by Candidates and Parties at the Scottish Parliament election. The Commission was considering the feedback received and draft Codes would be submitted to Scottish Ministers for approval and laying before the Scottish Parliament in due course. It was hoped the Codes would be in place in early January 2021 but that was dependent upon the progress of the Codes through Parliament. The Panel would be updated on progress in due course. (MMcK) advised the Panel that the Electoral Commission had recently published guidance regarding online party conferences. He agreed to circulate a link to the document to Panel members. Dates of future meetings 2020 Tuesday 24 November 2020 10:30am 2021 Thursday 21 January 10:30am Thursday 10 March 10:30am Related content Party registration decisions View our decisions on political party names, descriptions and emblems View current applications View the political party names, descriptions and emblems which we are currently considering as part of our assessment process Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Registers of unincorporated associations Download and view the registers of unincorporated associations

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Governance Matter – Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) membership (EC 55/21) Commission Board Action Tracker (EC 56/21) Forward Plan of Board business (EC 57/21) First published: 14 October 2021 Last updated: 14 October 2021 Meeting summary Date:

Wednesday 21 July 2021 Time: 9:30am to 12:45pm Location: By video conference Date of next scheduled meeting: Wednesday 22 September 2021 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Pullinger, Chair Rob Vincent Alex Attwood Sarah Chambers Elan Closs Stephens Stephen Gilbert Alasdair Morgan Joan Walley In attendance: Bob Posner, Chief Executive Craig Westwood, Director, Communications, Policy and Research Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services Binnie Goh, General Counsel Zena Khan, Senior Advisor, Governance Hannah Kavanagh, Legal Officer (for all items) Alicia Diaz, Legal and Governance Officer (for all items) Phil Thompson, Head of Research (for items 4 and 7) Rhidian Thomas, Head, Electoral Commission, Wales (for item 4) Sarah Mackie, Manager, Electoral Commission, Scotland (for item 4) Katy Knock, Policy Manager (for items 4, 6 and 7) Tom Hawthorn Head, Policy (for items 5, 7 and CSPL item) David Bailey, Head, Strategic Planning and Performance (for item 5) Niki Nixon, Head, External Communications (for items 6 and 7) Laura Mcleod, Public Affairs Manager (for item 6) Mark Williams, Policy Manager (for item 6) Kate Engles, Policy Manager (for items 6 and CSPL item) Orla Hennessey, Media Relations and Public Information Manager (for item 7) Andreea Ghita, Senior Communications Officer (for item 7) Susan Crown, Head, Campaigns and Corporate Identity (for item 8) Dan Adamson, Head, Monitoring and Enforcement (for CSPL item) Apologies and welcomes Apologies were received from Commissioner Sue Bruce. The Board noted that Commissioner Sarah Chambers' appointment to the Commission Board for a second term ending in 2026 had been confirmed. The Board further noted that the appointment of the new Commissioner for Northern Ireland, Katy Radford has now been approved by the House of Commons and subject to timely receipt of the Royal Warrant will start with the Commission on 1

September 2021. Declarations of interest Commissioner Joan Walley declared the end of her term of office as Chair of Aldersgate Group ending 19 July 2021. The Board noted that the Commissioners Register of interests would be updated and this reflected on the Commission's external website in line with the Commissioners Code of Conduct.

Minutes of the previous Board meeting (EC 49/21) Resolved: That the minutes of the Commission Board meeting on 23 June 2021 be agreed. Reporting on the May 2021 polls (EC 50/21) The Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance introduced the report providing information gathered and analysed from voters, campaigners and electoral administrators which forms an important part of our evidence base for reporting on the polls, which will be published in September 2021. The Board discussed reviewing comparable data trends on areas such as turnout and voter confidence. The Board also discussed the inclusion of narrative in the reporting to provide context around voting / elections in the context of COVID. The Board noted that we are continuing to engage at a UK-wide level, through national and regional forums and individually with local authority chief executives and election teams, to enhance the evidence base before the reports are finalised. Resolved: That the Board noted the update on

emerging findings from the post May 2021 elections research and the key themes for reporting on the polls, to be published in September 2021. Corporate Plan 2022/23 – 2026/27 (EC 51/21) The Chief Executive introduced the draft Corporate Plan 2022/23 – 2026/27 building on the previous discussions on financial strategy at the June meeting. The Board welcomed how the plan was developing and agreed to move forward from previous discussions, with offers of further review of the developing parts of the draft Plan from some Commissioners. Resolved: That the Board noted the draft Corporate Plan 2022/23 – 2026/27 subject to further planned work. Elections Bill Update (EC 52/21) The Director, Communications, Policy and Research introduced the report, providing an overview of the key points and updates since they last met in June and further to the Bill's publication on 5 July 2021. The Board discussed elements of the key provisions, looking at the impact and evidence supporting the Commission's position. The Board welcomed the update and look forward to further updates as work streams develop. Resolved: That the Board noted the update on the Bill and actions arising. Modernising Voting research (EC 53/21) The Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance introduced the report providing the Board with a summary of the key research findings on voters' attitudes to voting and setting out proposed next steps for the project on the feasibility of introducing reforms to the current voting process. Resolved: That the Board noted the update on the research findings and agreed initial next steps on the project. Public awareness plans for scheduled elections in May 2022 (EC 54/21) The Director, Communications, Policy and Research introduced the report providing information on the Commission's plans to deliver its function of providing public information ahead of the next scheduled set of elections across the UK. Resolved: That the Board agreed the plans and budget for the voter registration campaign, identified issues and/or risks that should be taken into account. Governance Matter – Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) membership (EC 55/21) The General Counsel introduced the report providing an update to the membership changes of the Audit and Risk Committee. The Board acknowledged Alasdair Morgan's sound service on the ARC. Resolved: That the Board agreed the appointment of Stephen Gilbert onto the ARC for a three year term from 1 October 2021. Resolved: That the Board agreed the renewal of the Independent Advisor Paul Redfern onto the ARC for a second three year term from 1 November 2021. Commission Board Action Tracker (EC 56/21) Resolved: That the Board noted the progress against actions requested by the Board. Forward Plan of Board business (EC 57/21) Commissioners discussed items of business for future meetings. These would be reflected in the Forward Plan of Board business at the September meeting. Resolved: That the Board reviewed and noted the Forward Plan of Board business scheduling further topics for the next few meetings. At this point the Board concluded their business and this was followed by an informal briefing session on CSPL report recommendations. The Board received a presentation on the recommendations made by the Committee on Standards in Public Life in its report on the regulation on electoral finance law, with initial analysis, led by the Director, Regulation. The Board noted the CSPL report recommendations and thanked the Director, Regulation and the teams.

You are in the How we make decisions section [Home](#) [How we make decisions](#) [Scottish Parliament Political Parties Panel meeting minutes: 9 November 2022](#) [Northern Ireland Assembly Parties' Panel: 7 June 2022](#) [On this page](#) [Parliamentary Parties Panel](#)

[Northern Ireland Assembly Parties Panel](#) [Scottish Parliament Parties Panel](#) [Wales Assembly Parties Panel](#) First published: 11 June 2019 Last updated: 6 December 2022

About our party panels We have four party panels, which represent the different areas of the UK. These panels give political parties the chance to tell us about any issues that are affecting them. Each of the panels usually meet four times a year, but they can meet more or less often if they need to.

[Parliamentary Parties Panel](#) has a representative from each of the parliamentary political parties that have two or more sitting MPs. Currently, there are

representatives from: the Conservative and Unionist Party the Labour Party the

Scottish National Party the Liberal Democrats the Democratic Unionist Party the

Social Democratic and Labour Party Plaid Cymru the Alba Party [Meeting minutes](#) [Read the full minutes of the: 6 June 2023 meeting](#) [7 February 2023 meeting](#) [6 December 2022 meeting](#)

[6 September 2022 meeting](#) [Previous Parliamentary Parties Panel meeting minutes](#) [7 June 2022 meeting](#) [1 February 2022 meeting](#)

[7 December 2021 meeting](#) [7 September 2021 meeting](#) [1 June 2021 meeting](#) [2 February 2021 meeting](#)

[1 December 2020 meeting](#) [1 September 2020 meeting](#) [2 June 2020 meeting](#) [3 February 2020 meeting](#)

[3 September 2019 meeting](#) [4 June 2019 meeting](#) [21 February 2019 meeting](#) [4 December 2018 meeting](#)

[4 September 2018 meeting](#) [5 June 2018 meeting](#) [20 February 2018 meeting](#) [5 December 2017 meeting](#) [4 July 2017 meeting](#)

[6 December 2016 meeting](#) [6 September 2016 meeting](#) [23 February 2016 meeting](#) [1 December 2015 meeting](#) [1 September 2015 meeting](#)

[2 June 2015 meeting](#) [3 March 2015 meeting](#) [Northern Ireland Assembly Parties Panel](#) The Northern Ireland Assembly Parties Panel

has a representative from the political parties that make up the Northern Ireland

Assembly. Currently, there are representatives from: Sinn Féin the Social Democratic

and Labour Party the Democratic Unionist Party the Ulster Unionist Party Alliance the

Traditional Unionist Voice Party [Meeting minutes](#) [Read the full minutes of the: 28 March 2023 meeting](#)

[25 January 2023 meeting](#) [7 June 2022 meeting](#) [8 March 2022 meeting](#) [18 January 2022 meeting](#)

[21 October 2021 meeting](#) [27 April 2021 meeting](#) [26 January 2021 meeting](#) [6 October 2020 meeting](#)

[28 January 2020 meeting](#) [1 October 2019 meeting](#) [11 June 2019 meeting](#) [29 January 2019 meeting](#) [Scottish Parliament Parties Panel](#) The Scottish

Parliament Parties Panel has a representative from the political parties that make up

the Scottish Parliament. Currently, there are representatives from: Scottish

National Party Scottish Labour Party Scottish Liberal Democrats Scottish Green Party

Scottish Conservative Party [Meeting minutes](#) [Read the full minutes of the: 9 November 2022](#)

[16 May 2022 meeting](#) [8 March 2022 meeting](#) [20 January 2022 meeting](#) [10 November 2021 meeting](#)

[15 September 2021 meeting](#) [19 May 2021 meeting](#) [4 March 2021 meeting](#) [21 January 2021 meeting](#) [24 November 2020 meeting](#)

[29 September 2020 meeting](#) [29 April 2020 meeting](#) [22 January 2020 meeting](#) [7 June 2019 meeting](#)

[23 October 2018 meeting](#) Welsh Parliament Parties Panel The Welsh Parliament Parties panel has a representative from each of

the Parliament's political parties that have two or more sitting Members of Welsh

Parliament. Currently, there are representatives from: Welsh Labour Plaid Cymru Welsh

Conservatives Welsh Lib Dems [Meeting minutes](#) [Read the full minutes of the: 18 June 2018 meeting](#)

[29 March 2018 meeting](#)

Corporate Plan for Wales 2022/23 to 2026/27 | Electoral Commission Search

Corporate Plan for Wales 2022/23 to 2026/27 You are in the Our plans and priorities section Home Our plans and priorities Contents 1. The electoral system in Wales Section 1 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan for Wales 2. The Electoral Commission in Wales Section 2 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan for Wales 3. Putting voters first in Wales Section 3 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan for Wales 4. Supporting and securing campaigner compliance with the law in Wales Section 4 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan for Wales 5. Supporting local electoral services delivery and resilience in Wales Section 5 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan for Wales 6. Making sure electoral law is fair and effective in Wales Section 6 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan 7. A modern and sustainable electoral system in Wales Section 7 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan for Wales 8. Underpinning this work in Wales Section 8 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan for Wales 9. Managing our costs in Wales Section 9 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan for Wales 10. Measuring our performance in Wales Section 10 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan for Wales 11. Managing risks and opportunities in Wales Section 11 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan for Wales Foreword This five-year Corporate Plan has been prepared and is submitted pursuant to paragraph 16B of Schedule 1 to the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. It covers the Electoral Commission's activities in Wales for the period 2022/23 to 2026/27, and replaces and develops our interim plan put in place after the December 2019 UK general election. The Electoral Commission works independent from governments to promote public confidence in the electoral system, ensuring the integrity of elections and the legitimacy of their results. We aim to deliver our responsibilities impartially, ensuring independence of thinking and decision making that can be trusted. We have UK wide responsibilities, are accountable to the UK Parliament, the Senedd and the Scottish Parliament, and our work is directed to meeting the needs of each of the four parts of the UK. Our statutory responsibilities are integral to the electoral system – whether regulating political finance laws; providing oversight, guidance, or support on the delivery of elections; supporting voters to engage with the democratic process with confidence; or providing evidence and insights to inform future improvement. Working with others, we constantly strive to improve the electoral system for the benefit of voters, campaigners and electoral administrators. Elections in both Wales and the UK as a whole are well-run. Our survey work shows very high levels of public satisfaction in the processes in place for voters to register and cast their votes. We also have one of the most transparent systems of political finance in the world. However, there are pressures on the whole electoral system which need our attention. We will continue to seek to remove barriers that deter people from registering or casting their vote. Alongside our ongoing activities to encourage voter registration and protect against electoral fraud, we will work to retain voter confidence in political campaigning as it evolves. We will support parties and campaigners to comply with the law, while continuing to ensure political finance is transparent. We will support local authorities to meet the significant economic, social and environmental challenges they face in delivering well-run electoral services. We will also support electoral administrators to adapt to the increasingly diverse approach to the way elections are delivered, brought about by devolution and the changing needs of voters. During the period of this plan, we will work with others to secure changes in the law and in the operation of the electoral system that will ensure it is resilient to changes in society. Critical to this will be taking on board advances in digital technology, seeking sustainable solutions and

improving the coherence and efficiency of how organisations involved in the electoral system work together. Underpinning the plan is the requirement to provide value for money and maintain a well-run organisation. The plan incorporates a renewed focus on equality, diversity and inclusion, and is designed to encourage staff engagement, development of skills and use of the technology required to support effective ways of working and continuous learning and improvement. We look forward to working constructively with the Welsh Government, Senedd, other UK governments and parliaments, parties and campaigners, electoral administrators and other interested groups to maintain voter confidence in our electoral system. Download the corporate plan Corporate plan for Wales 2022/23 to 2026/27

Draft Disability Action Plan: A Consultation | Electoral Commission Search
Draft Disability Action Plan: A Consultation You are in the Our consultations section Home Our consultations On this page Introduction Action measures Action plan Arrangements for consultation and publication Consultee list Feedback form First published: 13 January 2021 Last updated: 15 April 2021 Responding to this consultation Thank you for your interest in our draft Disability Action Plan, on which consultation has recently closed. We are currently considering the responses and will be publishing the final version in due course. If you need any further information on any aspect, please email us at infonorthernireland@electoralcommission.org.uk or call on 028 9089 4020 to speak to one of our team Introduction Under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) (as amended by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006), the Electoral Commission is required when carrying out its functions to have due regard to the need to: promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and encourage participation by disabled people in public life ('the disability duties'). Under Section 49B of the DDA 1995, the Electoral Commission is also required to submit to the Equality Commission a disability action plan showing how it proposes to fulfil these duties in relation to its functions. As Head of the Electoral Commission, Northern Ireland, I can confirm that we are committed to implementing effectively the disability duties and this disability action plan. We will allocate the necessary resources (in terms of people, time and money) in order to implement effectively this plan and, where appropriate, build objectives and targets relating to the disability duties into corporate and annual operating plans. We will also put appropriate internal arrangements in place to ensure that the disability duties are complied with and this disability action plan effectively implemented. We will ensure the effective communication of the plan to staff and to providing all necessary training and guidance for staff on the disability duties and the implementation of the plan. Responsibility for implementing, reviewing and evaluating this disability action plan and the point of contact within the Electoral Commission will be: Name: Mairaid McMahon Title: Manager, Electoral Commission Northern Ireland Address: Ground floor, 4 Cromac Place, The Gasworks, Belfast, BT7 2JB Telephone number: 028 9089 4029 Email: mmcMahon@electoralcommission.org.uk If you require this plan in an alternative format (such as in large print, in Braille, on audio cassette, easy read or on computer disc) and/or language, please contact the above person to discuss your requirements. We confirm our commitment to submitting an annual progress report on the implementation of this plan to the Equality Commission and carrying out a five year review of this plan, or plans submitted to the Equality Commission over the five year review period. A copy of this plan, our annual progress to the Equality Commission and our five year review of this plan will be published in the near future. Functions Outlined below are the range of functions of the Electoral Commission. . Our vision is to be a world-class public sector organisation – innovative, delivering great value and getting right what matters most to voters and legislators. We plan to achieve this vision through a five year work programme with four goals: To enable the continued delivery of free and fair elections and referendums, focusing on the needs of electors and addressing the changing environment to ensure every vote remains secure and accessible To ensure an increasingly trusted and transparent system of regulation in political finance, overseeing compliance, promoting understanding amongst those regulated and proactively pursuing breaches To be an independent and respected centre of expertise, using knowledge and insight to further the transparency, fairness and efficiency of

our democratic system, and help adapt it to the modern, digital age To provide value for money, making best use of our resources and expertise to deliver services that are attuned to what matters most to voters. This goal underpins and supports all of our work. Public life positions The range of public life positions which the Electoral Commission has responsibility for is as follows. Together our ten Electoral Commissioners constitute the Board of the Commission and ensure that the Commission discharges its functions. One of these Commissioners is the Chair of the Commission, and one is appointed specifically as a lead Commissioner for Northern Ireland. The Commissioners are appointed by Royal Warrant to exercise the functions of the Commission. The Commissioners are independent, non-partisan and accountable directly to Parliament. Action measures Outlined below are the measures which we propose to take over the three year period of this disability action plan, together with performance indicators or targets. The actions outlined below are designed both to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and to encourage their participation in public life. During the lifetime of this plan, there are several key activities and events that we will use to structure our activities:

Modernising Voting research: this UK-wide study will explore views around what people think about the current way they can cast their vote, what is important to people when they vote and what would improve their voting experience. This study will include identifying any findings on the experiences of disabled people. We will use the findings to help us to identify any improvements to processes within the current framework as well as to inform any recommendations for changes to the system.

Northern Ireland Canvass 2021: this exercise, carried out by the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland, will form the basis of a new electoral register, by canvassing households across Northern Ireland to ensure as many people as are eligible are registered accurately. We will run a Northern Ireland-wide public awareness campaign to encourage people to sign up to the electoral register. Accuracy and Completeness research: after the electoral canvass is complete, we will undertake research to assess both the accuracy and completeness of the new register. In this context, accuracy is a measure of the number of major and minor errors in the register, while completeness considers the percentage of people who are eligible to be on the register who are actually registered.

Northern Ireland Assembly election 2022: we will run a Northern Ireland wide public awareness campaign to encourage people to register to vote and to provide them with the information they need to be able to cast their vote. We will publish a set of digital learning resources to promote the political literacy amongst young people in Northern Ireland. These resources will increase understanding of the provisions in place to ensure disabled people are able to cast their vote. The resources will also include guidance for educators to support the delivery of sessions in formal and informal educational settings. We will also conduct research and analysis to assess levels of participation amongst varying demographics, including disabled people.

Northern Ireland Local Government elections 2023: we will run a Northern Ireland wide public awareness campaign to encourage people to register to vote and to provide them with the information they need to be able to cast their vote. Our digital learning resources will provide information on the provisions in place to ensure disabled people are able to cast their vote. We will also conduct research and analysis to assess levels of participation amongst varying demographics, including disabled people. We will also use the findings of previous and forthcoming post-election research, as well as reports such as Elections for everyone , to inform our work on engaging with representative groups in Northern Ireland, to identify any specific barriers or issues that exist in achieving higher levels of participation in

elections. This will form the basis of our engagement with the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland and Northern Ireland Assembly Parties' Panel as outlined below. Underpinning this will be our ongoing work to ensure Commissioners and staff across the organisation are aware of their responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, and that our communications and engagement work is designed to both enable access and promote positive attitudes towards disabled people. We have brought in an interim consultant ahead of appointing to a permanent role in spring 2021; their specific responsibilities will include the provision of advice and expertise to management to ensure organisational compliance with all equality legislation, as well as the incorporation of this Plan within the priorities for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. Action plan Measures to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage the participation of disabled people in public life Part 1: commencing 2021 Measure Timescale Performance indicator/target Build objectives and targets relating to the disability duties into workplans and annual operating plans, whilst ensuring the corporate planning process is informed by adherence to all relevant equality duties. 2021 and ongoing Relevant plans include objectives and targets that will enable the disability action plan priorities to be addressed Identify opportunities to portray positive images of disabled people, in both internal and external communications, as well as ensuring all communications are accessible 2021 Positive images of disabled people used in both internal and external communications Identify a disability champion and develop a description for the role, at a senior level, to communicate on its importance and drive organisational engagement. The Champion will play a key role in ensuring that the EDI Officer provides reports on progress against the implementation of the DAP at 6-monthly intervals to the Senior Leadership Group (SLG). 2021 and ongoing Disability Champion appointed, to sit on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group Skynet posts to inform and engage with staff across the organisation Bi-annual reports to ET Ensure all staff and office holders aware of the Disability Duties and the public authority's DAP. Undertake this by: Including information in induction of new staff/office holders, at staff/office holders training sessions Alerting staff/office holders to information on the internet and/or intranet, articles in staff and sectoral magazines and newsletters. Where possible, we will include people who have lived experience of a range of disabilities in training and awareness raising activities. 2021 and ongoing Induction and training programmes include reference to Disability Duties in Northern Ireland and an overview of the DAP Recruitment and selection training - Ensure all those involved in recruitment and selection panels have been trained in disability awareness and disability equality legislation to ensure no negative attitudes in recruitment and selection processes. 2021-2 All staff involved in recruitment and selection activities to have been trained by December 2022 Submit annual review of DAP 2021 Review submitted to Equality Commission and published online Engage with representative bodies for disabled people to build relationships, identify any barriers to registration for people with disabilities and encourage participation in the 2021 Canvass in Northern Ireland 2021 Relationships established with key representative bodies Information shared in advance of the Canvass to encourage greater participation Use the findings of the Modernising Voting research to identify barriers for disabled people in casting their votes, and work with EONI and to ensure they are addressed. 2021 Issues identified and raised with EONI by end of 2021 in preparation for Northern Ireland Assembly election in May 2022. Engage with representative bodies for disabled people to encourage participation in 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election 2021-2 Tailored information, where required and

available, shared with representative bodies to encourage participation in the election Building on existing organisational approach to promoting mental health and wellbeing, consider signing up to the Equality Commission's Mental Health Charter. 2021-2 Internal review of mental health and wellbeing policies complete by end 2021 Evidence gathered through staff surveys Part 2: commencing 2022-3 Measure Timescale Performance indicator/target Include questions in post-election research to enable an assessment to be made of the experience of disabled people in participating in the election, or reasons why they did not. Identify any immediate actions/areas that can be addressed to enhance the experience of disabled people when voting. 2022 Establish baseline data to inform decision making and use as a comparator for 2023 analysis. Immediate actions, if applicable, identified and addressed in advance of 2023 polls Consider how the views of disabled staff are incorporated in the promotion of disability equality in the workplace and in policies, practices and procedures. 2022 Incorporate into EDI agenda and EDI officer role description Submit annual review of DAP 2022 Review submitted to Equality Commission and published online Engage with representative bodies for disabled people to encourage participation in 2023 Northern Ireland Local Government elections 2022-3 Tailored information, where required and available, shared with representative bodies to encourage participation in the election Include questions in post-election research to enable an assessment to be made of the experience of disabled people in participating in the election, or reasons why they did not 2023 Evidence gathered on participation the election Analyse responses to post-election research and compare to 2022 data. Identify short, medium and long term actions that can be taken to enhance the experience of disabled people when voting. 2023-4 Trends/themes identified from 2022 Assembly election and 2023 Local Government election Submit annual review of DAP 2023 Review submitted to Equality Commission and published online Arrangements for consultation and publication Following engagement with the Equality Commission, we will publish this Plan for consultation in early 2021, using our website and social media channels to raise awareness and encourage responses. We will also engage directly with a range of organisations (outlined below) which represent disabled people, and endeavour to gather responses from those with lived experience of disability including mental health conditions through that process. The consultation will last for 3 months, and we will review responses and update the Plan accordingly. We will submit the final version of the Plan to the Equality Commission and make it available on our website.

Consultee list Voluntary and Community Sector Action on Hearing Loss ADAPT Northern Ireland Advice NI Age NI Age Sector Platform Association of Talking Newspapers Autism NI Aware British Deaf Association (NI) Bryson Charitable Group Carers Northern Ireland Cedar Foundation Children in Northern Ireland (CiNI) Children's Law Centre Commissioner for Older People NI Community Development and Health Network (NI) Council for the Homeless (NI) Diabetes UK NI Disability Action Disability Sport NI Down's Syndrome Association Employers for Disability Equality Commission for Northern Ireland Inspire Marie Curie Mencap Mindwise Motor Neurone Disease Association National Autistic Society Northern Ireland NI Commissioner for Children & Young People Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA) Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO) Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke Association Northern Ireland Dyslexia Centre Northern Ireland ME Association Northern Ireland Union of Supported Employment NOW Group Praxis Care RNIB Sense NI Start 360 The National Deaf Children's Society Northern Ireland Stakeholders Electoral Office for Northern Ireland Northern Ireland Office Northern Ireland Parties Alliance Party

of NI Democratic Unionist Party Labour Party People Before Profit Alliance SDLP Sinn Féin The Green Party in Northern Ireland Traditional Unionist Voice Ulster Unionist Party Workers' Party Local Government Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Ards and North Down Borough Council Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council Belfast City Council Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Derry City and Strabane District Council Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Mid Ulster District Council Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Northern Ireland Departments The Executive Office Department for Economy Department for Infrastructure Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs Department for Communities Department of Education Department of Finance Department of Health Department of Justice Feedback form

Public attitudes towards voting in Wales in the context of COVID-19 | Electoral Commission Search Public attitudes towards voting in Wales in the context of COVID-19 You are in the Public attitudes towards voting in the context of COVID-19 section Home Our research Public attitudes towards voting in the context of COVID-19 On this page Introduction Key findings Polling station voting Postal voting Other findings First published: 20 January 2021 Last updated: 19 March 2021 Introduction In February 2021, we asked a representative sample of eligible voters in Wales about their attitudes towards voting during the pandemic. The questions covered attitudes towards postal voting and other options for the safe running of the election in 2021. This is a repeat of the work carried out in December 2020. This page provides a summary of findings from the latest of these studies, makes comparison with December. Key findings There was an increase, between December and February, in the proportion of people who said they would vote in person if an election were held now. Voting in a polling place is the preferred option amongst a majority of voters but, compared with how people normally vote, the findings suggest a likely increase in the proportion of voters opting to use a postal vote. Polling station voting There was a large increase in the proportion of people who said they would vote in a polling station. In December, 44% said they would vote in a polling station if an election were held now, this rose to 56% in February. When we explain the planned Covid safety measures for polling stations, based on Electoral Commission guidance, the proportion who say it's safe to vote in a polling station rises from 73% to 81% (or 86% of people who usually vote in person). Over 4/5 (82%) of those who say its unsafe think that there is no measure that could be taken at polling stations that would make them feel safe. While we are not able, from this research, to report specifically on BAME respondents in in Wales we can report for Great Britain as a whole. 61% of BAME respondents said voting in person was safe compared to 75% of White respondents. Once told about the Electoral Commission guidance around safety measures 73% of BAME respondents feel safe voting in person compared with 84% of White respondents. Postal voting 19% of those who say they usually vote in person said they would vote by post although this has declined significantly from the 27% who indicated this in December. While this should not be taken as a reliable indicator of the number of people who will vote by post it does indicate that there could be an uplift in May. Other findings There has been an increase in the willingness to vote if an election were to take place now. 85% said they would vote in February compared to 75% in November. While the most common preferred method for holding the poll remained using the same voting methods as usual (37%) there was an increase in the number of people who wanted the polling stations to be open more than one day. In December 23% of people wanted the polling station to be open more than one day, by February this had risen to 32%. This is potentially a result of the increased discussion and coverage of this approach. Just under a third (32%) of those people who intend to vote in person said that if their household had to isolate due to Covid-19 then they would not know someone able to vote for them. Just over half (53%) said they would. There was no change since December in the proportion of people (52%) who said they would apply for a postal vote if encouraged to do so. Background notes Background notes All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from work done for the Commission by YouGov Plc. February 2021: Total sample size was 508. Fieldwork was undertaken between 29 January- 20th February 2021. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all adults in Wales (aged 16+). December 2020: Total sample size was 1,031 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 7 - 11 December 2020. The survey was carried out online. The figures have

been weighted and are representative of all adults in Wales (aged 16+). Full tables Wales Related content Public attitudes towards voting in England in the context of COVID-19 Public attitudes towards voting in Scotland in the context of COVID-19 Read more about public attitudes towards voting in Scotland in 2021 2019 electoral fraud data about electoral fraud in 2019 and view the data Public attitudes Read our reports about public attitudes towards voting

Appendix 3 of the Code of Conduct for Electoral Commissioners: Guidance on Acceptance of Gifts and Hospitality, and Declaring Meetings | Electoral Commission Search
Appendix 3 of the Code of Conduct for Electoral Commissioners: Guidance on Acceptance of Gifts and Hospitality, and Declaring Meetings You are in the Code of Conduct for Electoral Commissioners section Home Commissioners Code of Conduct for Electoral Commissioners On this page Introduction Frequently Asked Questions First published:

19 December 2022 Last updated: 18 June 2023 1. Introduction Introduction 1.1

Commissioners are expected to observe exceptionally high standards of personal honesty and integrity. 1.2 The registration of gifts and hospitality, as well as interests, helps ensure public confidence in the Commission, and maintains accountability and transparency of decision-making by avoiding any real or perceived bias or influence. 1.3 Commissioners are required to record all gifts and hospitality offered or received (other than those in a purely personal or private capacity, unless there is a connection which might make disclosure advisable) - including any which is refused - in writing using the forms at Appendix A or B (one for hospitality and gifts received, and the other for hospitality and gifts offered).

1.4 In certain circumstances it is less the refreshment that has been offered and accepted that is worth recording, than the person with whom a meeting is taking place. Encounters with people either closely involved in the sphere of the Commission's concerns, or where discussion includes areas of the Commission's concerns should be declared. It is not designed to include the many incidental and purely social contacts which all Commissioners, but perhaps more particularly former politicians, are bound to have on an almost daily basis. 1.5 The arrangements for gifts and hospitality were last reviewed and updated by the Commission Board in 2023.

Principles 1.6 Integrity and public confidence in the UK's democratic process, and transparency in party funding, are among the aims and objectives of the Electoral Commission, and fairness, impartiality and transparency our declared organisational values. It is therefore especially important for the Commission to observe the highest standards of probity in its own practices. 1.7 Commissioners should always undertake their duties according to the "Nolan principles" (appended to Code of Conduct), and not use their official position to receive gifts, hospitality or benefit of any kind which might reasonably be seen to compromise the Commission's position or an individual's personal judgement or integrity. 1.8 The conduct of Commissioners should not foster the suspicion of any conflict of interest between their Commission duties and their private interests. 1.9 The actions of

Commissioners should not give the impression that they could be, or may have been, placed under some kind of obligation, or influenced by a gift or consideration, to show favour or disfavour to any person or organisation when acting as a Commissioner.

What this means for you a) Be aware of the policy and your obligation: you must register any gifts and hospitality that you receive or have refused, or that you offer to others, where there might be a perception that the offer was made in connection with your role with the Commission. If you have external interests which you have declared, you are required also to declare gifts and hospitality associated with those roles, not only those directly relating to your role at the Commission.

It is likely that these will have been sanctioned by the organisation on whose behalf you have been involved, but for the sake of transparency it is better that all gifts and hospitality are recorded even if, for example, you receive them in your capacity as a trustee of a charity or you are a member of another board. These will be recorded by the Commission but not published on its website. (You must also declare) If you have any meetings (that take place) with people who are closely

involved with areas of the Commission's concerns, or where a meeting with a significant or influential figure involves a discussion which includes areas of the Commission's concerns, then advise the Chair by letting him know the brief details (or by using the form below). b) Openness: if there is any doubt about the propriety of accepting a gift or hospitality it should be refused. c) Seek advice: if still in doubt about any aspect, or in the event of queries in relation to a particular case, consult the Chair, Chief Executive or Secretary to the Commission Board at the earliest opportunity; d) Complete the form: annotated examples of the forms are at Appendix A and B. Commissioners should complete the Declaration of Gifts and Hospitality Form, together with the necessary counter-signature, within 28 days of receiving it, and return it to the Secretariat. The Secretariat adds the declaration to the register which is published on our website. e) Get the form counter-signed/or signed in advance for hospitality offered: forms must be countersigned as shown below. If you are proposing to offer hospitality, prior approval must be obtained in advance from the Chief Executive or another member of the Executive Team. f) Monitoring and publication: the Secretary to the Commission Board will maintain the Register of Gifts and Hospitality (Appendix D), which is reviewed on a quarterly basis by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and published on the Commission's website. Approval arrangements Declaration: Countersigned by Chair, Chief Executive Commissioners, Chair Chief Executive, Chair Executive Team, Chief Executive Independent Member of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, Chief Executive Management Team, Relevant member of ET Other staff, Relevant Management Team Declarations by the Chair and Chief Executive (who counter-sign one another's declarations) are sent also to the Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee prior to each meeting of the Committee as an additional safeguard. All declarations are held in a register by the Secretary to the Commission Board, and periodically reported to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and published. Reviewed March 2023 Frequently Asked Questions I've been offered a gift I didn't want and couldn't give back without being discourteous or causing offence and I just want to get rid of it – can I simply bin it or ignore it? Answer: No, unless it is a de minimis gift (biro, mouse mat, key-ring) of very low value. Complete the form for gift received, explain the circumstances which prevented your refusing it, get it counter-signed, and pass the form and gift to Secretariat, who will arrange for appropriate disposal. We have avoided specifying a de minimis amount as even very small gifts can appear significant depending on the context and the donor. If the gift is perishable (flowers, plant, chocolates or similar), share it with your colleagues. I've been sent a gift (e.g. a bottle of wine) as a thank you by a contact/supplier – can I keep it? Answer: Not usually, and never alcohol. Declare it on the form and pass the gift to Secretariat for appropriate disposal to a registered charity. However, if you want to keep it and it is of low value (with the exception of alcohol), and your manager/the Chair authorises retention, declare it on the form and report it to Secretariat. If it is of some value and you are prepared to pay for it, establish a value, include it on the declaration form with your intention to pay for the item, seek authorisation by getting it counter-signed by your manager/the Chair, and if approved make a payment to the Commission. I was offered a gift of more than de minimis value and I'd like to keep it – what should I do? Answer: With the exception of alcohol, which should never be retained, try to ascertain or estimate its value for an equivalent payment to the Commission and include that on the declaration form (together with any supporting information including a description of the item and what it's made of, equivalent items for sale on the internet, rates of exchange for

the date the gift made if applicable). So, inexpensive cufflinks may be acceptable to keep, but if made of gold and diamonds, would need to be handled differently. Give the declaration form and supporting information to Secretariat and once it is countersigned, including as appropriate by the Chair of the Commission or the Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, you may make a cheque out (payable to the Electoral Commission) for the amount determined. If not authorised by counter-signature, the gift is to be provided to the Commission and either retained or disposed of for charitable purposes as it thinks fit. At a meeting hosted by a local authority at which I was present, we were offered lunch – should I declare this? Answer: If it is a basic sandwich lunch, then no, but if it is a hot meal away from the building, then yes. I met by chance a junior minister at the Department of Education whom I knew from my days as a constituency MP (or other party role) and we had a chat over a cup of coffee (she bought) which was catching up about mutual colleagues and one another – do I need to declare this? Answer: No. This is an incidental, social meeting with an acquaintance who is not obviously involved in any area of the Commission's concerns and where you did not touch explicitly on Commission work. If the same circumstance had involved, say, a meeting with a former colleague now in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities , involved in work on referendums, or individual electoral registration, then yes, with a note to say whether Commission areas of concern were touched on. I have been approached to give advice on a Bill relevant to the Commission's area of work – should I declare it? Answer: Yes. I've been asked to attend a meeting with Party colleagues to cover a number of matters – is this something I need to declare? Answer: It would depend what was covered at the meeting, but probably. It might be best to preface your meeting with your colleagues by advising them that you will need to declare the fact of any discussion relevant to the Commission's areas of concern, so that everything is clear and open from the outset. I've been offered a (low-value) item as a thank you for a lecture carried out in a Commissioner capacity – what should I do? Answer: If of de minimis value, disclose the gift and keep it. The disclosure will be recorded and reported to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee for its information in the usual way, if it's not of de minimis value. If other than de minimis, the gift should be declared, reported, and handed to Secretariat for disposal for charitable purposes. I've been sent a sample box of chocolates as a marketing device – what should I do? Answer: Declare the gift, contact the senders (if practicable) and explain our policy and politely ask them not to repeat it; then share the chocolates with your Commission colleagues. Does a gift I've been offered have to be disposed of by Secretariat, or can I route it to something/somebody I've identified as a suitably deserving cause? Answer: You must pass it to Secretariat for the sake of transparency and to avoid any imputation of impropriety, bias or attempt to gain advantage or influence another. It will be disposed of to a suitable charity, in an auditable way. I've been offered lunch/dinner/tickets to an event by a company/organisation on behalf of another organisation with which I'm involved – not the Electoral Commission. How should I treat this? Answer: Make a practice of declaring all gifts other than those in a purely personal or private capacity unless there is a connection which you think would make disclosure advisable (having had them separately recorded and if applicable their acceptance sanctioned by the relevant organisation) to avoid the risk of unknown connections subsequently coming to light which make acceptance of the gift appear suspicious or inappropriate. Staff-related FAQs (the staff Code of Conduct refers to this Guidance) Our contract to use a venue was of a high enough value to trigger a gift [e.g. of a Nintendo] – is it declarable,

and what should happen? Answer: Declare it, and hand it to Secretariat where it will be recorded and disposed of for charitable purposes (with a suitable audit trail). I won a prize for completing an evaluation form at the end of a conference as the result of a draw of all those completing forms – must I declare the prize and relinquish it? Answer: You must declare it, but you will be able to keep it. You won the prize as an individual and as the result of random chance, rather than by a firm intending to foster any relationship or commercial advantage with the Commission by targeting you to receive the prize. You have been lucky! Our loyalty card with an airline and our travel framework provider resulted in two free economy flights which were used on business – does this count as a gift? Answer: No – it isn't a gift or hospitality for the benefit or enjoyment of the individuals, but is a benefit (a saving) to the business. I have been given a Christmas present of (eg) a bottle of wine by a police officer with whom we work on Commission issues – may I keep it? Answer: You must not accept gifts or hospitality or receive other benefits from anyone who might reasonably be seen to compromise your personal judgement or integrity... However, with the exception of alcohol, which must never be kept, with the agreement of your manager and appropriate disclosure, a case may be made for accepting a gift, providing it is of low value, and the details recorded (including estimated value) for declaration and report to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee in the usual way. A Commissioner has given a present to a member (or group) of staff, as an acknowledgement of work done – must this be declared? Answer: Reasonable low value gifts from a Commissioner (or a line manager) to a member of staff to thank them for their work or acknowledge some celebration are acceptable (e.g. bottle of wine, chocolates). I have been paid royalties for a chapter I contributed as part of my Commission role to a book on electoral practice – do I keep the royalties or pay them to the Commission? Answer: Executive Team and Management Team members should not accept royalties or fees in any circumstances and the practice of paying the fee over to the Commission or advising the requesting organisation to donate the fee to charity should prevail. If you are approached or are considering undertaking external work, such as editing or writing a chapter for an external publication or speaking at an external conference you should always disclose such work to your Head of function (or Director in the case of Heads) in advance of agreeing to it, and refer to paragraph 3.3 of the Staff Code of Conduct, for more detailed guidance.

Letter to Minister for Levelling Up regarding secrecy of voting in polling stations |
Electoral Commission Search Letter to Minister for Levelling
Up regarding secrecy of voting in polling stations You are in the Key
correspondence section Home Key correspondence First published: 29 March 2022 Last
updated: 27 April 2023 Summary of the letter Date: 29 March 2022 To: The Rt Hon Kemi
Badenoch MP - Minister for Levelling Up Communities From: Bob Posner, Chief Executive
Format: Sent by email Full letter Dear Minister, Thank you for your letter dated 22
March on the secrecy of voting in polling stations. I am pleased to agree that the
law is clear and to confirm that is the Commission's established and consistent
position on this important subject. The right to vote in secret is set out in UK
electoral law. Anyone attempting to steal someone else's vote, or to influence
inappropriately how another person votes, is committing an offence. For this reason,
and as stated in your letter, voters should not be accompanied in the polling booth
except in specific defined circumstances. On this the law is clear, and the
Commission's position follows the law. While the police are responsible for enforcing
the law on secrecy requirements and other electoral fraud, the Commission works to
support voters, electoral administrators, police and prosecution authorities, as well
as law abiding campaigners to deter, prevent and detect electoral fraud of all kinds,
including 'family voting'. For voters, we raise awareness of the importance of
keeping votes secret and secure. Our 'Your Vote is Yours Alone' campaign – run in
partnership with Crimestoppers – highlights what constitutes electoral fraud and aims
to empower people to protect their vote and report any concerns. This campaign is
focused in areas where there have been historic concerns about electoral fraud. We
also produce a range of resources, including posters, leaflets, video adverts for
social media and other channels, and template press releases, which local authorities
can and do use to support the campaign and promote these important messages in their
area. We give Returning Officers and their staff clear guidance that voters should be
supported to vote in secret and free from influence. Our polling station handbook
highlights the issue of 'family voting', advising staff: "Make sure voters go to
polling booths individually so that their right to a secret vote is protected. No
other person is allowed to accompany a voter to a polling booth unless a voter who is
disabled or unable to read has requested assistance to vote." We have taken
additional steps in areas with a history of concerns about electoral integrity, such
as Tower Hamlets. We continue to be in regular contact with the Tower Hamlets
electoral services team, including in preparation for this year's elections. Polling
station staff there are being briefed on the need for vigilance. They should be pro-
active in the polling station to address issues such as family voting, involving the
police as required. We have worked with the local authority to produce a poster for
display at polling stations emphasising that only one voter at a time can enter a
polling booth. This will be displayed outside each polling station and on the desks
where voters receive their ballot papers from polling station staff. Additional
members of staff will also be assigned by the Returning Officer to polling stations
to help direct voters individually to polling booths. Finally, as with other
elections, Commission staff will be observing at polling stations and counts, though
I should emphasise that while my colleagues would highlight to polling station staff
any potential legal breaches witnessed, they have no powers themselves to intervene.
While it is the case that only the police and prosecution authorities can take
decisions on allegations of 'family voting', we work with the police to support
officers to understand the law, both through the National Police Chiefs' Council and
with individual forces and officers. In the context of elections in Tower Hamlets, we

have advised the Metropolitan Police that someone accompanying another person into a polling booth, other than in permitted cases to support someone with a disability with casting their vote, would bring into consideration for the police Section 66 of the Representation of the People Act 1983. This could include an attempt to interfere with a voter or to obtain information about how someone has voted. We fully share your view on the importance of the secrecy of the ballot and hope that this letter provides assurance that we will continue to play our part, working with others, to ensure it is upheld. Yours sincerely, Bob Posner Chief Executive

Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal three | Electoral Commission Search

Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal three You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 On this page Key achievements Performance measures First published: 30 June 2020 Last updated: 17 August 2020 Goal three To be an independent and respected centre of expertise, using knowledge and insight to further the transparency, fairness and efficiency of our democratic system, and help adapt it to the modern, digital age. This area of work focuses on innovation and strengthening our evidence base. Our expertise in policy, research and communications are core to enabling this work. Key achievements To contribute to innovation and strengthening our evidence base, we: reported on the three sets of elections and two recall petitions from 2019 and made recommendations to help improve future events reported on the accuracy and completeness of the electoral registers in the UK evaluated the UK Government's pilot schemes testing polling station voter ID in parts of England at the May 2019 local elections provided the Scottish and Welsh governments and parliaments with independent expert advice on legislative and policy changes arising from their respective electoral reform agendas assessed the impact on voters of any changes to the ordering of candidates on ballot papers for Scottish council elections, at the request of the Scottish Government published feasibility studies on options for modernising electoral registration provided oral evidence to three UK Parliament committees and written evidence to two House of Lords select committees provided written evidence to three National Assembly for Wales committees and gave oral evidence on two occasions provided written evidence on three bills to two Scottish Parliament committees and gave oral evidence on three occasions Performance measures Measures Performance Delivering a project to understand the landscape of public democratic engagement in the UK Achieved 1 Deliver a project to develop and explore the feasibility of proposals to modernise electoral registration and meet voters' needs and expectations in our digital society. Achieved Publish our evaluation and response to the 2019 voter ID pilots Achieved Work in support of the electoral law reform recommendations from the England and Wales, Scotland and the Northern Ireland Law Commissions Ongoing Innovation and strengthening our evidence base We provided expert advice and support to the Scottish and Welsh governments and parliaments, to help with their electoral reform agendas. This included extending the franchise for their elections to younger people in Wales and new categories of electors in both countries. We advised on proposals and draft legislation and our input helped to ensure these would work in practice. We evaluated the UK Government's ID pilots, which took place during the local elections in parts of England in May 2019. Our independent assessment will help the UK Government to assess the accessibility and security of different approaches, before introducing any requirement to show ID in polling stations across Great Britain. Our major studies into the accuracy and completeness of the electoral registers are the only UK studies on this topic. Many people use these findings and they provide evidence to inform the policy and legislative changes governments need to make to modernise our electoral registration systems. They are also a vital resource to inform our own and other organisations' efforts to target public awareness work to increase voter registration. The latest study found that while the proportion of people registered to vote remains largely stable, young people and private renters are still less likely to be correctly registered, and overall levels of accuracy and completeness remain in need of further improvement. We published feasibility studies that explore different ways public data could improve the registration system and how reforms to processes could work in

practice. This gives governments a starting point to make the types of changes that would address pressures on electoral administrators' resources as well as making it easier for individuals to register. We are using the outcomes from these studies to inform and encourage a wider policy debate about the future of electoral registration, and to support our own policy development work. In Scotland, we carried out research to assess the impact on voters of any changes to the ordering of candidates on ballot papers for council elections. Our final report to the Scottish Government provides it with an evidence base to consider the impact of any changes on voters, electoral administrators and political parties. We continued working to identify and make the case for ways to simplify, modernise and consolidate electoral law, including implementing the Law Commissions' recommendations, made initially in their 2016 report and given final weight in their closing report this year. We gave evidence to parliamentary committees to ensure our expert analysis about elections and regulation would inform their work. In the UK Parliament, this included the Digital, Culture, Sport and Media Committee inquiry on disinformation; the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee inquiry on electoral law; and the Exiting the European Union Committee on rules for any future citizens' assembly and referendum. We also gave evidence to the House of Lords select committees on Democracy and Digital Technologies and on the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013. In the National Assembly for Wales, we gave evidence to the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee on the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill, and to the Assembly Electoral Reform Committee's inquiry into electoral systems and boundaries, and the Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee on the Senedd and Elections (Wales) Bill. In the Scottish Parliament, we gave evidence to the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee on the Scottish Elections (Franchise and Representation) Bill and the Scottish Elections (Reform) Bill. We also gave evidence to the Finance and Constitution Committee on the Referendums (Scotland) Bill. Report navigation links Previous Next Performance analysis: Goal two Performance analysis: Goal four 1. We focussed on identifying gaps in youth democratic engagement initiatives. We delivered the project as we had scoped it and in 2020-21, we will start new projects based on the findings, including a project to develop education resources. ■ Back to content at footnote 1 Related content Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 Read our annual report and accounts for 2019/20, including key figures about the year at a glance. Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal one This is goal one of the performance analysis section of our annual report and accounts Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal two This is goal two of the performance analysis section of our annual report and accounts Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal four This is goal four of the performance analysis section of our annual report and accounts

Objective: Transparent political campaigning and compliant political finance |
Electoral Commission Search Objective: Transparent political
campaigning and compliant political finance You are in the Annual Report and
Accounts 2022/23 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts
2022/23 On this page What we are working to achieve Work done to achieve this aim
Performance indicators First published: 4 July 2023 Last updated: 27 September 2023
What we are working to achieve It is a fundamental part of the democratic process
that campaigners are able to get their messages to voters. s, including parties, must
be able to communicate with voters to explain their views and policies, so that
voters are informed when they vote. It's important that voters hear from a wide and
diverse variety of campaigners. s must be able to campaign without facing undue
actual or perceived barriers, while we continue to ensure political finance is
transparent. We are working to improve the transparency of political campaigning, and
help parties and campaigners to comply with the law by: ensuring campaigners can
access support to understand the law in the way and at the time that works best for
them ensuring political finance laws are enforced fairly, working with police
services and other regulators to support their work in areas outside our legal remit
publishing complete and accurate political finance data providing insights to
campaigners and parliaments on how campaigning methods directly affect voter
confidence in elections. Work done to achieve this aim Ahead of the May 2022
elections, the Commission ran its digital transparency campaign, encouraging voters
to think critically about the campaign information they see. Our candidate surveys
following the May 2022 polls found that over 40% of candidates across the UK
experienced intimidation or abuse during the campaign. As a result, the Commission
has taken steps to convene relevant stakeholders to discuss ways to improve their
experience, as well as providing candidate guidance and advice on protecting their
safety. As a result of the Elections Act, we updated our guidance to reflect new
political finance laws for parties and campaigners to support compliance. We worked
with campaigners to design a new code of practice for non-party campaigner spending.
We consulted on the code and submitted it to Ministers as the law required. We also
consulted on new digital imprints guidance to support changes in the law in this
area. We held webinars for parties, candidates, agents and others before the May 2022
elections to explain the law, and did the same again for the May 2023 polls. We held
virtual advice surgeries that allowed candidates and agents to discuss specific
issues around the spending and donation laws with one of our expert advisers. We also
offered further advice surgeries in advance of the reporting deadlines, to provide
practical and ongoing support with spending returns. We delivered targeted advice and
guidance resources to the full range of parties and campaigners. We improved the
accessibility and usefulness of our guidance by increasing consultation with parties
and campaigners when drafting it. This also enhanced our evidence base on how the law
is applied in practice, to inform future compliance resources. We bolstered our
advice service on the political finance laws with the recruitment of additional
advisors. We launched a new initiative that provides targeted support for newly
registered parties, who are likely to be less familiar with the law and their
obligations and responsibilities. To ensure our Enforcement Policy is as clear as
possible, we made changes to it and consulted parties and campaigners. The Policy
sets out how we approach our regulatory investigations and sanctions. Our annual
tracker of public opinion found that confidence in the transparency of political
finance is in decline. We continue to make recommendations for improving controls on
the system to improve confidence, including through engagement with the government,

with parliamentarians, and through the national media. Member of Parliament on their contact with the Commission Very informative and easy to work with. Highly engaging with a broad knowledge Member of Parliament on their contact with the Commission Performance indicators Indicator Target 2022-23 Timely publication of donation and loan reports which are received by the statutory deadline 100% 100% Publication of statements of accounts within 60 working days 100% 5.02% Timely progression and conclusion of investigations 90% 91.18% Timely notification / issuance of decisions on sanctions 90% (final notices) following representations period 90% 100% Timely notification of outcome of party and non-party campaigner registration applications (for new and change of details) 90% 81.91% Timely responses to requests for regulatory advice on financial reporting 90% 99.17% Effective regulatory guidance products / resources delivered to support compliance with the law N/A 59 Guidance product related queries that help identify existing and/or new areas of the guidance that provide additional clarity with the law 100% 100% There are different deadlines by which parties with income and expenditure under and over £250,000 need to submit their annual statement of accounts to the Commission. Owing to internal resource constraints, a decision was taken in 2022 to combine publication of the two tranches. This meant postponing the publication of a large number of statements until after the reporting deadline for the larger parties. 100% of statements were published on the agreed publication date. Ongoing and future work Following consultation, the Commission's revised Enforcement Policy comes into force after the May 2023 elections and will continue to be used as the basis on which we make decisions relating to enforcement. We will monitor changes as a result of the measures for parties and campaigners in the Elections Act implemented during 2022-23 and, subject to parliamentary process, publish a non-party campaigner code of practice and new digital imprint guidance to support our regulated community to understand the changes. The Commission will continue to monitor potential threats and risks to the electoral system, including the integrity of the political finance laws. We will keep advocating for improvements to controls on donations to political parties to prevent the threat of foreign interference, and monitor relevant legislation, such as potential impacts from the National Security Bill. In response to feedback, we are trialling a process of dedicated points of contact for larger parties, or those who contact us frequently for advice, to help support compliance further. We will continue to monitor the themes of queries received to inform and shape our regulatory guidance, enhancing our evidence base on how the law is applied in practice and helping to ensure our guidance is as clear and helpful as possible. Along with the police, we will take proportionate actions to ensure compliance with the digital imprints regime when it commences. The Commission will also continue to work with police forces across the UK on tackling intimidation and harassment of candidates. Member of Parliament on their contact with the Commission Have had good quality conversations about regulation and the pressures facing political parties. Member of Parliament on their contact with the Commission Navigation Previous Next Objective: Accessible registration and voting Objective: Resilient local electoral services

Draft statutory guidance on digital imprints | Electoral Commission Search
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Show page contents On this page What is digital material and when does it need an
imprint Requirements for the imprint Sharing and republishing material Non-party
campaigner imprints Enforcement of the regime Key terms About this guidance The
guidance has been prepared by the Electoral Commission, and laid before Parliament,
in accordance with section 54 of the Elections Act 2022. It applies throughout the
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The purpose of this guidance is
to: explain the operation of Part 6 of the Act, concerned with information that is to
be included with digital material and how to comply with its requirements explain how
the Electoral Commission and the police will undertake their enforcement functions
where there is a breach or suspected breach of Part 6 of the Act. Where the guidance
says that something must be done, this means that it is a requirement in either
primary or secondary legislation. Key terms are explained throughout the guidance,
and also provided as an alphabetical list at the end of the document. The Electoral
Commission and the police must have regard to this guidance when exercising their
functions under Part 6 of the Act. The Electoral Commission may propose revisions to
this guidance from time to time in accordance with the Act or when directed to do so
by the Secretary of State. Introduction When certain campaign material is published,
it must contain certain details to show who is responsible. These details are known
as an 'imprint'. The imprint helps to ensure there is transparency for voters about
who is campaigning. There are already laws requiring imprints on printed election,
referendum and recall petition material, and on digital election material used at
Scottish devolved elections. For these laws, please see the Electoral Commission's
non-statutory guidance . Under the Elections Act 2022, there are laws requiring
imprints on some kinds of digital material. Examples of the types of digital material
that need an imprint are explained in the guidance. The digital imprint requirements
do not apply in relation to digital material published prior to the commencement of
Part 6 of the Act. What sort of material requires an imprint? There are two different
tests to apply to determine if your digital material requires an imprint under the
Elections Act 2022. The first test applies to paid adverts. The second test applies
to any other material. This guidance refers to material that is not a paid advert as
'organic material'. If you have paid for the material to be published as an advert,
then it must have an imprint if it is 'political material'. The imprint laws apply to
anyone placing paid adverts. If you have not paid for the material to be published as
an advert, then it is organic material. Organic material must have an imprint if it
is election-related material, referendum material or recall petition material.
However, the laws for organic material only apply to certain official political
entities, such as candidates or registered political parties. An ordinary member of
the public does not need to include an imprint on any organic digital material. The
two imprint tests are explained in more detail in the following sections. What is
digital material? The digital imprint laws can apply to any digital material,
provided the material meets the tests which are set out in the following sections.
Digital material is material in electronic form that consists of or includes text,
moving images, still images, speech or music. It does not include telephone calls or
SMS messages. It can apply to material published in messaging services which do not
use SMS, such as WhatsApp or Signal. The imprint laws only apply to digital material
that is published, which means made available to the public or a section of the

public. For example, they would not apply to a private messaging group between friends, or an email sent out by a party only to its members. Imprints may be required on published material including (though this is not an exhaustive list):

Pop-up ads Social media posts Any advert that appears in any website, search engine result, app or social media platform Adverts on internet radio or other streaming platforms Adverts in podcasts Adverts in online newspapers Messages on WhatsApp, Signal or Telegram MMS messages Websites Images Videos Electronic billboards

Definitions of material in scope of the regime may also be updated by secondary legislation to allow for emerging technology.

Paid adverts If you have paid for digital material to be published as an advert, then it must have an imprint if it is 'political material'. This test applies to anyone placing a paid advert. Payment is not limited to just money. It can also include benefits in kind, for example goods or services being provided for free or at a discount. It does not include payments as part of the costs of creating, setting up, operating or maintaining the material. It is limited to payments specifically to advertisers for the publication of adverts. If the service provider hosting the advert (for example, a digital platform or electronic billboard advertiser) has not been paid, then the material is not a paid advert.

Example For example, if you employ a digital agency to pay social media platforms for placing adverts on their platforms, then these are paid adverts because the agency is paying the platforms for the adverts to be published. By contrast, if you employ a digital agency to publish digital material on their own social media channels, then these are not paid adverts, because the platforms on which the material is published are not being paid. The fact that the agency is being paid does not make the material a paid advert.

Paid adverts 2 Political material Political material is digital material whose sole or primary purpose can be reasonably regarded as intended to influence the public, or any section of the public, to give support to or withhold support from:

- one or more political parties
- a particular candidate or a particular future candidate
- a particular elected office-holder

political parties, candidates, future candidates or elected office-holders that are linked by their support for or opposition to particular policies, or by holding particular opinions

other categories of candidates, future candidates or elected office-holders that are not based on policies or opinions – for example, candidates who went to a state school, or MPs who grew up in their constituency

the holding of a referendum, or a particular outcome of a referendum

any combination of the above

The laws can apply at any time, not just in election or referendum periods. For example, you could pay for a digital advert promoting a party or elected office-holder at any time, without it being related to an electoral event.

Paid adverts only need an imprint if their sole or primary purpose can reasonably be regarded as one of those on the list above.

Example For example, a sponsored Facebook post of a comedian doing a routine criticising a government Minister would not need an imprint, because the primary purpose of the clip is reasonably regarded as being to promote the comedian.

Paid adverts 3 If you publish digital material on behalf of an organisation, the sole or primary purpose of any given piece of material will not always be the same as the overall purpose of the organisation. It will be a matter of fact in each case whether the sole or primary purpose of any particular piece of material can reasonably be regarded as being one of those in the list above.

Example For example, suppose a campaigning organisation in 2023 has as its main objective to bring back the death penalty. It runs three sets of paid adverts. The first criticises a political party which is opposed to the death penalty. The primary purpose of this material can be reasonably regarded as to influence the public to withhold support from the party.

Therefore it requires an imprint. The second argues for holding a referendum on reinstating the death penalty. The primary purpose of this material can be reasonably regarded as to influence the public to give support to the holding of a referendum.

Therefore it requires an imprint. The third advert lists a number of positive predictions about the effects of reinstating the death penalty. The primary purpose of this material can be reasonably regarded as to influence the public to support the death penalty. Therefore it does not require an imprint. Although the organisation has an overarching primary organisational purpose, the different pieces of digital material it publishes have distinct primary purposes. This means that some of the material requires an imprint and some does not, depending on the facts. Paid adverts 4 Referendums and political material The law for paid adverts can apply to material relating to the holding of, or a particular outcome of, any kind of referendum in the UK, such as: a UK-wide referendum a referendum held in England, Scotland Wales or Northern Ireland, or any combination of those a Senedd referendum a local authority governance referendum a local government referendum a local poll a council tax increases referendum a parish poll a Neighbourhood Planning referendum Any paid digital advert that supports an outcome in a referendum that is being held must have an imprint. Any paid digital advert that promotes an outcome in a potential future referendum must have an imprint, even if that referendum has not yet been called or legislated for. Example For example, suppose there is serious speculation about a referendum on an issue, but it has not yet been officially called or legislated for.

If a campaigner places a paid advert saying 'VOTE YES' to the particular issue, this is reasonably regarded as promoting an outcome (Yes) in a future referendum.

Therefore, under the digital imprint rules, it would require an imprint. Paid adverts 5 Any paid digital advert that expressly advocates the holding of a new referendum must have an imprint. It does not matter if the referendum is unlikely to be held – the imprint laws still apply. Example For example, a paid digital advert calling for a referendum on an independent North of England would require an imprint. Paid adverts 6 Paid adverts relating to referendums held in the past will not be political material under the referendum part of the test. Example For example, a paid advert marking the anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement would not need an imprint simply because of the referendum held in Northern Ireland in 1998. Paid adverts 7 Some paid digital adverts may relate to: the subject matter of a past referendum the consequences of the outcome of a referendum the implementation of a referendum result Since in these cases the referendum is over, this material will only require an imprint if it meets one of the other parts of the test. Example For example, the material would need an imprint if it could be reasonably regarded as having the sole or primary purpose of influencing public support for or against having a second referendum on the same topic, or of promoting parties or categories of elected office-holders with particular views on the past referendum. Paid adverts 8 You should always bear in mind that even if material does not require an imprint because it relates to a referendum, it may require an imprint for other reasons. Organic material If you have not paid for the digital material to be published as an advert – for example, you just posted it on your own social media – then it is organic material. There is a different test for whether organic material requires an imprint. Organic material only needs an imprint if it is published by or on behalf of certain political entities. The political entities are: a registered party a registered non-party campaigner a candidate or future candidate an elected office-holder a registered referendum campaigner a registered recall petition campaigner These organisations and individuals must include an imprint on any digital material, even

if they have not paid for it to be published, if it is any of: election-related material referendum material recall petition material Unlike the rules for paid adverts, the rules for organic material are all related to specific electoral events. Organic material is therefore more likely to need an imprint during the campaigns leading up to these events. Election-related material Election-related material is material whose purpose can be reasonably regarded as intending to promote or procure electoral success for: one or more political parties a candidate or future candidate political parties, candidates, or future candidates that are linked by their support for or opposition to particular policies, or by holding particular opinions other categories of candidates or future candidates that are not based on policies or opinions – for example, candidates or future candidates who went to a state school, or independent candidates (who do not stand for a political party) any combination of the above The test is met even if there are other additional purposes which the material could reasonably be regarded as intended to achieve. Referendum material Referendum material is material that wholly or mainly relates to a PPERA referendum, and which is published during the referendum period. This means that in the rules for organic material, referendum material only relates to a referendum that is being held – unlike in the rules for paid adverts, which can also apply to material concerned with referendums that may not happen. A PPERA referendum is a referendum held under Part 7 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, including: a UK-wide referendum a referendum held in one or more of England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland (but not including a Senedd referendum) The rules for organic material do not apply to material relating to any other type of referendum, for example: Senedd referendum local government referendum local authority governance referendum local poll council tax increases referendum parish poll Neighbourhood Planning referendum Recall petition material Recall petition material is material whose purpose can be reasonably regarded as intending to promote or procure the success or failure of a recall petition. Material that does not need an imprint The following types of material do not need to carry an imprint under either the test for paid adverts or the test for organic material: Journalistic material Any party political broadcast or referendum campaign broadcast Certain shared material which still includes the original imprint. See ‘Sharing and republishing material’ for more details Journalistic material Material published on a website or mobile app whose primary purpose (or one of whose primary purposes) is journalism does not need to include an imprint unless the material consists of an advert. This is regardless of whether the placement of the advert is paid for or not. This can include material published on: Online newspapers or news channels Newspaper apps Online radio shows Online TV shows E-books Podcasts Party political broadcast or referendum campaign broadcast Digital imprints are not required on any party political broadcast or referendum campaign broadcast included by a broadcaster in its broadcasting services. A “broadcaster” means: the holder of a licence under the Broadcasting Act 1990 or 1996, the British Broadcasting Corporation, or Sianel Pedwar Cymru. A ‘referendum campaign broadcast’ means any broadcast whose purpose (or main purpose) is or may reasonably be assumed to be to further any campaign conducted with a view to promoting or procuring a particular outcome in relation to any question asked in a referendum to which Part VII of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 applies, or otherwise to promote or procure any such outcome. What information must you include in the imprint? You must include the name and address of: the promoter any person on behalf of whom the material is being published (and who is not the promoter) You must use a postal address where you can be contacted. It can be a

home address or an office or business address. You can also use a PO Box address, or other mailbox service. The imprint must be in text form, unless it is included as a part of solely audio material. In this case, the imprint must also be included as audio material. The imprint must be legible, or in the case of audio material, audible, no matter what device is used to access the information. In order to comply with the law, you must ensure that a written imprint is on screen for long enough that it can be read. Similarly, an audio imprint must be read at a speed at which it can be heard and understood. If digital material which requires an imprint is published without one, the promoter and anyone on whose behalf it has been published may be liable for an offence under section 48 of the Elections Act 2022. The promoter and anyone on whose behalf the material is being published is the promoter is whoever has caused the material to be published. Both the promoter and any person on behalf of whom the material is being published may be an individual or an organisation.

Material could be published on someone's behalf for a number of reasons, including: the role someone plays in a campaign – for example, an agent who is the promoter may publish material on behalf of their candidate they are paying for a service – for example, an advertising agency who is the promoter may publish adverts on behalf of the political party that has employed them they are part of a wider group involved in publishing the material – for example, a non-party campaigner who is the promoter may publish material on behalf of a coalition of non-party campaigners. The imprint must include the details of both the promoter and anyone else on whose behalf the material has been published. This means that your own details will not always be enough to meet the imprint requirements. Example For example, suppose someone is an agent for a candidate, and also works for a political party. Some of the material they promote will be on behalf of the candidate, and so need to include the details of the candidate and agent. Some of it will be on behalf of the party, and so need the details of the party instead. What information must you include in the imprint? 2 If you are being paid to publish the material, the material must include an imprint which includes the details of whoever is paying you. This is because either they are the promoter, or you are publishing the material on their behalf. If the material is published by an organisation and authorised through the proper channels, then the promoter can be the organisation itself. The details of an individual are not required. If you are acting on behalf of a party and have put together material promoting more than one of your candidates or future candidates, the imprint does not need to include the details of every individual candidate or future candidate. You can instead include the party's details in the 'on behalf of' part of the imprint.

Where must the imprint appear? The imprint must be included as a part of the material, unless it is not reasonably practicable to do so. If the imprint is included as a part of the material, it must be included in such a way that if the material is shared as it is, the imprint will still be a part of it. Example For example, if the material is a picture and contains an imprint, then if the picture is shared unaltered, the imprint will still appear. Where must the imprint appear? 2 If it is not reasonably practicable to include the imprint as a part of the material, then the imprint must appear somewhere directly accessible from the material. In practice, this means it can be reached via a direct link, usually one click or equivalent, where both the link and the imprint are easy for a voter to locate. If the imprint appears somewhere directly accessible from the material, it must be included in such a way that if the material is shared as it is, the imprint will still be accessible from the shared material. Example For example, if the material is a tweet, and the imprint is included in your Twitter bio, then if the material is

retweeted, the imprint in your bio will still be accessible from the retweet. Where must the imprint appear? 3 This means that you must not delete the imprint from your bio for as long as an imprint is required and the material remains published. If you were to delete the imprint, then it would no longer be accessible after your material is shared. Similarly, you cannot include your imprint somewhere which would not be accessible by those who can view the material itself. Example For example, the imprint cannot be behind a firewall or otherwise protected area of the internet, if that would mean that voters would see the shared material but would not have the necessary permission to view the imprint itself. Where must the imprint appear? 4 Beyond these requirements, the original promoter of the material is not liable for any imprint offences that are due to the material being shared by other people later on. The liability is on the people republishing the material – see Sharing and republishing . The next sections give some detailed guidance on particular types or categories of digital material, and on what is typically reasonably practicable.

Social media Usually, the material on social media will be the whole social media post. You must include the imprint in the post itself, unless it is not reasonably practicable. For example, for paid adverts , it will usually be reasonably practicable to include the imprint as a part of the material – you can include the imprint in the content of the advert, or in the disclaimer text which appears at the top of the advert. On some digital platforms, the design of the platform, such as there being a character limit on posts, may mean that it is not reasonably practicable to include the imprint as a part of the post. In this case, you must display the imprint legibly somewhere directly accessible from the post. The imprint must be directly accessible from the post no matter what device is used. There are a number of different ways that you can do this. Example For example, , it may often not be reasonably practicable to include the imprint in the post itself because of the design of the platform. If this is the case, your imprint can be included on your profile, for example underneath your name, or as a pinned post or tweet. Where must the imprint appear? 5 Usually the ‘About’ section of a profile on a digital platform is not directly accessible from a post, because the hyperlink to the profile does not directly take you to that section. In this case, the ‘About’ section will only be directly accessible from a post if you add your own direct link to the ‘About’ section into the post. Videos, images and cartoons A video or image can still be required to display an imprint even if it contains no text. If your material is a video or image, it will usually be reasonably practicable to include the imprint in the video or image, especially if you have created it yourself. If this is not reasonably practicable, for example if the material is a very small image, you must include the imprint somewhere directly accessible from it. If your material is a social media post which contains a video or image, then it will usually be reasonably practicable to include the imprint as a part of the post. The best way to do this is to include it in the content of the video or image itself. Alternatively, you can include the imprint somewhere else in the post, for example for a video on YouTube you can include it in the post’s description. It is good practice to include the imprint in the content of the video or image itself. This is because if it is shared, the imprint is more likely to remain a part of the material. This means that voters will see the original imprint as it is shared, which is good for transparency. It is also less likely that people sharing the material will be required to include their own imprint when they share it. Further detail is included in the section ‘ Sharing and republishing ’. Websites Where the digital material is a website or webpage, it will usually be reasonably practicable to include the imprint on the relevant

webpage. For example, it could be displayed in the footer. Where the material is just a part of the webpage, for example a social media post embedded in the page, then the imprint must be included as a part of the material unless it is not reasonably practicable. If it is not reasonably practicable, then it can appear somewhere directly accessible from the material – for example, somewhere else on the same webpage, or somewhere hyperlinked from the material. Audio material On solely audio material, the imprint must be included as a part of the material. For example, you could include someone reading out the imprint at the end. The imprint must be audible. The imprint must be read at a speed at which it can be heard and understood. For how long does material need an imprint? In all cases, digital material must include an imprint for as long as both: the imprint is required either by the law for paid adverts or for organic material the material remains published Material remains published for as long as it is being made available to the public or a section of the public. For example, if a post remains available on your social media channels, then it remains published. Organic material For organic material, the imprint is required on published material for as long as the published material remains any of: election-related material referendum material recall petition material Because these tests are all related to a particular electoral event, in many cases the imprint will stop being required once that event is over. For example, a video saying 'Vote NO on 10 May' in relation to an upcoming referendum will cease to be referendum material after 10 May when the referendum is over. Paid adverts For a paid advert, an imprint is required for as long as the material remains political material. How long the material remains political material will depend on who or what your material is promoting support for or against. If the material is linked to a particular electoral event or electoral cycle, then it will have a natural end point. For example: a future candidate either officially becomes a candidate or decides not to stand a candidate ceases to be a candidate on polling day an elected office-holder ceases to be an elected office-holder when their term ends a particular outcome in a referendum cannot be promoted after polling day Some political material will not have such a clear end point. For example, material promoting support for or against a political party could continue doing that for as long as the party exists. Sharing and republishing material When you share material on social media or otherwise republish it, this is a type of publication. The laws on imprints therefore also apply to material that you share – for example, using the 'retweet' function , the 'Share' button , or forwarding an email. However, if you share material that has already been published with a correct imprint and you do not materially alter the material, then you do not need to include a new imprint with your own details. The original imprint will suffice. Materially altering the material includes: changing the material in such a way as to change the meaning of the material removing the imprint (if it originally appeared as a part of the material) sharing it in such a way that the imprint ceases to be accessible from the material (if it originally appeared somewhere directly accessible from the material) If you share digital material that has already been published but you materially alter the material, then you must include your own imprint even if the original material had an imprint. If you do not, you may be committing an offence. Examples of republishing material The following tables show different examples of 'chains' by which material is shared. Each table begins with the same piece of digital material, but in each table it is then republished in a number of different ways. The examples within each table usually follow on from the example in the row above, unless it specifies that it follows from a different example. Chain of sharing organic material where the imprint is included

as a part of the material: Example Does it require an imprint? Why? What they did next A political party tweets an image criticising a rival party's election manifesto Yes. It is election-related material and promoted by a party. The party includes their imprint in the image itself. The image is retweeted by one of the party's MPs. No. It is election-related material and has been shared by an elected office-holder, but it is exempt under the sharing rules. It has been shared without being materially altered and the party's original imprint is still a part of the material. The MP does not need to include their own imprint. Another MP retweets their colleague's retweet. No. The sharing exemption still applies – the material is not materially altered and the original party imprint is still a part of the material, so no further imprint is required. The second MP does not need to include their own imprint. Chain of sharing organic material where the imprint is originally in the material but is removed during the republication. Example Does it require an imprint? Why? What they did next A political party tweets an image criticising a rival party's election manifesto Yes. It is election-related material and promoted by a party. The party includes their imprint in the image itself. A registered non-party campaigner screenshots the image and turns it into a Facebook post. They crop the image so that the imprint no longer appears Yes. By removing the imprint, they have materially altered the material. This means the sharing exemption does not apply. Because it is election-related material, and they are a registered campaigner, it requires the campaigner's imprint under the rules for organic material. The registered campaigner does not include an imprint, and so commits an offence. A candidate shares the altered image using the 'Share' button . Yes. The sharing exemption does not apply, because the campaigner in the previous example did not include an imprint. The candidate must include their own imprint. It is reasonably practicable to include it in the post, so the candidate includes it above the image. A member of the public shares the same altered image using the 'Share' button . No. Because it is not a paid advert, the imprint rules only apply to certain political entities. Members of the public do not need to include an imprint on unpaid material, regardless of whether they are publishing it originally or republishing it. No imprint is required. Chain of sharing organic material where the imprint is included somewhere directly accessible from the material: Example Does it require an imprint? Why? What they did next A political party tweets an image criticising a rival party's election manifesto. Yes. It is election-related material and done by a party. The party includes their imprint in the image itself. An MP from a rival party republishes the original image using the 'Quote Tweet' function . They add a lengthy comment which is critical of the material and the party which originally tweeted the image. Yes. The MP has shared the material but turned it into election-related material against the original party. The sharing exemption does not apply because the material has been materially altered. The MP's tweet is a new piece of material which requires an imprint in its own right. In this case, because the MP has used up a lot of the character limit with their comment, it is not reasonably practicable to include the imprint as a part of the tweet. The MP therefore adds their own imprint underneath their name in their Twitter bio. This is directly accessible from the tweet because of the hyperlink to the bio internal to the platform's functionality. An elected mayor retweets the MP's tweet. No. The mayor's tweet still contains a hyperlink with a direct link to the MP's Twitter bio. The imprint is therefore still accessible from the shared material. The mayor does not need to include their own imprint. A future candidate screenshots the mayor's retweet and posts it on another digital platform. Yes. Because of the way the image has been republished, there is no longer a hyperlink to the MP's profile, where the

original imprint appears. The imprint is no longer accessible from the future candidate's republishing, so the exemption does not apply. The future candidate therefore includes their own details in the post. Examples where organic material is republished and turned into a paid advert: Example Does it require an imprint? Why? What they did next A political party tweets an image criticising a rival party's election manifesto. Yes. It is election-related material and done by a party. The party includes their imprint in the image itself. A campaigner pays Facebook to 'boost' the party's post, thereby turning it into a paid advert. No. This is now a paid advert, and it is political material. However, the imprint is a part of the original post and is retained. The material has not been materially altered. The sharing exemption applies and the campaigner does not need to include their own imprint. No imprint is required. A member of the public creates and publishes a meme criticising a political party and some of their elected office-holders. They do not pay for it to be published as an advert. No. If material is not published as a paid advert, then only certain political entities are required to display an imprint. Members of the public do not need to display an imprint on unpaid material. No imprint is required. The campaigner pays Facebook to 'boost' the meme, thereby turning it into a paid advert. Yes. The original meme did not require an imprint because it was not a paid advert and was not posted by a political entity. However, by 'boosting' the post, the campaigner has turned it into a paid advert, and it is now political material. Since the original post did not contain an imprint, the campaigner must include their own details in the advert. The campaigner includes their details in the 'disclaimer' section. Non-party campaigners Non-party campaigners are individuals and organisations who campaign around elections without standing candidates themselves. Non-party campaigners who spend over a certain amount on campaigning at elections must register with the Electoral Commission. Being able to get their messages to voters is a fundamental part of the democratic process, and it's important that voters hear from a wide and diverse variety of campaigners.

Unlike a political party, where all or nearly all of their material is likely to require an imprint, if you are a non-party campaigner that campaigns on an issue, you may find that only some of your material requires an imprint. You should consider the imprint tests for each piece of material according to the facts. Paid adverts – all campaigners If you pay an advertiser to publish a digital advert, you will need to determine if the advert is 'political material'. Your advert will be political material if its sole or primary purpose is reasonably regarded as one of the purposes on the list. If you are a non-party campaigner campaigning on an issue, the primary purpose of your overall campaign is likely to be based on that issue. However, what matters for whether your digital advert is political material is not your organisation's overall aim, but whether the sole or primary purpose of a particular paid advert meets the 'political material' test (see paid adverts section). If you are a registered charity, then if you follow charity law and guidance from the relevant charity regulator, your material is unlikely to have a primary purpose on the list, because many of the sorts of campaigns that have those purposes are prohibited. For example, charities must remain independent of party politics and must not support a political party or candidate, or create a perception of support as a result of their actions or participation. This may also apply to other organisations who have limits on their political activities, for example in their constitution.

Imprints are important for transparency in campaigning. It is therefore good practice to include an imprint on paid adverts that relate to elections, referendums and recall petitions, even if the advert does not need to include one by law. Organic

material – registered campaigners If you are a non-party campaigner who is registered with the Electoral Commission, then as well as paid adverts, you must also apply the imprints test for your organic material– including anything you post on social media.

The test for election-related material is very similar to the ‘purpose test’ for regulated non-party campaigner spending (see the Commission’s spending guidance for more information). If you have determined that your digital material meets the purpose test, then it will also need to carry an imprint. Examples are included below.

Example Two months before a UK Parliamentary general election, an animal welfare organisation that is registered with the Electoral Commission retweets a news article reporting that the party of government has announced they will legalise fox hunting if they are re-elected. This is not election-related material. This is merely sharing information, and the organisation would share any news relevant to their work. No imprint is required.

Example Once all the main parties have launched their manifestos in advance of a UK Parliamentary general election, a registered non-party campaigner compares their manifesto pledges. They create a graphic comparing the parties with regard to the issues the campaigner works on, giving marks out of ten and saying which party has the best policies in the area. They then publish the graphic on their own social media channels. Because the campaigner has compared the parties and said which is better in this context, they have effectively promoted some over others. The campaign is therefore reasonably regarded as promoting some parties over others and it is election-related material. An imprint is required on the material.

Example During the referendum period for a UK-wide referendum, a registered non-party campaigner publishes a blog post on their website setting out what they see as the consequences of each outcome for their service users. This requires an imprint. For organic material which is published during the referendum period, it does not matter whether or not the material promotes an outcome in the referendum – it only needs to wholly or mainly relate to the referendum.

Non-party campaigner imprints 2 You must also apply the imprints test for your organic material if you are registered with the Electoral Commission as a referendum campaigner in a particular referendum, or if you are registered with your local Petition Officer as a recall petition campaigner in a particular recall petition.

Organic material – unregistered campaigners If you are a non-party campaigner who is not registered with the Electoral Commission, then you do not need to include an imprint on any organic digital material. For unregistered non-party campaigners it is only the rules for imprints on paid adverts that apply. However, even if an imprint is not required by law, imprints are good for transparency, particularly if you are spending money campaigning at elections, referendums and recall petitions. If you are spending money, it is good practice to include an imprint in your material even if you are not registered.

Offences and defences If digital material which requires an imprint is published without one, then both the promoter of the material anyone else on whose behalf the material is published may commit an offence under section 44(1) of the Elections Act. It is a defence for a person charged with this offence to prove that: the failure to comply was due to circumstances beyond their control, and that they took all reasonable steps, and exercised all due diligence, to ensure they did comply. they complied with this guidance in the case of the republication of material, the person charged with the offence reasonably believed that the material was exempt under the sharing exemption (see section Sharing and republishing)

Responsibilities for enforcement of the regime The Elections Act provides for enforcement of the offence under section 48(1) by the police, and the Electoral Commission. Which enforcement body is initially responsible depends on the purpose of

the material in question. Political material (paid adverts) and election-related material (organic material) The police will enforce material which relates to: a particular candidate a particular future candidate a particular elected office-holder The Electoral Commission will enforce material which relates to: political parties categories of parties, candidates, future candidates and/or elected office-holders, including those linked by their support for or against particular policies, or by holding particular opinions Recall petition material This will be enforced by the police, both for paid adverts and organic material. Material relating to referendums Any digital material, both for paid adverts and organic material, will be enforced by the Electoral Commission if it both: relates to a referendum held under Part 7 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (is a PPERA referendum) is published during the referendum period Any other material relating to a referendum will be enforced by the police. This will all be paid adverts, and includes any paid advert which either: relates to a referendum which is not a PPERA referendum relates to a referendum which is a PPERA referendum, but which is published before the referendum period Approach to enforcement The police and the Electoral Commission will seek to enforce the offence under section 48(1) consistently, but the differing nature of roles and powers means that specific actions may vary. Both the police and the Electoral Commission will enforce effectively, proportionately, and fairly.

Specifically: Consider enforcement action only where there are reasonable grounds to suspect an offence under section 44(1) of the Act Take enforcement action only where it is proportionate to do so Take the facts of each situation into account Enforce only where it is in the public interest to do so in the context of organisational priorities and resources. Whether or not a matter is in the public interest and justifies the use of resources in this way will depend on a number of factors. These factors may be different and/or differently weighted depending on the circumstances. Some of the factors that are likely to be considered, though this is not an exhaustive list, are set out below: Evidence of intent, rather than inadvertence or oversight Whether the required imprint is entirely absent or partial The extent of distribution of the material – how many people potentially saw it – and the geographical spread Both the police and the Commission recognise that it is important to conclude investigations as quickly as possible. This is both in the public interest and in the interests of justice for those involved. However, the first priority is always to conduct a fair and thorough investigation, and this will take priority over speed where the two conflict. Use of powers The Elections Act creates two new powers in relation to enforcement of the regime. Use of powers under Schedule 12 of the Elections Act 2022 – obtaining information The police and the Commission have powers under Schedule 12 of the Act to obtain two different types of information. There is a power to give notice in writing to any person requiring the person to provide it with information identified in the notice, which is reasonably required for: the purposes of determining whether electronic material has been published in contravention of section 41, or to enable the police or the Commission to make contact with the promoter of the material or the person on behalf of whom the material has been published. The police and the Commission also have a power to give notice in writing to any person requiring the person to provide it with electronic material identified in the notice, which is reasonably required for the purposes of determining whether electronic material has been published in contravention of section 41 of the Act. In both cases the police may choose to use this power as an alternative to its existing powers to obtain information. The Commission may exercise that power where it is proportionate and in the public interest to do so. Neither the

police nor the Commission will do so where that information is easily accessible by other means. Any information obtained under such a notice may not then be used as evidence in any enforcement action against the person who provides the information to the Commission. Compliance with notices Where either of these powers are exercised by either the police or the Commission, a deadline for compliance will be set which must be complied with. The deadline will be proportionate, taking account of the facts of the specific situation, including the urgency of obtaining the information. Where such a notice is not complied with, the police or the Commission may seek a court order requiring the information. Use of powers under section 51 of the Elections Act 2022 – taking down material The Commission has a power under section 51 of the Act to require that material be removed or access to it disabled after the Commission has determined an offence in relation to that material and imposed any sanction, or served a Stop Notice, or agreed an Enforcement Undertaking under its powers in Schedule 19C of the Political Parties Elections and Referendums Act 2000. The Commission may exercise that power where it is proportionate and in the public interest to do so, in accordance with its enforcement objectives. It will not generally exercise that power where, for example, the material has already been removed; the material has been amended to make it compliant; or for any other reason it is not proportionate or in the public interest to require it to be removed. A similar power is available to a court under section 49(2) of the Act, following a conviction for an offence under section 48(1). There is no equivalent power available to the police. It is a criminal offence for any person who receives a notice to take down material to fail to comply with it without a reasonable excuse. Advice and guidance An area of difference between the roles and remits of the police and the Electoral Commission is in terms of providing guidance. The Electoral Commission has a legal duty to take reasonable steps to secure compliance with the law, under which it provides support, advice and guidance. This is different from the police. The Commission may use advice and guidance proactively in order to secure compliance and to give those the Commission regulates a clear understanding of their regulatory requirements, as an alternative to enforcement action. What happens after an investigation The police, where there is evidence of an offence, may refer the matter to the relevant public prosecutor (the Crown Prosecution Service in England and Wales, the Crown Office/Procurator Fiscal in Scotland, and the Public Prosecution Service in Northern Ireland), who will decide whether to launch a criminal prosecution. Where the Electoral Commission is satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that an offence has been committed, the Commission may decide to impose a civil sanction using its powers under Schedule 19C of the Political Parties Elections and Referendums Act 2000. The Commission will generally sanction where it considers it appropriate to do so and when it is proportionate and in the public interest to do so. If the Commission seeks to impose a sanction, it will follow the statutory process set out in Schedule 19C of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. This involves the serving of a notice proposing a sanction, and a period of time for the person who is the subject of the notice to make representations. When making representations, recipients can put forward any information they consider relevant. In particular, if they have not already done so, the recipient may want to put forward any defence to the offence. They may wish to comment on the reasons for the Commission proposing a sanction, including the facts on which the decision is based. Representations may be made on the application of the factors the Commission has taken into account when determining the type and size of a sanction. Finally, the recipient may want to comment on their ability of the person concerned to pay a

financial penalty and/or the cost to the person concerned of any non-financial requirement that might be imposed. Where possible representations or objections should be accompanied by supporting evidence. Any representations or objections will be considered by a senior officer of the Commission who was not involved in the decision to issue the initial notice. This includes determining if the Commission remains satisfied that an offence took place and, if so, that the proposed sanction is reasonable and appropriate. Any representations will be considered as part of this process. If, as a result, the Commission is no longer satisfied that an offence or contravention occurred, the matter will be closed. Otherwise, the senior officer will decide whether to issue a final notice, either reflecting the initial decision or changing it. Where any sanction is imposed, the subject of that sanction has a right of appeal to the county court in England and Wales, a county court in Northern Ireland, or the sheriff in Scotland. Key terms Candidate A candidate is a candidate at an election for a relevant elective office or a relevant Scottish elective office within the meaning of Part 5 of the Elections Act 2022, including a person who is included in a list of candidates submitted in connection with such an election.

Digital material In the Elections Act 2022, digital material is referred to as 'electronic material'. Digital material is material in electronic form which consists of or includes: text, moving or still images, or speech or music. It does not include material that is received by a person in the form a telephone call (e.g. to a landline telephone number) or material that is received via a text message using SMS to a telephone number. Elected office-holder An elected office-holder is a person is to be treated as holding a relevant elective office or a relevant Scottish elective office during any period when— the person has been elected as, or declared to be returned as, the holder of the office, but their term of office has not yet begun

Election-related material Election-related material is material that is reasonably regarded as promoting or procuring electoral success for: one or more political parties a candidate or future candidate political parties, candidates, or future candidates that are linked by their support for or opposition to particular policies, or by holding particular opinions other categories of parties, candidates or future candidates that are not based on policies or opinions – for example, candidates or future candidates who went to a state school, or independent candidates (who do not stand for a political party) any combination of the above Future candidate A person is a future candidate at an election for a relevant elective office or a relevant

Scottish elective office if— the person has been declared, whether by the person or by someone on their behalf, to be a candidate at the election (and the declaration has not been withdrawn), the election is the next scheduled election for the office, and the notice of the election has not been published or, in the case of an election for the office of member of the House of Commons, the writ for the election has not been issued. Organic material Organic material is any material which is not a paid advert. That is, material where neither the promoter of the material, nor the person on behalf of whom the material is published, has paid for the material to be

published as an advertisement. Paid advert A paid advert is material where the promoter of the material, or the person on behalf of whom the material is published, has paid for the material to be published as an advertisement. For the purposes of the definitions of 'paid advert' and 'organic material', payments are not limited to just money. They can also include benefits in kind. They do not include payments that are part of the background costs of creating, setting up, operating or maintaining the material. They are limited to payments specifically to advertisers for the publication of adverts. Party officer A party officer is a registered officer of a

political party under section 24 or section 25 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. Political entities The certain political entities who must apply the test for including an imprint on organic material are: a registered party a registered non-party campaigner a candidate or future candidate an elected office-holder a registered referendum campaigner a registered recall petition campaigner Political material Political material is material whose sole or primary purpose can be reasonably regarded as intended to influence the public, or any section of the public, to give support to or withhold support from: one or more political parties a particular candidate or a particular future candidate a particular elected office-holder political parties, candidates, future candidates or elected office-holders that are linked by their support for or opposition to particular policies, or by holding particular opinions other categories of parties, candidates, future candidates or elected office-holders that are not based on policies or opinions – for example, candidates or future candidates who went to a state school, or MPs who have had a job outside of politics the holding of a referendum, or a particular outcome of a referendum any combination of the above Promoter The promoter is the person causing the material to be published. Publish To publish is to make available to the public at large or any section of the public. Recall petition A recall petition is a recall petition held under the Recall of MPs Act 2015. Recall petition material Recall petition material is material that promotes or procures the success or failure of a recall petition. Recall petition campaigner A recall petition campaigner is a person who is an accredited campaigner within the meaning of the Recall of MPs Act 2015 in relation to a recall petition. Referendums: Referendums to which the test for paid adverts being political material applies include (but are not limited to) the following: Key terms 2 Council tax increase referendum A referendum held under The Local Authorities (Conduct of Referendums) (Council Tax Increases) (England) Regulations 2012. Local authority governance referendum A referendum held under the section 0MB and 9MC of the Local Government Act 2000. Local government referendum A referendum held under the Local Authorities (Referendums)(Petitions)(England) Regulations 2011 or the Local Authorities (Referendums) (Petitions and Directions) (Wales) Regulations 2001. Local poll A local poll (a form of referendum) held under section 116 of the Local Government Act 2003. Neighbourhood Planning referendum A referendum held under the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012 (as amended). Parish poll A parish poll (a form of referendum) held under section 150 and Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972. PPERA referendum A referendum held under Part 7 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, including a UK-wide referendum a referendum held in one or more of England, Scotland Wales or Northern Ireland But not including a Senedd referendum. Senedd referendum A referendum held under section 64 of the Government of Wales Act 2006. Key terms 3 By contrast, referendum material in the test for organic material only applies to material wholly or mainly relating to a PPERA referendum. Referendum material Referendum material is material that wholly or mainly relates to a referendum under Part 7 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, and is published during the referendum period for that referendum. Referendum period The period before a PPERA referendum during which certain restrictions are in place, under section 102 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 Registered non-party campaigner A registered non-party campaigner is a campaigner recognised by the Electoral Commission under Part 6 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. In the legislation, registered non-party campaigners are referred to as ‘recognised third parties’. Registered party A registered party is a political party

registered by the Electoral Commission under Part 2 of Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. Registered referendum campaigner A registered referendum campaigner is an individual or organisation who is a permitted participant within the meaning of Part 7 of Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, in relation to a referendum to which that Part applies. In the legislation, registered referendum campaigners are referred to as 'permitted participants'. Relevant election "Relevant election" means: a Parliamentary election, an election to the Scottish Parliament, an election to Senedd Cymru, an election to the Northern Ireland Assembly, a local government election within the meaning of section 191, 203 or 204 of the Representation of the People Act 1983, an election under Part 1A or 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 for the return of an elected mayor, an election for the return of a mayor for the area of a combined authority established under section 103 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, a local election within the meaning of the Electoral Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1962 (see section 130(1) of that Act), or an election of a police and crime commissioner. Relevant elective office "Relevant elective office" means the office of: member of the House of Commons; member of Senedd Cymru; member of the Northern Ireland Assembly; member of a local authority in England, Wales or Northern Ireland; elected mayor (within the meaning of Part 1A or 2 of the Local Government Act 2000); mayor for the area of a combined authority established under section 103 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009; Mayor of London; member of the London Assembly; police and crime commissioner. "Relevant Scottish elective office" means the office of: member of the Scottish Parliament, or member of a council constituted under section 2 of the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994. In the definition of "relevant elective office" "local authority" means: in relation to England, a county council, a district council, a parish council, a London borough council or the Council of the Isles of Scilly; in relation to Wales, a county council, a county borough council or a community council; in relation to Northern Ireland, a district council; in relation to City of London, an office to which a person may be elected by a municipal election in the City. Page history First published: 31 October 2022 Last updated: 31 October 2022

published: 11 November 2020 Last updated: 11 November 2020 How political parties are registered Political parties are vital to a healthy democracy. The Commission maintains the registers of political parties – one for Great Britain and one for

Northern Ireland. To register, political parties must show that they are set up to be able to meet the obligations of electoral law. And, so that voters can mark their ballot paper with confidence, parties cannot have names, descriptions or emblems that are offensive, misleading or confusing. Did you know? Did you know? Parties can only be registered if party candidates will be put up to contest elections. Otherwise, candidates can stand as independents and they don't need to register a political party to stand for election Once registered, a party's name, description and emblem can appear on the ballot paper alongside the name of its candidate Once registered a party has legal responsibilities under electoral law, such as reporting financial data to the Commission If we refuse a party's application, we tell the party why and the party can re-apply Applications to register a party can be submitted online – our guidance will help with the process We aim to reach a decision on registration applications as soon as possible. We assess all applications carefully against the legal tests To register a party we need: a completed application form and a fee of £150 a copy of the party's constitution, setting out its structure and organisation a copy of the party's financial scheme, showing that it has the processes in place to comply with electoral finance laws details of at least two officers, who must fill the roles of registered leader, treasurer and nominating officer The registration process Making an application The Commission is responsible for registering political parties and an application to register must be submitted to the Commission to be assessed against the statutory tests The party's structure, organisation and financial processes must be in place and must show the party can comply with electoral law Assessing an application Registration is not automatic. The Commission assesses whether the party's application and identity marks meet the criteria set out in electoral law, as well as legal obligations under equality laws As part of this assessment process, we publish the party's identity marks so members of the public can comment on them. Views can be submitted on this page of our website The Commission will also assess whether the party's constitution is consistent with electoral law and its financial scheme has been adopted and shows the party has the processes in place to comply with electoral finance law There are different legal tests for names, descriptions and emblems. For example, for party names we look at whether the name is too long, is offensive or obscene, could mislead voters or hinder instructions on voting, or is likely to confuse a voter Taking a decision To be registered, as a minimum, we must decide that the application was complete, the constitution and financial scheme were compliant and the party name met the legal tests Once the assessment process is complete and all public comments considered, the decision whether to register a party is taken by the Director of Regulation. In Scotland, the decision is taken by the Head of the Electoral Commission – Scotland.

Outcome If the party registration application is approved, the publicly available register of political parties is updated with the details. The party must follow the political finance rules that ensure integrity and transparency in the system. We provide guidance that can help the party meet its responsibilities, and the party can also contact us with questions If the party registration application is rejected, the Commission will inform the applicant of the reasons for the rejection. The applicants can re-apply and we will work with them to overcome registration difficulties, and

enable them to be registered. A new application fee is likely to be needed for a new application.

Enabling activity: A skilled organisation where diversity is valued | Electoral Commission Search Enabling activity: A skilled organisation where diversity is valued You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23 On this page What we are working to achieve Work done to achieve this aim Performance indicators Ongoing and future work First published: 4 July 2023 Last updated: 27 September 2023 Enabling activity: A skilled organisation where diversity is valued The Electoral Commission is committed to the principle of equality of opportunity, the value of diversity and the benefits of inclusion. We are subject to a range of legislation including the Equality Act 2010, which includes the Public Sector Equality Duty, and Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, which prohibits discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity and good relations across a range of protected characteristics. What we are working to achieve We want our workforce to feel valued and be supported to achieve their potential. We are working to: implement refreshed working practices to reflect wider changes in our work environment and culture attract, retain and develop the people we need maintain and improve high standards of management, with a focus on developing our people further embed equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of our work. Work done to achieve this aim We published a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, including the Single Equality Scheme for Northern Ireland. The Commission is a UK-wide body and has therefore ensured that it complies with the requirements of both Great Britain and Northern Ireland on equality, diversity and inclusion. We refreshed and updated our processes for Equality Impact Assessments to ensure they reflect best practice. We appointed an independent adviser to our Board to help us continue our focus on equality, diversity and inclusion. The Adviser has made a number of recommendations around how the Commission delivers its commitments in this area, with a particular focus on governance and internal policy and practice. The Commission Board has accepted these recommendations in full and set up a group attended by Commissioners to oversee delivery. Worked with staff in our EDI group and Race at Work Charter Task Force to identify ways of improving equality, diversity and inclusion in the Commission. We raised internal awareness with events and speakers to mark Black History Month and Pride Month. We made changes to our recruitment process, including new training covering unconscious bias and employment law and adding questions on EDI to our interview question bank. Performance indicators Indicator Target 2022-23 Maintained completeness of workforce diversity information 85% 90.86% Ongoing and future work The Commission's People Strategy has four different strands – Recruitment, Learning & Development, Management, and ICT - all of which are underpinned by EDI. Some of the key areas of focus are ensuring roll-out of training on EDI topics, looking at establishing more diverse and inclusive recruitment options, and improving on our EDI data and reporting capability. In the next year, we will implement a range of changes to recruitment processes and practices, such as updating our recruitment policy, setting out clear management guidance, and rolling out a new recruitment system. We will be strengthening our internal team dedicated to supporting the organisation to deliver EDI related improvements, both internally and externally. The Commission will be looking at the opportunities presented by apprenticeships, and for staff who want to undertake qualifications using this pathway. We will have a new learning and development strategy prospectus in place by autumn 2023, with a full offer in place by 2025. A 'Reverse Mentoring' initiative will be launched, to support internal learning and improvement. The Commission will appoint a Disabilities Champion to communicate on its importance and drive

organisational engagement. Navigation Previous Next Enabling activity: Independence and integrity Enabling activity: Improvement is continuous and resources are used effectively

Report: How the May 2015 elections were run | Electoral Commission Search Report: How the May 2015 elections were run You are in the UK general elections section Home UK general elections On this page About the elections Registration and turnout Voters' experiences and views Recommendations: Voter experience Recommendations: Administration of the polls Recommendations: Candidates and campaigners Download our full report First published: 20 June 2019 Last updated: 13 August 2019 About the elections On 7 May 2015 elections were held for the 650 members of the United Kingdom Parliament and for local councillors in all 36 metropolitan boroughs, 194 district authorities and 49 unitary authorities in England. There were also elections for Mayors in six local authorities, a council tax referendum in Bedfordshire, and neighbourhood planning referendums in Central Milton Keynes, Malpas & Overton (Cheshire West & Chester) and Wirksworth (Derbyshire Dales). It was also the first time that parish council elections were combined with a UK Parliamentary general election. In almost 280 local authority areas in England, the poll for the UK Parliamentary election was combined with other polls. Of these, 239 local authorities held three or more types of election (including UKPGE, local election, parish council election, referendum or mayoral election) with one authority (Bedford) holding five polls on 7 May. There were no large-scale combined polls in Northern Ireland, Scotland, or Wales, although some local government ward by-elections were held.

Registration and turnout A total of 46.4 million people were registered to vote in the UK Parliamentary elections on 7 May 2015. Some 30.8 million votes were included in the count, representing an overall turnout of 66.4%. Across the four countries of the UK, turnout ranged from 58.4% in Northern Ireland, to 71.1% in Scotland. The electorate for local government elections in England was 31.5 million and approximately 20 million votes were cast. Consistent with previous elections, turnout among postal voters at the UK Parliamentary elections was higher than among those who voted at polling stations: 86.0% of people who were sent a postal ballot pack voted, compared with 63.5% of those who were entitled to vote at a polling station. Postal votes were issued to around 7.6 million electors and 6.2 million postal votes were included in the count. Across England, Scotland and Wales, the proportion of electors who chose to vote by post was 16.9%. In comparison, 1.4% of the electorate were issued with a postal vote in Northern Ireland, where postal voting is not available on demand. Approximately 150,000 electors had appointed a proxy to vote on their behalf, representing 0.33% of the total electorate. In the final days before the close of polls, a further 8,500 electors appointed emergency proxies, across England, Scotland and Wales. Voters' experiences and views Overall the polls on 7 May 2015 were well-run and evidence from our research with voters shows that they had a positive view of the electoral process. Registering to vote Eighty-five per cent of those surveyed said that they were satisfied with the procedure for registering to vote, with 62% saying 'very satisfied'. Just 5% per cent were dissatisfied (3% 'very dissatisfied'). Almost four in five respondents in Great Britain (79%) knew that it was possible to apply to register to vote online, and those aged 18-54 were more likely to say so. Information about the elections Almost nine in ten respondents (88%) said they knew a great deal or a fair amount about the UK Parliamentary general election (UKPGE). Forty-five per cent of respondents said the same about the local elections in their area. Ninety per cent of respondents said that information on how to cast their vote at the UKPGE was very or fairly easy to access, although 3% said it was 'Fairly/very difficult'. Over four-fifths of people (84%) said the same of the local elections in England, although 7% said it was difficult to access. Voting in polling stations Nearly all (94%) of those respondents who voted in person at a

polling station reported that they were very or fairly satisfied with the voting process with 72% being ‘very satisfied’. People with disabilities were more likely to be dissatisfied with the process of voting at their polling station (5%) than those with no disability (2%). The majority of polling station voters (54%) found the support provided by polling station staff useful, although 4% said it was not useful.

Voting by post Nearly all (97%) of those respondents who voted by post, reported that they were satisfied with voting in this way. More than nine in ten (92%) respondents who voted by post said it was easy to complete and return the postal ballot, with 5% saying it was difficult. A similar proportion of respondents (91%) found the written instructions on how to vote and return the ballot useful, although 2% said they were not useful. Confidence in the administration and regulation of the elections Nine in ten people (91%) reported that they were either very or fairly confident the elections were well-run on 7 May, although 7% of respondents said ‘Not very confident/not confident at all’. People who voted were more likely to be confident that the May 2015 elections were well-run (93%) than those who did not vote (68%). Almost two-fifths (39%) of respondents did not agree that the funding and spending of political parties and candidates at elections is open and transparent although a third of respondents (33%) agree (22% said ‘Neither’ and 6% said they did not know). Respondents were considerably more confident that the authorities would take appropriate actions if the rules are broken: 63% agreed with the statement, with 36% agreeing strongly (although 22% disagreed). Forty-five percent of respondents thought that hardly any or no electoral fraud took place at the May 2015 polls, although just over one-third (35%) of people said that they thought electoral fraud took place (with 29% saying it happened ‘a little’ and 6% saying ‘a lot’).

Recommendations: Voter experience

Recommendation 1: Registration information provided by broadcasters All broadcasters, particularly those with specific public purposes built into their remit, should continue to identify and take advantage of opportunities to include information about voter registration in their editorial coverage at elections.

Recommendation 2: Providing an online registration status check The UK Government should develop an online service to allow people to check whether they are already correctly registered to vote before they submit a new application to register. Any such service would need to carefully manage and protect voters’ personal information.

Recommendation 3: Introducing online electoral registration in Northern Ireland Given the clear benefits for electors in England, Scotland and Wales, who can now apply to register to vote online, online registration should be introduced in Northern Ireland. The Chief Electoral Officer and Northern Ireland Office should publish a timetable setting out when this will happen. This will require legislative change in the UK Parliament as well as significant changes to the management of the electoral register by the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland.

Recommendation 4: Improving the delivery of postal ballot packs to voters We will continue to encourage Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) and Returning Officers (ROs) to put plans in place to ensure that they make full use of provisions within the statutory election timetable to maximise the time available for electors to receive, complete and return their postal vote. We, along with the Electoral Advisory Board (EAB), have identified that the capacity of print suppliers to fulfil demand is a significant risk to the ability of individual ROs to produce and despatch postal votes in sufficient time. We will work with the EAB to consider ways to improve this area of election delivery and to minimise these risks.

Recommendation 5: Improving access to the voting process for overseas electors We will work with the UK Government and Returning Officers to identify practical steps which could be taken to

improve access to the voting process for overseas electors at the next scheduled poll where they are entitled to vote, including: Ensuring that all Returning Officers include the correct postage on postal ballot packs for overseas electors, so that they can be delivered to voters and returned as quickly as possible before polling day, including increasing the funding provided by the UK Government to Returning Officers for this purpose. Explaining the practical implications of different voting methods (such as postal voting or appointing a proxy) for overseas electors, particularly if they are making an application during the last month before polling day, including on the www.gov.uk/register-to-vote website. We will work with the UK Government and Returning Officers to develop workable and effective proposals, which could be included in the proposed Votes for Life Bill if legislation is required, to make it easier for overseas electors to cast their votes in time to be counted at elections. We will also continue our work with the Electoral Advisory Board to consider how technology might be introduced into a wider range of election activity.

Recommendation 6: Extending the qualifying circumstances for appointing an emergency proxy We have previously recommended that the qualifying circumstances for appointing an emergency proxy should be extended, so that those who have unforeseen caring responsibilities or who have experienced the death of a close relative would also be eligible. This recommendation has not yet been taken forward by any government with legislative competence over elections within the UK; we continue to recommend that the UK Government and, for Scottish Parliament elections and local government elections, the Scottish Government, should consult on and bring forward secondary legislation to further extend the qualifying circumstances for appointing an emergency proxy to reflect the concerns highlighted by electors at the May 2015 polls. The UK and Scottish Governments should ensure that any changes to the legislation relating to proxy vote applications for the May 2016 polls are clear by 5 November 2015, six months before polling day. Recommendations: Administration of the polls

Recommendation 7: Ensuring statutory Welsh and language election materials are treated equally We repeat our recommendation that the UK Government should work with relevant partners, including the Welsh Government, to re-examine its approach to the statutory provision of Welsh language forms, notices and ballot papers, and commits to providing the necessary statutory translation in good time before elections, consistent with the timing and approach taken to the provision of corresponding language resources.

Recommendation 8: Ensuring legislation is clear in good time before elections Governments with legislative competence over elections within the UK should manage the development and approval of legislation so that it is clear at least six months before it is required to be implemented or complied with by campaigners or electoral administrators. All governments should normally be able to plan to ensure that legislation for elections is clear at least six months before it is required to be implemented or complied with. While there may be unexpected developments or exceptional circumstances in which legislation is required later than this, it is not acceptable that poor planning has routinely resulted in late legislation in recent years. This is particularly disappointing when the date of

polling day has been fixed some time in advance. If a government has not been able to make legislation clear at least six months before the date of a scheduled poll, it should table a formal statement in the relevant legislature, explaining why it has not, and setting out its assessment of the likely impact of the late confirmation of legislation for campaigners, electoral administrators and electors.

Recommendation 9: Clarifying the law relating to candidates' commonly used names The UK Government should amend the law to remove the requirement for the commonly used name to be

different to any other forename or surname that the candidate has, while retaining the existing safeguard that ROs may reject the use of a commonly used name on the grounds that (a) its use may be likely to mislead or confuse electors or (b) it is obscene or offensive. Recommendations: Candidates and campaigners Recommendation 10: Registration of party names and descriptions for use on ballot papers We continue to recommend that where a candidate represents a political party on an election ballot paper, it should be clear to voters which party the candidate represents. We are concerned that the legal provisions for registration of party descriptions present risks of confusion for voters and restrict the participation of political parties. The UK Government should reform or remove the provisions on party descriptions. It will be important to consult political parties, other governments with legislative competence over elections within the UK, and the Commission on the practical considerations of achieving this change. Recommendation 11: Transparency and regulation of open primary party selection contests held close to an election or during a candidate regulated period We recommend that governments with legislative competence over elections within the UK should consider transparency and regulation of open primary party selection contests held during a candidate regulated period. If an open primary contest takes place during a candidate regulated period, the campaign spending that promoted the successful open primary contestant should be transparent and subject to appropriate limits, and relevant donations towards this spending should be subject to appropriate controls. Consideration should also be given to transparency of the costs of unsuccessful primary contestants and the central party in relation to such open primaries. We would be happy to work with political parties and relevant governments to discuss how this could be achieved within the existing regulatory framework. Recommendation 12: Costs relating to an individual's disability Governments with legislative competence over elections within the UK should amend the definitions of political party and candidate spending so that reasonable expenses that can be attributed to an individual's disability are exempt, (as was recently set out in the revised PPERA rules for non-party campaigners). Recommendation 13: Costs relating to translation from Welsh to and vice versa As the PPERA non-party campaigner rules now exempt the costs associated with translating Welsh to and vice versa, we recommend that equivalent legal provisions should be introduced into the election rules covering spending by political parties and candidates by the relevant government/s at that time. Download our full report Our report on how the 2015 UK general election was run Related content Results and turnout at the 2015 UK general election Gweld y canlyniadau a'r nifer a bleidleisiodd yn etholiad cyffredinol Senedd y DU 2015 Report overview: 2019 UK Parliamentary general election Read our full report on the 2019 UK Parliamentary general election. Find out how it was run, voters' experience, candidates' experience, challenges faced, and how they'll be addressed Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run Report: Voting in 2017 Read our report about voting at the general election in 2017

1. The electoral system | Electoral Commission Search 1. The electoral system You are in the Corporate plan 2022/23 to 2026/27 section Home Our plans and priorities Corporate plan 2022/23 to 2026/27 On this page Scheduled elections in the period April 2022 to March 2027 First published: 25 April 2022 Last updated: 25 April 2022 Introduction The electoral system enables democracy across and within the nations, regions and local areas of the UK by: encouraging people to register to vote, and to trust and value elections and referendums achieving high levels of compliance with registration, reporting and other political finance laws ensuring the delivery of free and fair elections and referendums A range of bodies operate within the electoral system to enable it to function efficiently and effectively. These include: parliaments and governments candidates, parties and campaigners local electoral services led by the Electoral Registration Officers and Returning Officers, who are responsible for directly delivering elections throughout the UK the Electoral Commission which has specific duties related to the oversight of elections, running referendums and the regulation of political finance, along with other bodies that have regulatory and law enforcement responsibilities relating to elections Scheduled elections in the period April 2022 to March 2027 May 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly Local Government (including London Boroughs) Welsh Local Government Scottish Council Combined Authority Mayoral Local Mayoral May 2023 Local Government Northern Ireland Local Government Combined Authority Mayoral Local Mayoral May 2024 Mayor of London and London Assembly Local Government Police and Crime Commissioners (England and Wales) Combined Authority Mayoral Local Mayoral No later than January 2025 UK Parliamentary May 2025 Local Government Combined Authority Mayoral Local Mayoral May 2026 Scottish Parliament Senedd Local Government (including London Boroughs) Combined Authority Mayoral Local Mayoral Navigation Corporate plan 2022/23 to 2026/27 There are five objectives in our corporate plan, which all contribute to our vision that people trust, value and take part in elections.

2. The Electoral Commission Section 2 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan

Northern Ireland Assembly's Parties Panel: 1 October 2019 | Electoral Commission Search Northern Ireland Assembly's Parties Panel: 1 October 2019 You are in the Party panels section Home How we make decisions Party panels First published: 6 November 2020 Last updated: 3 February 2021 Meeting overview Date: 1 October 2019 Time: 9:30am Location: Boardroom, Ormeau Business Park, Belfast Date of next scheduled meeting: 28 January 2020 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Alliance Party: Sharon Lowry DUP: Lee Reynolds Green Party: Kate Barry Sinn Féin: Gary Fleming and Seamus Drumm SDLP: Catherine Matthews UUP: Barbara Knox The Electoral Commission: Anna Carragher, Commissioner Cahir Hughes, Head of Electoral Commission NI Roisin McDaid, Senior Officer (Political Parties Liaison) Craig Westwood, Director of Communications, Policy and Research Laura Palts McCarthy, Senior Public Affairs Officer Electoral Office for Northern Ireland: Virginia McVea, Chief Electoral Officer for Ireland Welcome and introductions The Chair, Anna Carragher, welcomed everyone to the meeting and round table introductions were made. Anna congratulated Cahir on his new role and updated the panel on other Commission staffing changes. Notes of previous meeting on 11 June 2019 The panel agreed the notes of the previous meeting. There were no matters arising. Issues raised by the political parties No items had been raised by the parties in advance of the meeting. Electoral Commission updates Anna commented on the current political environment and said that the Commission had contingency plans in place for any unscheduled poll. Electoral Commission assessment on May 2019 local government elections Cahir told the panel that on 8 July we wrote to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland giving our assessment that the local elections in Northern Ireland had been well run, with feedback from voters and observers being positive. A copy of the letter was provided. The Commission identified a number of minor legislative issues that we have highlighted to the Government. These included issues relating to home addresses on ballot papers, the management of the count and polling scheme reviews. In response the Government has already consulted with us on draft legislation to remove the requirement for home addresses to be on ballot paper and other minor issues. Commission response to draft legislation Cahir updated the panel on draft legislation that the Commission had responded to the Government on: Representation of the People (Electronic Communications and Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2020 In August we responded to draft legislation for the canvass, welcoming the opportunity it would give voters to respond to a canvass online for the first time in Northern Ireland. Overall we were content with the draft legislation, although we are waiting on a further draft of the Regulations from the NIO. The Local Elections (Northern Ireland) (Amendment) Order 2020 We have also responded to a draft Order from the NIO that makes some amendments to local government elections. Most notably this brings local government elections into line with other elections by removing the requirement for a candidate to have their home address published. It also addresses the issue relating to the use of capital letters for a candidate's name on the ballot paper. We have welcomed the amendments made by the Order. Report on the accuracy and completeness of the electoral registers On 26 September we published our latest assessment on the accuracy and completeness of the electoral registers in Northern Ireland. A copy of the report was provided. Cahir highlighted the headline figures from the report. Private renters remain the least likely to have up to date register entries (38%) compared to people who owned their houses outright (88%). Registration levels are also low among young people aged 18-34, with only 51% correctly registered, compared to 94% for people aged 65 and over. The 2018 figures show a return to the levels of accuracy and completeness recorded in 2012. The last Northern

Ireland canvass was in 2013, with the next one scheduled for 2020. The Commission has renewed calls for modernisation of the electoral registration system in Northern Ireland, recommending that public data could be better used to help keep the electoral register accurate and complete throughout the year. Modernising electoral registration feasibility studies Craig updated the panel on the feasibility studies the Commission published in July. The studies explored how the system could be modernised further to make it easier for people to register to vote and for Electoral Registration Officers to maintain accurate and complete electoral registers. Craig said that our studies provided an evidence base for any future policy. Anna added that compared to NI, it is a more complex picture in GB with 381 separate registers. Gary said that they have serious concerns about the register but they support automatic registration of attainers when they get their national insurance number. Lee made the point of being careful with data and that people have the right not to participate. Anna acknowledged the point but added that people should be registered even if they choose not to vote. Craig mentioned the debate about automatic or automated registration. Update from Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland The CEO welcomed Cahir to his new role and thanked the Commission for its accuracy and completeness report. There are now 1.3m people on the register which is one of the highest levels it's been at. From 1 January to 1 October 2019 there were 21,849 paper applications and 117,089 online applications. The mid-year estimate for attainers is at 50%. EONI is looking at different data options to analyse registration levels and target outreach. Working with property services' data, EONI should be able to identify streets with the lowest levels of registration. The CEO would welcome opportunities to work with the Commission and parties on more raising more targeted public awareness. The CEO is also considering how to contact attainers and an option is to use a C2K network which would allow contact with every pupil on the network. Working with CCEA the EONI is planning to provide lesson plan materials for 11-14, 14-16 and 16+ to support electoral registration. The CEO is working with Start 360 to reach those not in education or training. EONI is working with RQIA to improve engagement with care home residents and to develop care home standards that would support this. There was a discussion about the difficulties of getting access to care home residents and how this needs to be balanced with the pressures and priorities of care homes and families. This led to a discussion around access to apartment blocks and their residents' turnout rate. Anna asked if more could be done to improve and modernise access to electoral ID for attainers and the elderly. The CEO said that a legislative change is needed but highlighted some options that could modernise the process. This included using photos on the C2K network for young people. However GDPR legislation would have to be carefully considered alongside this. These are longer term projects and might need pilots to test if they work in practice. The CEO suggested working with the Commission given its experience of the ID pilots in Great Britain The polling station review is due to be published on or before 1 December. The CEO will confirm with parties when it will be published. The CEO will arrange a meeting with the panel to discuss how data sources could be more effectively used to manage the electoral register. Electoral Commission updates – recent Commission publications Codes of Practice on election spending Roisin updated panel members on the Codes of Practice. In July we submitted two codes of practice on election spending to the Minister for Constitution. One on candidate and one on party spending. The Minister now needs to decide whether to make any amendments to the codes before laying them before parliament to approve. The draft codes and our report on the responses to the consultation process were circulated to members in July and

are available on our website. The codes, if enacted will apply to elections to Westminster, Northern Ireland Assembly and Councils in Northern Ireland. These codes would also apply at local government elections in Northern Ireland where the regulated period was combined with the regulated period for another election If you have any questions about the codes, please contact Roisin. Political finance – statutory return deadlines Parties were reminded of the following deadlines: Donation and loan returns for 1 July 2019 – 30 September 2019 (Q3 2019) must be submitted by 30 October 2019. Donation and loan returns for 1 October 2019 – 31 December 2019 (Q4 2019) must be submitted by 30 January 2020. Lee raised concerns about advice received regarding the reporting of loans. Roisin said that we can meet to discuss any individual concerns. AOB – none raised Proposed 2020 meeting dates Tuesday 28 January Tuesday 24 March Tuesday 9 June Tuesday 6 October

You are in the UK general elections section Home UK general elections In this section In depth: delivering the 2019 general election In depth: campaigning at the 2019 general election Overview This is a summary of our report on the 2019 UK general election. The report continues in two in-depth sections, covering delivering the election and campaigning at the election . Download the full report as a PDF Jump to

The election was well-run Challenges faced in running elections, and by new campaign techniques Actions and recommendations The election in depth Overview More than 40 million people were registered to vote in the 2019 general election. The turnout of registered voters was 67% The election was generally well-run, but there is new evidence showing challenges for the future The 2019 UK Parliamentary general election was held on Thursday 12 December. More than 40 million people were registered to vote, and the turnout of registered voters was 67%. There were high levels of satisfaction with the processes of registering to vote and voting. These were similar to other recent elections in the UK. Beneath this generally positive picture, however, we have also seen evidence about concerns and problems at this election.

Some people did not receive the service they should be able to expect, and many were not confident that the election was well run. Although more than two thirds of people said they were confident the election was well-run, a significant minority of nearly one in five people told us they were not confident. Many of these people selected reasons related to concerns about campaigning, or the media, to explain why they were not confident. Some people also selected concerns that related to the way the registration or voting process worked. Our report describes how the UK's electoral administration structures are operating under significant strain, and shows that people have growing concerns about some aspects of election campaigns. The report makes recommendations about how the running of elections may be improved. It precedes consideration of the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which is only beginning to be felt at the time of publication. There may be further recommendations to ensure the effective delivery of future elections. Challenges of delivering elections

Challenges of delivering elections Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) were under pressure from large numbers of applications to register to vote made close to the deadline. They had to spend time and effort at a critical point dealing with many duplicate applications Some overseas electors did not have enough time to receive and return postal votes before polling day, as has happened before, which meant their votes could not be counted The December timing brought specific challenges for Returning Officers (ROs), who found it harder to recruit staff and secure polling stations and counting venues Challenges from changing election campaign techniques Challenges from changing election campaign techniques Misleading content and presentation techniques are undermining voters' trust in election campaigns It is too often unclear who is behind digital election campaign material. Significant public concerns about the transparency of digital election campaigns risk overshadowing their benefits Some candidates experienced significant and unacceptable levels of threats, abuse or intimidation Addressing these challenges ahead of the next UK general election Many of the challenges described in this report are not new. We have seen similar issues arise at other recent elections in the UK. But the evidence we have seen after this election shows significant concerns from the public and electoral administrators. Opportunities There is an opportunity between now and the next scheduled general election to make real change. This will protect confidence in how elections are run and increase trust in campaigns. Action needs to begin now

to ensure confidence is not further damaged at future elections. Areas for improvement There are areas where governments, EROs, ROs, political parties, campaigners, social media companies, and regulators need to work together to agree new laws, processes or standards of conduct. We will support this work to ensure changes are workable, will benefit voters, and improve public confidence. Action needed Supporting EROs and ROs to meet voters' expectations The UK Government needs to identify improvements to the online register to vote service, electoral management software systems and the funding model for elections, to help EROs effectively manage large numbers of registration applications (including duplicate applications) ahead of major electoral events The UK Government should also explore reforms that would make it easier for people to register or update their details throughout the year, such as by integrating registration applications into other public service contacts The UK Government needs to consider innovative new approaches to improve voting for overseas electors, using evidence from other countries, particularly given its plans to increase the number of British citizens living abroad who are eligible to vote The UK's three governments need to set out how they will simplify and modernise electoral law, building on the comprehensive and well-supported recommendations by the Law Commissions Supporting trust and confidence in election campaigns s, candidates and political parties need to take greater responsibility for the presentation and content of campaigns they run and the impact of their activities on public confidence in elections The UK Government needs to make progress on its planned consultation on legislation to ensure campaigners have to include information about themselves on digital campaign material Social media companies need to provide more detailed and accurate data about election campaigns and spending in ad libraries on their platforms so we and voters can see more information about who is campaigning Supporting people who want to stand as candidates Political parties and other campaigners, the UK Government and social media companies should continue to take steps to tackle intimidation so that people are not discouraged from standing for election or campaigning because of the risk of abuse, threats or intimidation The election in depth Take an in depth look at the top issues faced at this election: How electoral registration officers and returning officers found delivering the election The challenges posed by campaigning Supporting evidence Supporting evidence Supporting evidence: main data tables for the 2019 UK Parliamentary general election Electoral data: 2019 UK Parliamentary general election Related content Report: Voting in 2017 Read our report about voting at the general election in 2017 Results and turnout at the 2017 UK general election View the results and turnout at the 2017 general election Report: Political finance regulation at the June 2017 UK general election Read our report about political finance regulation at the 2017 general election Report: Electoral registration at the June 2017 UK general election Read our report about electoral registration at the 2017 general election

Letter: To Facebook about digital campaigning at the EU referendum | Electoral Commission Search Letter: To Facebook about digital campaigning at the EU referendum You are in the Key correspondence section Home Key correspondence On this page Letter summary Read our letter in full First published: 16 November 2017 Last updated: 20 December 2019 Summary of the letter Date: 16 November 2017 To: Mr Gareth Lambe, MD Facebook Ireland From: Louise Edwards, Head of Regulation Format: Sent by email Full letter Dear Mr Lambe Political campaign finance transparency You may be aware that we have recently met with colleagues in your Public Policy team. We would like to thank them for their open and productive approach and look forward to continuing to engage with Facebook on the important issues arising from digital political campaigning. The Electoral Commission is responsible for regulating and enforcing the rules - set out in the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) - that govern political campaign finance in the UK. These rules cover the funding of and spending on campaign activity, and include provisions and offences about acting as an agent for donations, and arrangements to evade the rules on donations. You will be aware of concerns that individuals or organisations from outside the UK, and notably from or on behalf of Russia, may have been campaigning via social media platforms in the June 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the EU. Further, concerns have been raised that the individuals and funds behind such campaigning, if it occurred, were hidden from those viewing the campaign material. EU referendum campaign activity Campaign activity in the context of the EU Referendum included activities that were intended to, or were otherwise in connection with, promoting or bringing about a particular outcome in the referendum. This included campaign broadcasts, advertising of any kind, unsolicited material sent to voters and market research or other methods of finding out how people intended to vote. Further clarification on what constituted campaign activity was given in our guidance on referendum spending. The referendum was preceded by a regulated period, which ran from 15 April to 23 June 2016. During this period the rules stated campaign activities carried out by referendum campaigners – any individual or entity engaged in campaign activity, whether registered with the Commission or not – could only be financed from permissible donations. This excluded individuals not on the UK or Gibraltar electoral roll and companies not carrying out a business in the UK or Gibraltar. Request for information The Commission's legal duties include taking all reasonable steps to secure compliance with the campaign finance rules (see section 145 of PPERA). In furtherance of this duty, please provide us with the following information: Any evidence you hold of campaign activity conducted via Facebook during the regulated period for the June 2016 EU Referendum (15 April to 23 June 2016) that was funded from Russia. Please provide any such evidence to us by 8 December 2017. In anticipation of this, thank you for your prompt assistance on this important matter. June 2017 UK parliamentary general election Our work in respect of the June general election is ongoing. We may, as part of our assurance work in respect of these returns, wish to contact you at a later date regarding campaign activity on your platform during the general election campaign. Please contact me if you have any questions regarding this request. Related content Letter: Coronavirus and its impact on the May polls Read our letter to Chloe Smith MP (Minister for the Constitution and Devolution) from March 2020 Letter: To Twitter about digital campaigning at the EU referendum Read our letter to Twitter from November 2017 Letter: Electoral Commission investigations in respect of Leave.EU Read our letter to Mr Arron Banks (Chairman, Leave.EU) from November 2017 Letter: BBC NI Spotlight programme "Brexit, Dark Money and the DUP" Read our letter to Mr Jim

Fitzpatrick from February 2018

[View current applications](#) | [Electoral Commission](#) [Search](#) [View current applications](#) You are in the section Home First published: 30 May 2019 Last updated: 2 October 2023 List of current applications We publish names, descriptions and emblems which we are currently considering as part of our assessment process. Political parties can't use these names, descriptions and emblems on a ballot paper until we have approved them. However, a party can use these names, descriptions and emblems in other materials before our approval. Date we published the following notices - 02 October 2023 Fairer Voting Party Part of the UK that this application applies to: All of Great Britain Proposed name: Fairer Voting Party Proposed description: Proposed emblem: Great British National Workers Party Part of the UK that this application applies to: All of Great Britain Proposed name: Great British National Workers Party Homeland Party Part of the UK that this application applies to: All of Great Britain Proposed name: Homeland Party More Police Officers for Thames Valley Part of the UK that this application applies to: England Proposed name: More Police Officers for Thames Valley Proposed description: Proposed emblem: New World Order Resisting Independence Party Part of the UK that this application applies to: All of Great Britain Proposed name: New World Order Resisting Independence Party Proposed descriptions: New World Order Resisting Independence Party New World Order R.I.P New World Order Resistance Party Resisting The New World Order Warning! Communism Ahead Proposed emblem: New World Order Resisting Independence Party Part of the UK that this application applies to: Northern Ireland Proposed name: New World Order Resisting Independence Party Proposed descriptions: New World Order Resisting Independence Party New World Order R.I.P New World Order Resistance Party Resisting The New World Order Warning! Communism Ahead Proposed emblem: Party of Women Part of the UK that this application applies to: All of Great Britain Proposed name: Party of Women Proposed description: Proposed emblem: Somerset Unionist Party Part of the UK that this application applies to: England Proposed name: Somerset Unionist Party Proposed emblem: The Other Party Part of the UK that this application applies to: England Proposed name: The Other Party Proposed descriptions: Decentralise The Nation. Choose The Other Party Choose Pure Democracy The Other Party. Choose Life Proposed emblem: Date we published the following notices - 22 September 2023 Democrats (GB) & UK Independence Party (UKIP) (GB) Part of the UK that this application applies to: All of Great Britain Proposed joint description: Patriots Alliance The People's Independent Party Part of the UK that this application applies to: England Proposed name: The People's Independent Party Proposed description: Local people for local people Proposed emblems: Emblem 1 Emblem 2 Date we published the following notices - 19 September 2023 All 4 Freedoms Part of the UK that this application applies to: All of Great Britain Proposed name: European Party Proposed name: Plaid Ewropeadidd Proposed descriptions: European Party: All 4 Freedoms European Party: fair federal future European Party: UK in EU Plaid Ewropeaidd: y 4 rhyddid Proposed emblem: Bury Independents Part of the UK that this application applies to: England Proposed name: Bury Independents Proposed descriptions: Bury Independents - Whitefield and Unsworth Bury Independents - Prestwich Bury Independents - Ramsbottom Bury Independents - Tottington Bury Independents - Whitefield Proposed emblem: New World Order Resisting Independence Party Part of the UK that this application applies to: All of Great Britain Proposed name: New World Order Resisting Independence Party New World Order Resisting Independence Party Part of the UK that this application applies to: Northern Ireland Proposed name: New World Order Resisting Independence Party The Front for British Unity Part of the UK that this application applies to: England Proposed name: The

Front for British Unity Proposed description: The party for British Unity The Yoruba Party in the UK Part of the UK that this application applies to: All of Great Britain Proposed name: The Yoruba Party in the UK Proposed descriptions: Yoruba Diaspora mobilising party Yoruba Diaspora welfare party Proposed emblem: Date we published the following notices - 23 August 2023 Communist Future Part of the UK that this application applies to: All of Great Britain Proposed name: Communist Future Proposed descriptions: Communist Future - there is an alternative! There is an alternative: Communist Future Proposed emblem: Godstone Residents Part of the UK that this application applies to: England Proposed name: Godstone Residents Proposed description: Godstone Residents One Farnworth Part of the UK that this application applies to: England Proposed name: One Farnworth Proposed description: Proposed emblem: Scottish Eco-Federalist Party (SEFP) Part of the UK that this application applies to: Scotland Proposed descriptions: Eco-Federalists - For a Sustainable Federal Model Eco-Federalists - Reject Independence, Reject the Tories Scottish Eco-Federalists - Prioritise fighting climate change Scottish Eco-Federalists - Reject Independence, Reject Anglocentrism Scottish Eco-Federalists - For a Sustainable UK Scottish Eco-Federalists - For a Sustainable Union Scottish Eco-Federalists - Reject Independence, Reverse Brexit Scottish Eco-Federalists - Modernise the Union Scottish Eco-Federalists - More Autonomy for Scotland Scottish Eco-Federalists - For Climate Action Scottish Eco-Federalists - Reject Independence, Reject Labour Scottish Eco-Federalists - Reform the Union The Progressive Unity Party Part of the UK that this application applies to: All of Great Britain Proposed name: The Progressive Unity Party Proposed descriptions: Compassion-driven reform for a better future Let's build a better tomorrow, today. A community that values every voice. Proposed emblems: Emblem 1 Emblem 2 Date we published the following notices - 09 June 2023 United Kingdom Democratic Party Part of the UK that this application applies to: All of Great Britain Proposed name: United Kingdom Democratic Party Proposed descriptions: UKDP Against Cuts UKDP for Direct Democracy UKDP - A Voice For Workers Proposed emblem: Related content Find out about party registration applications and decisions Comment on an application Find out how to comment on a particular political party name, description or emblem as part of our assessment process Party registration decisions View our decisions on political party names, descriptions and emblems How political parties are registered

8. Underpinning this work in Wales | Electoral Commission Search

8. Underpinning this work in Wales You are in the Corporate Plan for Wales 2022/23 to 2026/27 section Home Our plans and priorities Corporate Plan for Wales 2022/23 to 2026/27 On this page 1. We demonstrate independence and integrity 2. We are a skilled organisation where diversity is valued 3. We are a learning organisation where improvement is continuous and resources are used efficiently First published: 25 April 2022 Last updated: 25 April 2022 Summary The preceding sections of this Corporate Plan summarise the work we will undertake to achieve our five strategic objectives. We will ensure we are equipped as an organisation to meet these objectives, focussing on the key enabling activities summarised below.

1. We demonstrate independence and integrity The electoral system depends on the Electoral Commission being an independent non-partisan body, and we therefore hold ourselves to high standards of integrity. We work hard to ensure we are respected for our expertise, and that our advice and decision making are free from bias. Given our unique role, our integrity needs to be clear and demonstrable. We will continue to demonstrate our integrity by: taking decisions on the evidence and being transparent about the reasons for them basing our policy positions and recommendations on analysis of evidence effectively communicating our work and views providing responsive services to those we support maintaining effective governance arrangements

Taking decisions on the evidence and being transparent about the reasons for them In making decisions, of a regulatory nature or otherwise, we will proceed based on the law, evidence, fairness and proportionality, and in accordance with sound governance processes. Our published policies, such as our Corporate Governance Framework and Enforcement Policy, provide a clear understanding of how we operate and make decisions. Wherever and to the extent it is appropriate for us to provide reasons for decisions we will do so, including in accordance with freedom of information and data protection law. To that end we will continue to publish the outcome of every investigation, and highlight instances where learning from investigations could assist other campaigners in understanding and applying the law. We are accountable to the Courts for our decisions and the reasons for them, as well as being accountable to parliaments. Basing our policy positions and recommendations on analysis of evidence Our recommendations must be evidence-based and underpinned by research if they are to be trusted, adopted and taken forward. We will continue to conduct research to understand how elections and referendums have been run and experienced. We will continue to develop our evidence base on all issues that impact the electoral system – from voters' perceptions of the legitimacy of elections, to challenges faced by electoral administrators. We will embed the horizon-scanning approach that underpins our policy development work, and will continue to identify challenges and recommend solutions. Effectively communicating our work and views We want to ensure our work and our considered views have impact. We will therefore continue to ensure all information relevant to Wales is published in English and Welsh. We will use plain English and Clir, avoid jargon to aid understanding, and will communicate clearly to all audiences. We will continue to make our services and the information we provide accessible. Providing responsive services to those we support We support our stakeholders – including voters, campaigners, and electoral administrators – with accessible information and guidance on all aspects of the electoral system. They come to us for advice and support, and expect a responsive service that meets their needs. We will continue to consult our stakeholders to understand their expectations of our services, and will make improvements based on their needs. We will maintain high standards of customer service. Maintaining effective governance arrangements We

outline our governance arrangements in Section 12 of this Corporate Plan.

2. We are a skilled organisation where diversity is valued We want our workforce to feel valued and be supported to achieve their potential. In the next five years we will:

implement refreshed working practices to reflect wider changes in our work environment and culture attract, retain and develop the people we need maintain and improve high standards of leadership and management, with a focus on developing our people further embed equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of our work ensure the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the language Implement refreshed working practices to reflect wider changes in our work environment and culture The coronavirus pandemic has impacted our working practices and resulted in new behaviours and approaches. We will learn from this to ensure that we retain the benefits, embedding more flexible working in ways that benefit our people, the Commission as a whole and our stakeholders. We will ensure our culture and behaviours reflect these values. We will also strengthen our approach to internal communications, working hard to keep our people connected, informed and motivated. We provide more information about how we will utilise technology to support new working practices below. Attract, retain and develop the people we need Our people are the core of our organisation. We will enable them to be skilled, with the diverse expertise needed to deliver our work. We will ensure they are capable, with a focus on being effective in everything they do, and committed, with a passion for democracy and our role in supporting it. We don't take these qualities for granted, and we will continue to implement our People Strategy to ensure we continue to attract, retain and develop the best team possible. Maintain and improve high standards of leadership and management, with a focus on developing our people Learning is a key part of our people's day to day work, and we are committed to supporting their development. We will continue to achieve high standards of leadership, management and people development, consulting our people to ensure we support their specific needs. Further embed equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of our work We value diversity, and aim to be an open and inclusive organisation. We celebrate the breadth of thinking, skills and experience that our people bring to our organisation. And, we are committed to being an inclusive regulator, with strategies and processes that reflect the diversity of those we serve. We will deliver a renewed equality, diversity and inclusion strategy. We will implement the Business in the Community Race at Work Charter. And, we will work to increase and support diversity at senior levels, including representation on our Commission Board. Ensure the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the language We are committed to treating the Welsh and languages equally in all our work. We will continue to ensure that people in Wales can access our services and all information we publish which relates to Wales in both Welsh and . We will continue to fulfil our statutory responsibility by meeting the Welsh Language Standards, set by the Welsh Language Commissioner through the Compliance Notice. We plan to strengthen our commitment to these standards, and the Welsh language more generally, by implementing a new Welsh Language Compliance Plan. This will include appointing a senior owner of the Welsh Language Standards within the Electoral Commission. The Electoral Commission in Wales will continue to lead and support other teams throughout the UK to uphold the Welsh Language Standards.

3. We are a learning organisation where improvement is continuous and resources are used efficiently The world around us is changing rapidly. We need to adapt fast to be successful. In order to do this we aim to be rigorous in learning from experience and seek continuous improvement in all that we do. With pressures on public spending set to continue, it is crucial that we continue to manage our costs

and make effective use of our technology, funding, time and resources. In the next five years we will: procure and implement value for money IT systems that improve service delivery maintain our financial strategy to keep the Commission within approved budgets continue to develop techniques to learn from experience, seek continuous improvement and become more efficient and effective develop a corporate environmental strategy that meets policy and legislative requirements for reduced environmental impact We will do this through effective leadership and management within a five-year financial plan that is aimed at costs of no more after inflation in 2026/27 than it does in 2021/22. Procure and implement value for money IT systems that improve service delivery Technology and data are crucial to our work. Our website and Political Finance Online database allow us to publish vital information which is in the public interest, bringing transparency to our democracy. Our internal systems are key to ensuring the quality of our work, and enable us to effectively manage risk. We will continue our programme to procure and implement new IT systems. We will ensure our infrastructure is up to date and fit for purpose. We will launch our new Political Finance Online database to make it easier and faster for parties and campaigners to submit financial data. We will also implement a new customer relationship management tool. Maintain our financial strategy to keep the Commission within approved budgets We detail our financial strategy in Section 8. With pressures on public spending and a need to ensure value for money, our spend on core services will be no higher in real terms at the end of the Corporate Plan period than it is at the beginning. We will work to increase the value we deliver for parliaments.

Continue to develop techniques to learn from experience, seek continuous improvement and become more efficient and effective Technology enables us to run an efficient workplace, but our processes are also key to ensuring the quality of our work. We will embed quality management processes across all our services and functions. We want to improve the way we make decisions, and will also make better use of our knowledge. We will develop and implement a new knowledge management framework. We want to meet the needs of voters, parties and campaigners, electoral administrators and parliaments, and will undertake research to understand their expectations of our services. Develop a corporate environmental strategy that meets policy and legislative requirements We outline our plans to reduce the environmental impact of the electoral system in sections 2 and 5 of this Corporate Plan. We are also committed to reducing the environmental impact of our organisation. We will enhance our expertise, ensuring we have the environmental skills we need. We will carry out an environmental audit. We will develop and implement an action plan to achieve our environmental targets in line with legislation. This will include reducing waste and increasing recycling where possible. Navigation 7. A modern and sustainable electoral system in Wales Section 7 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan for Wales 9. Managing our costs in Wales Section 9 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan for Wales

Board notes: 25 September 2019 informal presentation/discussion for Commissioners on accuracy and completeness survey | Electoral Commission Search

Board notes: 25 September 2019 informal presentation/discussion for Commissioners on accuracy and completeness survey You are in the Electoral Commission Board

section Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Accuracy and completeness survey First published: 22 January 2020 Last updated: 6 February 2020 Meeting overview Date: Wednesday 25 September 2019 Location: Boothroyd Room, 3

Bunhill Row, London Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Holmes, Chair

Anna Carragher Sarah Chambers Elan Closs Stephens Alasdair Morgan Rob Vincent Stephen Gilbert Joan Walley Bob Posner, Chief Executive Craig Westwood, Director, Communications, Policy and Research Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation Mel Davidson, Head of Support and Improvement David Bailey, Head of Strategic Planning and Performance David Meek, Senior Adviser, Governance Phil Thompson, Head of Research Tom Hawthorn, Head of Policy Mark Williams, Policy Manager Accuracy and completeness survey The Head of Research introduced the presentation, and explained that the purpose of the research

was to provide an overview of the accuracy and completeness of electoral registers in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, inform our guidance for Electoral Registration Officers, and inform our approach to public awareness campaigns. The presentation covered the latest report on the quality of the 372 electoral registers in the UK.

Care was taken to ensure that the sampled households represented geographically spread local authorities across England, Scotland and Wales and wards across Northern Ireland. This was the first time where the sample size in Wales and Scotland allowed us to make robust estimates for those devolved areas. While our response rate of 72%

was quite high, the Board understood there was a risk of systematic bias from which households were likely to respond, which was difficult to address. The survey found that around 17% of eligible voters in Great Britain were not correctly registered at their current address. In Northern Ireland, 25% of eligible voters were not correctly registered. In addition, more than 10% of entries on the registers in Great Britain and 20% in Northern Ireland were inaccurate. The Head of Research acknowledged that the study could not accurately measure voters who were registered in more than one constituency. The Board heard that young people, recent home movers, and private renters were much less likely to be correctly registered. People who had lived at their address for under two years were significantly less likely to be correctly

registered than those who had lived at their address for longer. Private renters were much less likely to have up-to-date register entries than those who own their homes outright. These findings were similar to results from previous surveys. The Board

discussed the registration rates of voters with different characteristics. The study found lower rates of registration among voters aged under 35 as compared to voters aged over 35 in both Great Britain and Northern Ireland. There was concern that the

data indicated that lower rates of registration among young people in Northern Ireland was resulting in lower rates of registration in older cohorts; voters who

were not accurately registered when younger appeared less likely to be correctly registered as they aged. The Board considered the limitations of existing

registration campaigns, and considered new methods to improve accuracy and completeness. The Board noted the proposed reforms to the annual canvass that were already underway. The Board considered options that could improve the accuracy and completeness of the register. Some options included allowing Electoral Registration Officers greater access to existing national data which could support more automated or automatic registration. There was also discussion of integrating electoral

registration into other public service transactions, for example applying for or renewing driving licences, to make it easier for voters to keep their registration details accurate. A move towards more automated forms of registration for specific groups, for example registering young voters when they were allocated their National Insurance number ahead of their sixteenth birthday, could also help to improve levels of registration. The Head of Research noted the difficulties of reliably comparing accuracy and completeness figures over time and across different studies. He explained that other factors had to be taken into account, such as the number of European Union nationals living in the UK at the time of comparison. There had also been changes to the franchise over time which would affect the ability to compare figures. The Board asked the Head of Research to consider providing a comparison with other countries. The Board discussed how best to present the findings and the recommendations of the study. The Board considered it appropriate to provide granular information on the characteristics of voters who were less likely to be registered. The Board also suggested recommending changes to registration to reduce the number of duplications in the system. The meeting ended at 2.35pm.

You are in the section Home What is the Elections Act? The UK government is making changes to the UK electoral system. The Election Act contains measures that affect: elections and the way we vote campaigning and the rules on campaign spending and funding parliamentary oversight of the Electoral Commission about the Act Changes to elections and the way you vote Requirement to show ID at polling stations about the UK Government's voter ID proposal. Changes to postal voting The UK Government has proposed a number of changes to postal voting. . Changes to proxy voting about the proposed changes to voting by proxy, where someone you trust votes on your behalf. Changes to elections and the way you vote Improving the accessibility of elections Read about the proposals to make it easier for people with disabilities to vote.

Preventing undue influence Read about the proposals to simplify and clarify the offence of undue influence (when someone uses, or threatens to use, force or violence to make someone vote a certain way). Changes for EU Citizens about proposed changes to EU Citizens' rights to vote and stand in elections. Changes to elections and the way you vote Changes to overseas voting about proposals to remove the 15 year limit on voting rights for British citizens living overseas. Changes to the voting system for mayoral and PCC elections Read about the proposals to change the voting system for mayoral and Police and Crime Commissioner elections in England and Wales. Changes for campaigners and spending and donation rules Introducing digital imprints about the proposed changes to digital imprints on election material. Preventing candidate intimidation Read about the proposals for a new penalty for intimidating candidates, campaigners or elected representatives. Changes to notional spending Read about the proposals to clarify the rules that relate to notional spending for candidates and agents. Changes to legal requirements for parties and non-party campaigners about proposals to change the law affecting parties and non-party campaigners. Changes to how Parliament oversees our work The Electoral Commission's ability to bring prosecutions about the proposal that would stop us from being able to bring prosecutions against those who break electoral law relating to parties and campaigners. A strategy and policy statement for the Electoral Commission about the UK Government's proposal for the Electoral Commission.

Executive Team You are in the section Home First published: 30 May 2019 Last updated: 1 April 2022 Summary Members of our executive team are each responsible for different areas of our work. They provide leadership to their teams, and ensure we deliver the strategies provided by our Commission Board. Our Executive Team Shaun McNally CBE, Chief Executive As Chief Executive, Shaun leads the organisation, putting into practice strategies agreed with our Commission Board. Shaun joined the Commission in April 2022 from the Ministry of Justice, where he led on the Department's planning, preparation and response to major incidents, including the end of the EU transition period and Covid-19. He has more than 35 years working within the UK justice system, with his previous roles including Chief Executive of the Legal Aid Agency, Director of Legal Aid Casework, and Director of Crime at Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service, HM Courts Service. Shaun was awarded a CBE in the January 2008 New Year's Honours list in recognition of his leadership and delivery of the North Liverpool Community Justice Centre. Ailsa Irvine, Director of Electoral Administration and Guidance Ailsa is responsible for our guidance. This includes guidance for electoral administrators on running electoral events, as well as the guidance for candidates and agents, political parties and other organisations. Ailsa has been at the Commission for over a decade, holding a number of different positions since starting as the Policy and Practice Officer in Scotland in 2003. From 2010 to the end of 2016, Ailsa was Head of Guidance, leading on the Commission's guidance, support and performance standards work. She played a key role in supporting the Commission's previous Chair, Jenny Watson, in her role as Chief Counting Officer at the recent EU referendum. Ailsa was appointed Director of Electoral Administration in January 2017. Louise Edwards, Director of Regulation and Digital Transformation Louise Edwards is our Director of Regulation and Digital Transformation. Louise is responsible for our regulatory work and digital, data, technology and facilities infrastructure. This includes funding and spending at elections and referendums, registering political parties, our enforcement work, and data and information management. Prior to joining the Commission, she worked for a range of regulators including the Charity Commission for England and Wales, The Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority, Ofgem and the Home Office. Craig Westwood, Director of Communications, Policy and Research Craig oversees the work of our campaigns, external communications, policy and research teams, which includes our public awareness campaigns right through to our recommendations for policy change. Craig joined the Electoral Commission in August 2016. Between February 2013 and July 2016, Craig was a Partner at the corporate communications agency Pagefield, leading corporate affairs accounts for clients ranging from major multi-national brands to small charities. These included AB InBev, Kellogg's and HS1 Ltd, the British Library, the Fundraising Regulator and the Roddick Foundation. He spent the preceding 10 years in the Civil Service, in a series of policy roles in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Department of Health, concluding with three years as Private Secretary to the Minister for Culture, Communications and Creative Industries. Before joining the Civil Service, Craig worked in corporate press offices including at Fourth Estate publishers and at the British Library. Craig is a trustee of the arts charity Poet in the City, which creates new audiences for poetry through a programme of events, commissions and education work. Related content Our Senior Leadership Team Meet our Senior Leadership Group, and find out what they're responsible for Interim corporate plan 2020/21 - 2024/25 Our interim corporate plan was published following the 2019 UK Parliament general election. It has now been replaced by our 2022/23 to

2026/27 plan. Our spending about our spending estimates, reports and accounts Our Commissioners

Audit and Risk Committee | Electoral Commission Search Audit
and Risk Committee You are in the How we make decisions section Home How we
make decisions First published: 30 May 2019 Last updated: 25 August 2022 About our
Audit and Risk Committee The Audit and Risk Committee supports the Accounting Officer
in carrying out their formal accountability responsibilities. The Committee offers
objective advice and ensures that the most efficient, effective and economic risk,
control and governance processes are in place. The Audit and Risk Committee also acts
on behalf of the Board to provide them with assurance on these issues. There shall be
three members of the Audit and Risk Committee, which will include the Chair. The
Chair is appointed by the Commission Board. An Independent Adviser shall be appointed
by the Commission Board, but not be a member of the Audit and Risk Committee . The
Audit and Risk Committee minutes will be circulated to the Board and a report of the
work of the Audit and Risk Committee will be presented annually to the Board. Related
content Electoral Commission Board Find out about our Electoral Commission board, and
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Executive Team, and find out more about them Interim corporate plan 2020/21 - 2024/25
Our interim corporate plan was published following the 2019 UK Parliament general
election. It has now been replaced by our 2022/23 to 2026/27 plan.

Board minutes: 22 September 2021 | Electoral Commission Search
Board minutes: 22 September 2021 You are in the Electoral Commission Board section Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Who was at the meeting Apologies and welcomes Declarations of interest Minutes of the previous Board meeting Corporate Plan 2022/23 – 2026/27: Final Performance report quarter one 2021/22 Discussion on Board diversity and update on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) activities Policy Development Grants scheme Dates of proposed Commission Board and Committee meetings 2022/23 Update from the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo) Chair Update from the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) Chair Annual review of complaints Chief Executive's update Commission Board action tracker Forward Plan of Board business Incoming Chief Executive salary First published: 4 January 2022 Last updated: 4 February 2022 Meeting summary Date: Wednesday 22 September 2021 Time: 9:30am to 12:50pm Location: In person and by video conference Date of next scheduled meeting: Wednesday 20 October 2021 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Pullinger, Chair Rob Vincent Sue Bruce Alex Attwood Sarah Chambers Elan Closs Stephens Stephen Gilbert Alasdair Morgan Joan Walley Katy Radford In attendance: Bob Posner, Chief Executive Craig Westwood, Director, Communications, Policy and Research Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services Binnie Goh, General Counsel Zena Khan, Senior Advisor, Governance David Bailey, Head, Strategic Planning and Performance (items 4, 5, 6 and 12) Bola Raja, Performance and Planning Manager (item 4) Tim Crowley, Head, Digital Communications and Learning (item 4) Marcia Bluck, External Consultant (item 6) Carol Sweetenham, Head of Projects (item 6) Cindy Williams, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead (item 6) Daniel Stoker, Senior Advisor, Policy (item 7) Kate Engles, Policy Manager (item 7) Apologies and welcomes The Chair welcomed all to the first hybrid meeting of the Commission Board, with some attendees joining in person, following social distancing rules, and others joining remotely. The Chair welcomed Katy Radford, the new Commissioner for Northern Ireland, to her first Board meeting, participating as an observer while we wait for her signed Royal Warrant. The Chair advised that they would be joined by an external facilitator, Marcia Bluck at agenda item 6, to facilitate part of the discussions on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. It was noted that item 9 of the agenda (Incoming Chief Executive salary) would be taken at the end of all business items, as limited staff members would remain. Declarations of interest Commissioner Sue Bruce declared that she had stepped up from Deputy Chair to presently Chair the 'Prince's Foundation'. The Board noted that the Commissioners' Register of interests would be updated and this reflected on the Commission's external website in line with the Commissioners' Code of Conduct. Minutes of the previous Board meeting (EC 58/21) Resolved: That the minutes of the Commission Board meeting on 21 July 2021 be agreed. Corporate Plan 2022/23 – 2026/27: Final (EC 59/21) The Chief Executive introduced the report updating Commissioners on the present position with regards to processes for the three parliaments and on the final budgets. It was noted that Commissioners for Scotland and Wales would further review the cover letters to respectively the Scottish Parliament and the Senedd that will accompany the narrative for the Corporate Plan and Main Estimate. Resolved: That the Board agreed the final Corporate Plan 2022/23 – 2026/27 and associated budgets subject to further review of material to be submitted to the Scottish Parliament and the Senedd by the Commissioners for Scotland and Wales. Performance report quarter one 2021/22 (EC 60/21) The Chief Executive introduced the report providing a summary on progress. The Director, Finance and Corporate Services advised that he was

currently confident that financial pressures could be managed within budget, although he and the Chief Executive would be holding meetings with Directors during October to assure the mid-year forecasts. Commissioners discussed several aspects of recent performance including speed of complex investigations and staff turnover. The Board requested a paper to a future meeting showing the process of an investigation including the length of time it takes and outcomes. The Board further requested the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee to report back on staff turnover, liaising as necessary with the Audit and Risk Committee. Action: To bring back to a future meeting a paper on the process of an investigation, time allocated and outcomes.

Action owner: Director, Regulation. Submitted by: December Board meeting. Resolved: That the Board noted the delivery of the work programme and considered areas where more scrutiny was required. Discussion on Board diversity and update on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) activities (EC 61/21) The General Counsel introduced the item updating Commissioners on the recent progress made delivering the Commission's commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). The second item on well-being was deferred to a future meeting. The Board reviewed and discussed areas within the draft EDI Strategy including widening the range of groups reached such as carers and people with various disabilities and generally to recognise diversity of thought beyond the groups identified in law with protected characteristics. Serious consideration needs to be given to unconscious bias.

Commissioners emphasised the importance of demonstrating commitment to the themes of the strategy rather than simply being compliant with rules. It was suggested that we should explore best practice adopted elsewhere, notably in Northern Ireland. The Board noted the importance of getting the strategy out and for the consultation to be put in place and the work programme introduced. Further progress will be reported to future meetings. The General Counsel introduced Marcia Bluck, an external consultant who led a session on exploring options to improve Board diversity. The Board noted a presentation focussing Commissioners on the following: Improving diversity at Board level Improving representation – protected characteristics and socio-economics Widening the perspectives of the Board Deepening authentic engagement with diverse groups The Board discussed various ways in which to build confidence and reputation and set clear objectives and value for individuals, including recruiting an independent advisor on EDI to the Board. The Board thanked Marcia for a provoking, thoughtful presentation and welcomed discussions. Further detail and job description for an EDI independent advisor to the Board will be brought back to a future meeting for agreeing. Action: The Board delegated authority to the Chief Executive and General Counsel to prepare further detail and job description, for an independent advisor on EDI to the Board and a mechanism for engaging Commissioners. Action owner: Chief Executive and General Counsel. Submitted by: October 2021. Resolved: That the Board noted and agreed the actions taken during this year to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion. Resolved: That the Board agreed for the Commission to go out to consultation on the EDI Strategy and the new EIA material. Policy Development Grants scheme (EC 62/21) The Chief Executive and the Director, Communications, Policy and Research introduced the report. The Executive invited the Board to agree the Alba party joining the Scheme, but wanted to further consider both how the allocation of grant should work and the additional recommendation. The Board agreed that the Alba party join the Scheme and delegated to the Chief Executive, with Director, Communications, Policy and Research, reviewing and then writing to the Board with proposed recommendations to the Minister. Board responses would enable the Chief Executive to finalise the approach and write accordingly to the Minister.

Action: The Board delegated to the Chief Executive, with the Director, Communications, Policy and Research to review how the grant will be allocated with the Alba party being part of the Scheme, then write to the Board with proposed recommendations to the Minister. Action owner: Chief Executive Submitted by: End of October Resolved: That the Board agreed to include the Alba Party as an eligible Scotland-only party. Dates of proposed Commission Board and Committee meetings 2022/23 (EC 63/21) The Chair advised Commissioners to liaise directly with the Board Secretary on slight adjustments to the proposed Board and Committee meeting dates for 2022/23. This would include a meeting outside London and continuing to plan for hybrid meetings. Action: The Board Secretary would revisit the proposed Board and Committee meeting dates for 2022/23 incorporating a meeting outside London and continuation of hybrid meetings. Action owner: Board Secretary Submitted by: December 2021 Resolved: That the Board noted a revised proposal would be circulated by the Board Secretary on Board and Committee meeting dates for 2022/23. Update from the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo) Chair (Oral) The Board received an oral update from the Chair of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo) of their meeting held on the 20 July 2021. The Board noted an update on People Strategy followed by a presentation on COVID ways of working and wellbeing from the Head of Information, Communication and Technology. There was an update on the EDI Strategy from the Head of Projects and, a report on recruitment showing a low turnover. A report on the Executive salaries was agreed. Resolved: That the Board noted the oral update. Update from the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) Chair (Oral) The Board received an oral update from the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) of their meeting held on the 21 September 2021. The Board noted a report on the Risk appetite statement of which recommendations will come to a future Board meeting for discussion, an oral update on the Risk improvement plan and oral updates from our internal and external auditors. It was noted that non-ARC Commission members would be welcome to observe a future ARC meeting. The Board noted a presentation on a deep dive into training and development of ARC members. There was a review of schedule of policies and codes which is done periodically. It was noted that within the post meeting discussion following main ARC business, a discussion was had about recruitment and retention in the Commission and a risk of losing corporate memory. A discussion on an action plan arose and a suggestion was to invite the Chair of RemCo to a discussion on this topic. The Board noted that it was Commissioner Alasdair Morgan's last ARC meeting serving on the Committee for 10 years and Commissioner Stephen Gilbert's first ARC meeting as a participating observer until he joins as a full member in November. Resolved: That the Board noted the oral update. Annual review of complaints (EC 64/21) The Director, Finance and Corporate Services introduced the report providing the Board with the annual review of complaints received during the period 1 April 2020 to 30 June 2021. The period also took into account data related to May 2021 elections. Resolved: That the Board noted and have been assured that complaints are dealt with appropriately and that any necessary action resulting from complaints was taken. Chief Executive's update (EC 65/21) Resolved: That the Board noted the introduction and update from the Chief Executive's report. Commission Board action tracker (EC 66/21) Resolved: That the Board noted the progress against actions requested by the Board. Forward Plan of Board business (EC 67/21) Resolved: That the Board reviewed and noted the Forward Plan of Board business scheduling further topics for the next few meetings. At this point staff colleagues and guests were asked to leave the meeting except for the Chief Executive, General Counsel, Director, Finance and Corporate Services and the Board Secretary. Incoming

Chief Executive salary (Oral) Director, Finance and Corporate Services introduced a paper following an Extraordinary meeting of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo) on 17 September 2021 with recommendations to the Board. Resolved:
That the Board agreed the recommendations of the Committee.

Accredited Organisations: submission of additional names | Electoral Commission

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Accredited Organisations: submission of additional names

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and referendums Update application: Accredited organisation First published: 9 March

2021 Last updated: 11 August 2022 summary of page Please note this form is for

organisations who are already accredited, to provide details of additional

individuals for accreditation. If you wish to apply for organisational accreditation

please click here. What you and your observers need to apply To add an additional

name for accreditation, you will need: your organisation name an email contact for

your organisation the names of the people who will be observing for your

organisation, as well as a passport style photo and identification The photo needs

to: just include the observer be a headshot, so that it includes their face and

shoulders clearly show their face, with their eyes open be taken against a plain

background The identification needs to show the observer's name and age. You can

upload their: passport driving licence national identity card Northern Ireland

electoral identity card 700KB is the maximum file size for all of the photos and ID.

Anything above this cannot be processed. You can contact us via

observers@electoralcommission.org.uk if any of the observers do not have this form of

identification. Update application: Submit additional names Update application:

Submit additional names

Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal two | Electoral Commission Search

Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal two You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 On this page Key achievements Performance measures First published: 30 June 2020 Last updated: 30 August 2020 Goal two To ensure an increasingly trusted and transparent system of regulation in political finance, overseeing compliance, promoting understanding amongst those regulated and proactively pursuing breaches This goal captures our regulatory role. This work focuses on two areas at the heart of a healthy democracy: ensuring transparency and good regulation. Key achievements To ensure transparency, we: published annual accounts from registered parties, information about donations and loans, and details of campaign spending, which parties and others are required to report to us registered political parties and other campaigners and published details in online registers continued reviewing party descriptions, to ensure that voters can identify the party for which candidates are standing continued developing a new online portal for party registration and finance, which we aim to launch in 2021 and will improve how parties and campaigners register and deliver financial returns scrutinised advertising transparency proposals from social media companies including Facebook, Google, Twitter and Snapchat, to ensure they provided improved transparency about digital campaign activity at elections in 2019 To support good regulation we: provided advice and guidance to support parties, candidates and campaigners to comply with the rules took action and imposed sanctions when the political finance rules were broken defended legal challenges to our enforcement decisions developed new codes of practice for parties and candidates continued pressing for law changes to strengthen our investigatory and sanctioning powers – including increasing the maximum fine we are able to impose for breaches of PPERA from the current level of £20,000 worked with the National Assembly for Wales to review their Standing Orders and ensure they have a robust plan to develop new rules and guidance for the elections in 2021 and to bring dual reporting to an end

Performance measures Measures Performance We publish routine financial returns from parties and campaigners, including statements of accounts, within 30 working days of receiving them (target 100%) 100% Achieved We check a minimum of 25% of all financial returns for accuracy and compliance each year 57.7% 1 Achieved We publish 100% of guidance products on time with no substantive errors 100% Achieved We provide accurate advice within five to 20 days of receipt of the request, depending on the complexity of the advice (target 90%) 94% Achieved We notify applicants of the outcome of their registration applications within 30 days of a complete application 75% of the time 86.2% Achieved We conduct timely and proportionate investigations of which 90% are completed within 180 days 84.3% 2 Achieved We issue 90% of final notices setting out our sanctions within 21 days of the deadline for representations. We publish the outcome of all our investigations 87.5% 3 Achieved We make timely regulatory recommendations that reflect the principles guiding our approach to effective regulatory framework 100% Achieved Ensuring transparency Throughout the year, we focussed on delivering the responsibilities we are accountable for to the UK's parliaments. We maintained the registers of political parties, ensuring only parties meeting the legal tests are on the register, and we continued reviewing descriptions to help voters identify the party for which candidates are standing. We faced two instances of campaigners seeking, via the court, to have their spending returns removed from our online database. One campaigner withdrew their court application and the court refused the other application. Good regulation Leading up to the UK Parliamentary general election, we registered a record number of non-party

campaigners. We also developed our approach to campaign monitoring to be more proactive and quickly identify and intervene when issues came up. This stopped them from escalating and prevented campaigners from breaking the rules. We will continue to focus on this. We continued to use our investigation and sanctioning powers to identify and respond to non-compliance and deter future non-compliance. We imposed fines of £25k and £40k respectively, on two registered parties for multiple failures. The courts heard three appeals against penalties in 2019. One was withdrawn, one refused and one upheld. This brings the total number of appeals against sanctions we have imposed to five, of which the courts have upheld one. The appeals have provided helpful case law and we have learned from each case to improve our enforcement approach. For a number of years we have recommended that the UK's governments should change laws to strengthen our investigatory and sanctioning powers. This year we saw such changes in Scotland, where the Scottish Parliament, through the Referendums (Scotland) Act, increased the level of fines available to us (from £20,000 to £500,000); gave us wider powers to obtain information outside of formal investigations; and established rules to require imprints on digital campaign material. Report navigation links Previous Next Performance analysis: Goal one Performance analysis: Goal three 1. The number of returns we check annually varies and is higher in years with electoral events, when we receive more and larger financial returns. ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. Where we missed the deadline, the cases were complex and required significant legal advice or evidential analysis. The unscheduled UK Parliamentary general election also required us to re-allocate resource. ■ Back to content at footnote 2 3. Our need to prioritise monitoring and interventions work during the campaign period for the unscheduled UK Parliamentary general election temporarily drew resources away from sanctions decisions. ■ Back to content at footnote 3 Related content Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 Read our annual report and accounts for 2019/20, including key figures about the year at a glance. Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal one This is goal one of the performance analysis section of our annual report and accounts Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal three This is goal three of the performance analysis section of our annual report and accounts Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal four This is goal four of the performance analysis section of our annual report and accounts

Response to Scottish Government consultation on electoral reform | Electoral Commission Search Response to Scottish Government consultation on electoral reform You are in the Our responses to consultations section Home Our responses to consultations Currently reading: of 5 - Show page contents On this page Candidates Voting Scheduling of elections Campaigning Administration and Governance Introduction by: Enabling the delivery of free and fair elections and referendums, focusing on the needs of voters and addressing the changing environment to ensure every vote remains secure and accessible. Regulating political finance, taking proactive steps to increase transparency, ensure compliance and pursue breaches. Using our expertise to make and advocate for changes to our democracy, aiming to improve fairness, transparency and efficiency. The Commission was set up in 2000 and reports to the Scottish, UK and Welsh parliaments. Response overview This response sets out the Commission's views on the Scottish Government's consultation on electoral reform . It also includes additional recommendations that we suggest the Scottish Government reflect in policy development and legislation. We look forward to working with the Scottish Government in developing its thinking as the process continues. The Scottish Government needs to carefully consider the resilience of local electoral services as it takes forward its programme of reform. The issue of resilience has been clearly set out by us in our recent reports on the administration of elections in Scotland, and also raised by Returning Officers (ROs), Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) and the Electoral Management Board for Scotland (EMB). The proposals set out in the consultation are wide-ranging, and all those involved in delivering or participating in elections will need time to understand and prepare for any changes. For electoral administrators, many of whom have already raised concerns around their capacity, implementation of the Scottish Government's planned reforms is also likely to coincide with ongoing work to deliver changes resulting from the UK Government's Elections Act. In light of this it will be important to review the remit of the EMB in order to develop its capacity to support the delivery of electoral administration across Scotland, including considering any efficiencies which could be gained in delivering electoral services. Further, the Scottish Government will need to provide appropriate funding to local authorities to support the effective implementation of any changes. Failure to do so could create significant risks to the delivery of well-run polls and public confidence in elections. The Scottish Government will need to ensure that any legislation is in place at least six months before it is required to be implemented or complied with by campaigners, ROs or EROs. This will be essential to support effective planning for and delivery of the changes. For changes to be delivered effectively ahead of the 2026 Scottish Parliament election this means at least six months before: the commencement of the 1 July 2025 annual canvass in the case of changes to electoral registration processes the regulated period for campaigners which commences in January 2026 for any changes to campaigner laws the date of the poll on 7 May 2026 for any changes to voter participation in the election We note the Minister's intention to introduce legislation to the Scottish Parliament before the end of 2023. We will continue to monitor timescales for the delivery of any legislation and make Ministers and Parliament aware of any risks to changes being effectively delivered for voters. The Scottish Government should also utilise the opportunities provided by a legislative programme for electoral reform to consolidate, simplify and modernise the many existing sources of electoral law as recommended by the Law Commissions of Scotland, England and Wales, and Northern Ireland. This will help to minimise the impact of any further reform on the resilience of the electoral community by reducing

the complexity of electoral law. Candidates Expansion of candidacy rights Question 1: Do you think that 16 and 17 year-olds should be able to stand for election in: Both Scottish Parliament and Local Government elections Scottish Parliament elections only Local Government elections only Neither Scottish Parliament nor Local Government elections Question 2: Do you think that foreign nationals resident in Scotland with limited rights to remain in the UK should be able to stand for election in: Both Scottish Parliament and Local Government elections Scottish Parliament elections only Local Government elections only Neither Scottish Parliament nor Local Government elections Question 3: Do you have any additional comments on candidacy rights for 16 and 17 year-olds, or foreign nationals with limited rights to remain in the UK? We do not take a position on changes to eligibility for candidates at elections, which are significant policy matters for parliaments to decide. Where changes are made, we will work with the electoral community to ensure they are implemented effectively. We have noted below the concerns raised with us by candidates about intimidatory or abusive behaviour directed towards candidates at an election; the Scottish Government should seek advice from relevant organisations with expertise on the health and safety of young people in relation to the candidacy rights of 16 and 17 year-olds. The Government will also need to ensure that any changes are introduced in sufficient time for parties and independent candidates to familiarise themselves with them ahead of the next relevant election, and for us to update our guidance to support them.

Disqualification for intimidatory or abusive behaviour Q4 and 5 summary Question 4: Do you think that anyone found guilty of an offence involving the harassment or intimidation of politicians, candidates or campaigners should be subject to an additional sanction of losing the right to stand for election for 5 years? Question 5: If not, would you suggest another electoral sanction or approach? As noted in the consultation document, we carried out research with candidates and agents following the 2022 Scottish council elections. A notable minority (44%) of those who responded to our survey told us that they had experienced some kind of problem with threats, abuse and intimidation at those elections (rating this as a 2 or above on a scale from 1 to 5). Our research with candidates in other parts of the UK in 2022 found similar levels of concern. Our research in Scotland found that 1 : Of those that said they experienced some kind of abuse, the most common sources were verbal (55%) and online (53%). Over four in five of those reporting abuse (84%) said that it came from members of the public. Three in 10 (31%) said it was from an anonymous/unknown source, while one in 10 (11%) received threats or abuse from other candidates. One in 10 (10%) who experienced threats or abuse said that their experience(s) would discourage them from standing as a candidate in the future. It is vital that action is taken against those who abuse, threaten or intimidate candidates and campaigners, and that this behaviour does not discourage people from standing for election or campaigning. We agree with the Scottish Government's proposal to introduce additional sanctions for those found guilty of the harassment or intimidation of politicians, candidates and campaigners. It would strengthen the deterrent against this behaviour and also align with the sanctions available for UK Parliament elections. We will continue to work with the UK's governments, Police Scotland and the wider electoral community to make sure we understand what is driving candidate abuse and intimidation, and to ensure this issue is addressed as a matter of urgency. Sending of free letters or leaflets by candidates and political parties at elections Q 6,7,8 Question 6: Do you think that the option of sending a freepost letter or leaflet should be extended to Scottish Local Government elections? Question 7: Do you think that the right for candidates to send a free mailing should be limited to one free

mailing to each household, rather than to each voter? Question 8: Do you have any other comments on the issue of candidate mailings to voters? Freepost mailings for candidates at Scottish council elections As noted in the consultation document, in our research with voters after the 2022 Scottish council elections we found that more than a quarter (26%) of respondents said they did not have enough information on candidates to be able to make an informed decision on who to vote for. Voters aged 25-34 were most likely to state this (40%). When asked where they had seen information about candidates and parties, the most cited sources were leaflets or flyers from the candidate or party (61%). Respondents were more likely to recall seeing leaflets which had been delivered to their house (81%), however this was significantly lower for 16–24-year-olds (66%), suggesting that another method may be more effective to reach younger voters. The consultation document suggests that one potential solution would be for councils to opt in to authorising and funding a free mailing from candidates to each voter or household. This could lead to an inconsistency of experience for both voters and campaigners participating in council elections across Scotland. Consideration would also need to be given to the transparency of the decision-making process at council level to ensure that it could not provide advantages, perceived or otherwise, to one set of candidates over another. Whether limited to councils who opted-in or in place for all councils, if free candidate mailings were to proceed then wider consideration would need to be given to the considerable logistical, environmental and financial implications of managing the review, printing and distribution of election addresses. This should be done well in advance of the 2027 Scottish council elections to ensure that resources and processes are in place at council level to deliver any such change. In addition to the consideration of printed freepost mailings, the Scottish Government should also explore the use of digital routes to provide voters with information on candidates. This could help to future proof the process and help alleviate any environmental impacts. If freepost mailings for council candidates were to be taken forward, consideration would need to be given to ensuring that the costs met by the council did not count as a donation to candidates or as notional spending. Free mailings at Scottish Parliament elections The Scottish Government consultation paper also considers whether cost savings could be made by limiting candidates and parties to unaddressed material for households rather than to individual voters. We do not have enough evidence to be able to come to a view on this question. However, given the concerns noted above about access to information on candidates, there is a risk that those in multi-occupancy households may find it even harder to access information in the event of a move to unaddressed mailings. We recommend that the Government undertakes research with voters and consults political parties on the potential impact of this proposal. Publication of home addresses Q9 Question 9: Should candidates who are acting as their own agents be able to use a correspondence address for communications? The publication of contact details for agents plays an important role in the democratic process as it retains transparency and accountability, and enables the detection of fraud. However, in our report on the 2016 Scottish Parliament election we noted that security concerns had been raised by candidates who were acting as their own agent, as their home address would be disclosed. We recommended that the Scottish Government review the rules. In general, we are supportive of the proposals, to address concerns around the security of candidates. However, we recommend that consideration is given to extending this provision to all agents who do not have an existing office address. This would cover instances where the agent shares a home address with the candidate. How a candidate's

location is shown on the ballot paper Q10 and 11 Question 10: Currently ballot papers show either the candidate's home address or council area. Do you think that the ballot paper should also show the ward in which the candidate lives, if they request it? Question 11: Do you have any further comments on the topic of candidate addresses? We do not have enough evidence available on the suggested change to come to a view at this time. Before making any changes, the Scottish Government should commission research with voters to understand impacts this may have on their ability to navigate and understand the information on the ballot paper, and whether the provision of additional information provides benefits to voters. Voting Increasing registration Question 12: What do you think could be done nationally or locally to improve registration levels, especially among under-represented groups such as younger people and foreign nationals? Modernising electoral registration There is an urgent need to reform electoral registration in the UK, as the current registration system does not work well for voters or administrators. Our research shows that the quality of the registers could be improved, and the process streamlined for administrators, if the UK's governments provided them with greater access to public data. A modern, joined-up electoral register would: Use trusted public data to keep itself accurate and complete throughout the year without relying solely on action by individuals; and Make it as easy as possible for people to ensure their own registration record is accurate and complete, particularly ahead of elections and referendums. More digital methods using existing public data could also help address some of the specific challenges which exist. For example: Regular access to reliable data about recent address changes from other public services would allow EROs to make contact directly with people who have recently changed address (including those who move frequently). Integrating electoral registration applications into other public service transactions could make it easier for individuals to keep their registration details up to date and accurate. This could be particularly effective for people who are already updating their details with other organisations. Existing public data could also help to improve levels of completeness among some of the specific under-registered groups identified in our research. For example, data from the education sector could help EROs to identify attainers and other young people. Data from the Department for Work and Pensions could be used by EROs to register young people to vote automatically when they are allocated their National Insurance number. Access to data for EROs EROs are legally entitled to access local data sets from: the council which appointed them any registrar of births, deaths and marriages any person, including a company or organisation, providing services to, or authorised to exercise any function of, the council; this includes those that are providing 'outsourced' services under any finance agreement. There are no statutory restrictions on this disclosure (including data protection legislation). However, EROs can face issues with the quality and accuracy of this local data, which can mean that they are unable to use it with confidence. There is currently no provision for EROs to access national data that may be of higher quality and reliability. Improving access to data The UK's governments should support EROs to improve the accuracy and completeness of electoral registers – and improve efficiency to alleviate resource burdens – by giving them access to high-quality data from other public service organisations. Depending on the quality coverage of these data sets, this change could support automatic registration, integration of registration applications alongside other public service transactions, or simply enable EROs to send targeted invitations to register to specific individuals not currently correctly registered. As noted above, EROs already have some rights to inspect data from local organisations to enable them

to maintain electoral registers. In practice, however, they would be dependent on the UK Government (and in some cases the Scottish or Welsh Government) to give them access to any national or UK-wide data. Our 2019 feasibility studies identified that government departments that are responsible for the data source organisations would need to provide legal gateways to allow data sharing with EROs (for example, the Department for Transport for access to DVLA data). It is likely that a centralised interface would also be needed to manage the flow of data between the data source organisations and individual EROs, similar to the IER digital service that was established by the UK Government. Integrating registration applications alongside other frequently used public service transactions would also require support and some resource investment by data source organisations and relevant departments. They would need to develop and maintain the necessary technical infrastructure to collect and transfer data about potential new electors, and to manage the relationship with any centralised interface. We recommend that the Scottish Government take forward electoral registration reform, in consultation with the UK and Welsh Governments. We note that the Welsh Government is considering further reforms to the electoral registration process, including an all-Wales database of electoral registration data, and the Scottish Government should consider any lessons which can learned from Wales as they take these proposals forward.

Registering young people to vote

The Commission's research into the 1 December 2018 electoral registers found that levels of completeness in Scotland varied by age group, with younger groups less likely to be registered. Completeness stands at 68% for those aged 18-34 while it is higher for those aged 35-54 (87%) and those aged 55+ (92%). The Curriculum for Excellence provides opportunities for young people to be supported to develop their political literacy skills in school and youth work settings. While some young people receive excellent political literacy education through Modern Studies, not all young people will have the chance to develop the necessary skills if they do not progress with Modern Studies after second or third year of secondary education or where schools do not offer Modern Studies as a teaching subject. The Commission has produced a range of free and impartial education resources , designed to help young people understand how to get involved in democracy and support educators to teach political literacy. These can be used in Modern Studies, as well as in other subjects and whole-school activities

The Commission also runs Welcome to Your Vote Week each year, to provide support and encouragement to schools and youth organisations to run political literacy activity. We would support any initiatives from the Scottish Government to embed the teaching of political literacy across other areas of school teaching, including through Personal and Social Education. The Scottish Government should also explore the potential for allowing students to register to vote when enrolling at university, and data sharing agreements between councils and universities could help to facilitate this. Under the Higher Education and Research Act 2017, higher education providers in England that are registered with the Office for Students (OfS) are required to comply with OfS guidance to facilitate the electoral registration of students. We would welcome equivalent provisions being introduced for higher education providers in Scotland. The Government should also consider whether there are other institutions that may be able to assist with the registration of young people, such as further education colleges or large apprenticeship employers.

Improving the accessibility of voting Q13 Question 13: The Scottish Government intends to amend the rule requiring only a specific form of Tactile Voting Device to be provided in polling stations, to allow more flexibility and ensure the accessibility support offered can be adapted to take account of future innovations.

It also intends to place a duty on the Electoral Commission to provide guidance that includes minimum standards. Which of the following options would you prefer: The current legal requirement for a specific Tactile Voting Device is replaced by a general requirement on Returning Officers to provide appropriate support. The current legal requirement for a specific Tactile Voting Device is replaced with a requirement to provide a non-specific form of tactile support. No change to current legislation.

Other. Everyone should be able to register and cast their vote without facing barriers. While there have been significant improvements, we know there is still more to be done to improve the voting experience for disabled people. Provisions within the UK Government's Elections Act 2022 have replaced the specific requirement to provide a tactile voting device in polling stations with a broader duty on Returning Officers (ROs) to provide such equipment as is reasonable to enable, or make it easier, for disabled people to vote independently and in secret at the polling station. Our view is that this will improve the range and quality of support available, and we support a similar approach being taken by the Scottish Government. Introducing similar rules for devolved and reserved elections would also make it easier for people to understand the support they can expect when voting, and less complex for electoral administrators to deliver. It is important that ROs are clear on how to meet their responsibilities in relation to supporting disabled voters. If the Scottish Government were to introduce such a requirement, we would provide guidance and examples of good practice to support them in discharging this duty. Under the Elections Act, we have a duty to provide guidance to support ROs in delivering their duties under the Act and to consult on this guidance . While this guidance applies only to reserved elections, we anticipate that any Commission guidance that would be required for devolved elections in Scotland would cover similar considerations. We have a specific duty to report on the steps taken by ROs to assist disabled voters at elections and this will provide opportunities to learn from how the new duty has worked in practice. If the Scottish Government were to introduce such a duty on ROs, it would need to set out what funding would be available for additional support required as a result of any legislative change, as there is a risk that any new duty for ROs will not be effective if it is not funded appropriately.

Q14 Summary Question 14: Should the limit to the number of times one companion can support voters in casting their votes: Remain at two people per election Rise to five people per election Be changed to another number In our research, disabled voters told us that restrictions on who can act as a companion can make it difficult to find someone to help. Some evidence from learning disability charities suggests that people don't always know who they can take along to the polling station to help them. We support the Scottish Government's proposal to increase the number of voters a companion can support at the same election from the current limit of two. This will make it easier for disabled people to get support from a companion in the polling station if they need it. We have no firm view on what number this should be increased to. The Scottish Government should consider the evidence from disabled voters in coming to any decision in this area. We also recommend that the Scottish Government consider removing the requirement for a companion, who is not a close relative of the voter, to be a qualified elector. This would provide greater choice and flexibility for disabled voters and would align with changes to reserved elections being brought in by the UK Government's Elections Act.

Q15 Summary Question 15: Should there be an option in the future to request a digital poll card instead of a paper poll card for Scottish elections? In principle the option for providing digital poll cards may improve the accessibility of election

material for voters with sight loss, and we recommend in our guidance to ROs for reserved elections that they consider providing poll card information in other accessible formats in addition to the printed poll card. However, we would welcome further detail from and discussion with the Scottish Government on this proposal, including how it would ensure that any digital poll cards issued by ROs were compliant with digital accessibility standards.

Q16 Q16 summary Question 16: What more could be done to improve the voting experience for individuals with accessibility needs or requirements? In our ‘Elections for Everyone’ report, published in 2017, we made a range of recommendations on how the UK’s governments, electoral administrators, parties, and candidates could improve the experience of disabled people taking part in elections. We made several specific recommendations for how political parties and campaigners should communicate with voters, including:

- Making sure the information they produce is easy to read. Publishing easy read manifestos at the same time so disabled people have the same time as everyone else to understand what the parties stand for and make an informed decision.
- Sending information in good time so that people have time to read it.

We recommend that the Scottish Government works with parties, the Commission and other relevant organisations to produce good practice guidelines and accessibility standards for accessible election materials.

Clarification of undue influence of a voter Q17

summary Question 17: Do you agree that the offence of ‘undue influence’ should be made easier to understand and enforce? We support the intention to update the definition of the undue influence electoral offence in line with the changes set out in the UK Government’s Elections Act. The Commission has consistently called for the offence of undue influence to be clarified, as it is a complex offence that is not easily understood by voters, and we welcomed the provisions within the Elections Act to deliver this change. This should provide voters with more meaningful protection against exploitation and make clear what is and is not acceptable behaviour. It should also make it simpler for the police to act when allegations of undue influence are made. It is important that legitimate campaigning is not inadvertently prevented by changes to the way this offence is defined. We recommended that the UK Government should introduce a clear, workable definition of what activity should and should not be allowed around polling stations for reserved elections. We will monitor any cases of alleged undue influence at future reserved polls to identify whether the new offence in the Elections Act is clear and workable for voters, campaigners and the police.

Absent voting Q18

summary Question 18: Do you think that we should extend the right to emergency proxies to the companions of anyone who has to attend an unexpected medical appointment or treatment which would prevent them from voting at their normal voting place? The Commission has consistently recommended that the qualifying circumstances for appointing an emergency proxy should be extended, so that those who have unforeseen caring responsibilities or who have experienced the death of a close relative would also be eligible for an emergency proxy. Under current law, where a voter is incapacitated by ill health or an accident after the deadline to apply for a normal proxy vote, the individual would qualify for an emergency proxy on medical grounds but anyone caring for them, or accompanying them for medical treatment, would not. This is of particular concern in island and rural communities where a person may have to travel for medical treatment elsewhere in Scotland. The Commission will work with the Scottish Government and the electoral community to support the development of these proposals. It will be important that the qualification criteria, and any attestation requirements, enable EROs to confidently assess an applicant’s eligibility within the short timescales available

ahead of the poll. Acting as a proxy Q19 summary Question 19: Do you have any comments on changes to proxy voting in Scottish Parliament or local government elections? Proxy voting is an important option for people who can't – or don't want to – vote in person in a polling station or by post. We support the Scottish Government's proposal to retain the existing proxy voting provisions for devolved elections. Any move to limit the number of close family members for whom a voter may act as a proxy could disadvantage some people with a genuine need to appoint a proxy. Our 2014 review of electoral fraud did not identify any public support for further restrictions on proxy voting. People said that the current restrictions were reasonable, and would not prevent someone who might need a proxy from being able to vote in this way. There are existing safeguards to protect voters from unwelcome or inappropriate pressure to appoint a proxy. When a voter applies to appoint a proxy, they are required to state their relationship with the proposed proxy. This helps identify suspicious patterns that could be referred to the police for investigation.

An updated offence of undue influence should also act as a deterrent to people who would want to force someone to appoint a proxy. We will ensure that clear information is available to voters so that they can easily understand the different rules in place for reserved and devolved Scottish elections. Postal voting Q20 Question 20: Do you have any comments on the handing in of postal ballots? Postal voting is an important and popular voting method, used by around 24% of voters in Scotland. Strengthening some of the safeguards protecting postal voting could improve voter trust and confidence in the system and address perceptions that electoral fraud or inappropriate activity is taking place. Our 2022 Public Opinion tracker shows that a significant minority of voters in Scotland have concerns about the safety of postal voting: one in five (20%) believe it is not safe from fraud and abuse. However, any changes to postal voting must not only address the security of postal voting but also maintain its accessibility, ensuring everyone who wants to vote by post is able to do so easily. Limiting the number of postal votes handed into the polling station

Limiting who can hand in postal votes at polling stations and the number they can hand in could create barriers for some voters who need assistance. For example, friends or neighbours of voters would not be allowed to provide support by handing in postal votes, and people may be prevented from returning postal votes for family members. In any case, postal votes that are handed in at polling stations must still go through the same security checks as those returned through the postal service before they can be included in the count. Banning the handling of completed postal ballot packs For reserved elections, the UK Government's Elections Act introduces a ban on parties and campaigners handling completed postal votes and postal vote envelopes. This change could improve voter trust and address concerns around the potential for inappropriate activity taking place when postal ballot packs are handled. This formalises a key part of the 'best practice' approach that has been set out in our guidance and our voluntary Code of Conduct for campaigners for more than 15 years. The Code was developed and agreed with political parties, but not all campaigners are aware of or actively comply with it. We would welcome a discussion with the Scottish Government on how similar provisions could work for devolved elections in Scotland. Voting rights Q21, 22 Question 21: Should voting rights in Scottish Parliament and Local Government elections be extended to some or all persons detained on mental health grounds related to criminal justice? Question 22: Do you have any additional comments on voting rights for persons detained on mental health grounds related to criminal justice? The Commission does not take a position on changes to the franchise at elections, which are significant policy matters for

Parliament to decide. Where changes are made, we will work with the electoral community to ensure they are implemented effectively. If persons detained on mental health grounds related to criminal justice are included in the franchise, careful consideration would need to be given to the processes by which they would be registered and cast their vote. These should be prescribed in law and take into account the specific challenges that would be faced by these individuals in exercising their right to vote, building on the lessons learned around the enfranchisement of prisoners serving sentences of 12 months or less. This should include how EROs would identify and make contact with potentially eligible individuals, and determine their eligibility, and how such individuals should receive and return any absent votes. Consideration would also need to be given to how these individuals would be able to access information on upcoming elections and the policies and manifesto commitments of candidates and parties.

Q23 Q23 summary

Question 23: Should voting rights in Scottish Parliament and Local Government elections be extended to all people seeking asylum in Scotland? As noted above, the franchise for devolved Scottish elections is an important constitutional decision for the Scottish Parliament to consider and decide. If the franchise is extended to include all people seeking asylum, careful consideration would need to be given to how EROs will be able to determine their eligibility.

Implications of Elections Act 2022 changes

Q24 summary

Question 24: What issues do you think that the changes in the Elections Act 2022 to introduce voter ID and change postal vote renewals raise for elections held in Scotland? There is a potential for voter confusion about the different requirements for voter ID at reserved and devolved elections. From May 2023, voters in Scotland will be required to bring photo ID to vote in person in a polling station for any UK Parliament by-election or recall petition. The requirement for voter ID to be provided at UK Parliament general elections will take effect for polls from October 2023. A new form of identification, the Voter Authority Certificate, has been introduced as a form of free ID for those who do not have another type of accepted ID, as specified by legislation. The Electoral Commission has developed a public awareness campaign aimed at raising awareness of the voter ID requirement and reminding voters to take their ID with them to the polling station. It also advises of the option to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate if they do not already have an accepted form of ID. The campaign includes targeted partnership work with organisations which are a trusted voice in communities where people are less likely to have an accepted form of photo ID. The campaign will be deployed in Scotland ahead of a UK Parliament general election and across specific constituencies in the event of a UK Parliament by-election or recall petition. The Commission has also provided administrators with tailored guidance on planning for and delivering elections, including updated procedures for polling station staff to follow. In developing the guidance we have worked closely with the electoral community and civil society to help ensure that it meets the needs of voters with a range of different circumstances and needs.

Postal vote renewals

As set out in the consultation document, the Elections Act is introducing a change to postal votes for UK Parliament elections, and voters will now need to reapply every three years. With postal votes for devolved Scottish elections remaining on a five-year renewal cycle, the differences in absent vote renewal cycles risk creating confusion for voters and complexity for electoral administrators. Voters would need to respond to two separate renewal/re-application processes to maintain their absent voting status for both devolved and reserved elections. Electoral administrators would have two separate sets of processes to follow, with two sets of personal identifiers for each absent

voter. We strongly recommend that aligning these rules for devolved and reserved elections would be in the best interests of voters and administrators. This should be taken forward urgently in order to minimise the impact of divergence of rules on voters and electoral administrators. There may also be further benefits in moving to a three-year cycle of postal vote renewal, ensuring that electoral administrators hold the most up to date signatures for voters, reducing the risk of postal vote rejection. If the Scottish Government does opt to retain the existing five-year renewal cycle for devolved elections, there would be a significant risk of disenfranchisement for voters, who may incorrectly assume they have an active absent vote arrangement in place. The Scottish Government would need to consider whether there are any other changes that could be made to mitigate this risk in practice, to streamline the actions required of voters and electoral administrators and to enable clear communications to support voters' understanding of the process and its consequences.

Online absent vote applications

The Elections Act also contains provisions for the introduction of an online absent vote application (OAVA) system which is expected to go live later in 2023. Under the current proposals, the system would only enable online applications for postal votes at reserved (i.e. UK Parliament) elections; applications for postal votes at Scottish devolved elections would continue to be made on postal vote application forms. During the passage of the Elections Act, we said that an online absent voting application system would improve accessibility by making it easier for people to apply to vote by post. We also highlighted that it would likely result in improvements in efficiency for administrators – for example, by reducing the time taken to process applications. In the best interests of voters, we recommend that the Scottish Government works with the UK Government to ensure that the OAVA system is also available for those applying for a postal vote for devolved Scottish elections. At the latest, this should be in place for the commencement of the 2025 annual canvass in order that voters can easily obtain a postal vote for the 2026 Scottish Parliament election. The implementation of any online absent voting application system would need to be well-planned, phased, and resourced. Careful consideration would need to be given to the digital infrastructure required; the processes electoral administrators will need to develop and follow; ensuring voters understand how to use the system; and ensuring there is the capacity in the system for postal votes to be despatched in time for all those who have applied for one to be able to receive, complete and return it in time for it to be counted.

Q25 summary Question 25: Should there be a presumption against a Scottish devolved election being held on the same day as a UK Parliament election (for example, a UK Parliament by-election on the same day as a national Scottish Parliament election)? Our priority is that voters and campaigners should be able to understand and easily participate in any elections. There are both advantages and disadvantages to holding polls on the same day and these should be carefully considered. For example, holding two polls on the same day may risk voter confusion, particularly where different voting systems are in use or where processes in the polling station are different (for example, different franchises and different ID requirements). It could also lead to the campaign arguments for one poll receiving less media attention than the other poll. However, combining polls can provide convenience for voters, who do not need to attend the polling station on two separate occasions, and lead to cost efficiencies for administrators. On balance, our view is that there should be a presumption against holding a UK Parliament election on the same day as a devolved Scottish election. In the event that polls are held on the same day, it will be important to ensure that combination rules are carefully drafted

to minimise the risk of confusion for voters and electoral administrators. Scheduling of elections We recognise the importance of having a backstop provision for responding to any unanticipated events – such as a public health emergency – particularly in light of the impact of the Covid pandemic. However, certainty around elections is of critical importance to the confidence of voters, campaigners and electoral administrators. Consequently, we are strongly of the view that postponement of polls should only take place in very exceptional circumstances, and the process of decision making should be fully transparent and command the confidence of all those involved in delivering and participating in electoral events. Postponement of Scottish Parliament and local government elections Q26 27 summary Question 26: Do you think that the maximum period by which the Presiding Officer can propose the postponement of a Scottish Parliament election should be extended beyond 1 month? Question 27: Do you think that the date of dissolution of the Scottish Parliament in the run up to a general election should be changed to the day before the election, allowing MSPs to continue to hold office in case of emergency? These proposals appear to be a useful backstop for responding to any unanticipated events – including a public health emergency or a UK Parliament general election – which may impact on the smooth running of the poll and compromise the ability of voters and campaigners to participate. The Presiding Officer should be required to consult the Convener of the Electoral Management Board for Scotland (EMB) and the Electoral Commission before taking any such decision. There is precedent for this approach in the Scottish General Election (Coronavirus) Act 2021 . If the date of dissolution of Parliament is moved to one day before the poll, clear rules would need to be developed around MSPs' use of parliamentary resources during the regulated campaign period before the poll to avoid any advantage – perceived or otherwise – for incumbent candidates.

Postponement of Scottish Parliament by-elections Q28 29 summary Question 28: Do you think that the Presiding Officer should have the power to change the date of a Scottish Parliament by-election, if it is no longer possible to hold the election on the originally selected date? Question 29: Do you have any other comments on changing the date of a Scottish Parliament by-election? As with local government by-elections discussed below, there may be very limited circumstances in which to progress with a by-election may risk the health and safety of voters and polling staff, or where the ability of voter and campaigners to participate freely in the poll may be curtailed.

In these cases it would seem useful to have a backstop provision for postponement of the poll. As the date of the poll is set by the Presiding Officer, it would provide consistency if the power to change the date resided with them. However, they should be required to consult the Convener of the EMB and the Electoral Commission, along with the local Returning Officer, before taking any action to postpone. Postponement of scheduled local government elections Q30 summary Question 30: Do you think that the Convener of the Electoral Management Board should be given the power to postpone national Local Government elections in consultation with the Electoral Commission and the Scottish Government? Question 31: Should the law allow a Local Government by-election to be postponed, and if yes, who should make the decision to postpone? No

Yes, Returning Officer Yes, EMB Convener Yes, Other Question 32: Do you have any other comments on rescheduling of elections? Scotland-wide local government elections As the Scottish Parliament would still be sitting in this case, any decision to postpone local government elections across Scotland should remain with the legislative body. The Electoral Commission and the Convener of the EMB should be required to provide advice to Parliament to inform their decision making. Local government by-elections The legislation does not allow a Returning Officer to

postpone a poll due to, for example, severe weather conditions or other factors that could potentially prevent a large number of people voting at polling stations.

Concerns about Returning Officers not being able to postpone a poll were raised by some candidates at a by-election held during severe snow storms in March 2018. We have previously recommended that the Scottish Government consider whether such a provision should be introduced. Consideration would need to be given to what conditions could enable the poll to be postponed, who should ultimately be responsible for making that decision and what processes should be put in place to ensure such decisions are made reasonably and consistently. The Commission believes the circumstances for postponements should be exceptional, and the risks of creating such a provision would need to be considered carefully. For example, postponing a poll might cause uncertainty and confusion for voters, and introducing such an element of discretion for Returning Officers might lead to them being subject to unwarranted pressure from campaigners or others. There is precedent in the temporary arrangements put in place to manage the impact of the pandemic on local government by-elections in the autumn of 2020. In this case, the decision rested with the local RO, after consultation with the Convener of the EMB and the Electoral Commission. This process largely worked well and brought consistency to local decision making across Scotland. We recommend that this model is retained, with the local RO, who is accountable in law for the delivery of the poll, retaining the decision making power after consultation with the Convener of the EMB and the Electoral Commission. For transparency purposes, ROs should be required to publish the advice they have received and a statement on the factors they took into account when reaching their decision.

Campaigning Campaigning and Finance Question 33: Do you think that the language clarifying the definition of notional spending adopted in the UK Elections Act 2022 should also apply to Scottish devolved elections? The laws on notional spending ensure that campaigners properly account for and report all goods, services and materials that are donated to them, and which they use to help them in any way with their campaign activities. There is a considerable level of notional spending reported by candidates at elections. Notional spending reported by constituency and independent regional candidates at the 2021 Scottish Parliament election was £1,587,497.82, amounting to over half (52.28%) of all reported spending by constituency and independent regional candidates. Candidates, agents and party or campaigner staff need a clear understanding of when something is “notional spending” or “election expenses” because it counts towards their total campaign spend, which must not exceed the specified spending limit. The current law on notional spending for Scottish devolved elections is long established and has operated in practice for many years. The Elections Act 2022 changes the legal test for when a candidate or agent authorises someone else to use benefits in kind on their behalf. It will apply at UK Parliament elections in Scotland and Wales, and at all types of elections in England and Northern Ireland. Candidates need to report benefits in kind which they have “made use of” themselves or have authorised, directed or encouraged someone else to “make use of” on their behalf. The Act enables an agent to authorise another campaigner to pay for expenses that count towards the candidate’s spending limit - currently, only an agent can pay for these expenses. Differences in political finance rules between devolved and reserved elections inevitably add complexity as campaigners would have to plan, account and have different payment arrangements for their spending for devolved and reserved elections, even if they had undertaken the same kind of activity. However, changing a long-standing and well understood law also brings complexity, at least at first. We would recommend that the Scottish Government

test any proposed changes to the notional spending wording with a wide range of parties, candidates and agents to ensure that they are clear and commonly understood. Further, the changes to the notional spending law for UK elections have not yet been tested at any significant elections. We will monitor the practical impact of the changes in the Elections Act at any reserved elections and share any findings with the Scottish Government. We will continue to provide guidance to support the regulated community to understand and comply with the law. If the law is amended for notional expenditure at Scottish devolved elections, the Commission would develop a statutory Code of Practice on candidate expenses to provide further clarity about notional spending and spending under local non-party campaigner laws. However, guidance and Codes can only reflect the law, so it is important that the provisions themselves are clear and unambiguous. The Commission would need sufficient time to prepare and consult on any Code, ahead of the laws coming into force.

Q34 35 36 Q34 35 36 summary Question 34: Do you think that third party campaigners should have to register with the Electoral Commission if they spend more than £10,000 across the whole of the UK, even if they spend less than £10,000 in Scotland? The £10,000 registration threshold should apply to devolved elections across the UK The £10,000 registration threshold should apply to Scottish devolved elections only I have another view on the registration threshold Question 35: Do you think that the spending limit should be reduced to £700 for overseas based third parties that are ineligible to register with the Electoral Commission? The spending limit should be reduced to £700 The spending limit should remain the same (£10,000) I have another view of the spending limit Question 36: Do you think that an order-making power for Scottish Ministers should be introduced which allows them to add, change, or removed categories of third-party campaigners? A recommendation by the Electoral Commission would be required before a category of third-party campaigners could be changed or removed. Question 37: Do you think that the Electoral Commission should be able to provide a code of practice on third party expenditure in Scottish devolved elections? Non-party campaigners are a vital part of a healthy democracy and play an important role in providing information for voters and a diversity of voices. It is important that these groups can easily participate in the UK's elections. Controls in election law help voters to see and understand how these groups receive and spend money when they are intending to influence an election outcome. Over recent years, there has been an increase in the number of non-party campaigners. Spending by these groups has risen too. At the 2021 Scottish Parliament election seven registered non-party campaigners reported spending totalling £260,220 on campaigning during the regulated period. At the 2019 UK Parliament election, there were 61 registered non-party campaigners, and those who were required to report their spending recorded a total spend of more than £6 million. Registering with the Electoral Commission Currently non-party campaigners who spend, or plan to spend, more than £10,000 campaigning at a Scottish Parliament election must notify the Electoral Commission. s that spend more than £10,000 at a Scottish Parliament election must report their spending and donations after the poll. Imposing a new requirement for non-party campaigners to register with the Electoral Commission if they spend more than £10,000 campaigning across the constituent parts of the UK would not affect the reporting threshold in Scotland. Consequently, the impact of this proposal would be increased complexity to laws which many campaigners have said are already hard to understand and comply with, but with no increase in the transparency of non-party campaigner spending and donations. We urge caution about changes that bring a new regulatory burden for campaigners with no clear benefit for voters. Overseas campaigners Our recent public

attitudes research showed some concerns about the risks of foreign interference. When we asked people to prioritise their concerns from a list of issues, two fifths (40%) said “foreign interference on UK elections results” was a problem. Reductions to the limits on unregistered campaigning would make it clear that foreign interference in UK elections is not permitted. During the regulated period before an election, only specific categories of individuals and organisations would be allowed to spend more than £700 on activities that are intended to influence the election outcome. This would be a significant reduction from the current limits for unregistered campaigning, and would introduce a new principle that campaigners are subject to eligibility criteria even when they are not required to be registered. However, should these laws be broken, we would not be able to take enforcement action against organisations or individuals based outside the UK. The police are also limited in the action they can take against people or organisations based overseas. Order making power for Ministers We agree that Scottish Ministers should have an order making power to add, change or remove permitted categories of non-party campaigners for devolved Scottish elections. This would enable future flexibility to respond to the emergence of new categories of campaigners to ensure that legitimate campaigners are not prevented from engaging in democratic debate. As any changes would be in response to a recommendation from the Electoral Commission, it would build in a safeguard to prevent the politicisation of the process.

Code of Practice on third party expenditure

We agree that the Commission should be able to provide a Code of Practice for non-party campaigner expenditure at Scottish devolved elections. This Code would support campaigners by providing a clearer statutory base for the non-party campaigner rules and offer them assurances that if they have followed our Code, they will have complied with the law. We have recently consulted on a draft Code of Practice for non-party campaigners at UK Parliament and Northern Ireland Assembly elections . Subject to approval from the UK Parliament, we expect to publish this Code in the summer of 2023. We would follow a similar consultation process in developing any Code for Scottish Parliament elections. However, it will be vital for any legislation which affects non-party expenditure at Scottish Parliament elections to be in place in sufficient time for us to develop and consult on a code ahead of its use at the next Scottish Parliament election.

Q38 summary Question 38: Do you think the maximum fine the Electoral Commission should be able to impose for breaches of electoral law in Scottish elections should:

- A - Rise to £500,000, so it is in line with the maximum fine for referendums
- B - Be set at another amount (please specify the amount below)
- C - Remain unchanged at £10,000

The current maximum fine that the Electoral Commission can impose for each breach of the election spending laws for political parties or registered non-party campaigners at elections is set in law at £20,000 (£10,000 in Scotland). We recommend that our maximum fine is increased so that sanctions can be more proportionate to the amounts of money major parties and non-party campaigners raise and spend at those elections. Our maximum fine should be set at a high enough level for it to be a suitable deterrent that encourages compliance by all campaigners. We welcomed the provisions in the Referendums (Scotland) Act 2020 which increased our maximum fine to £500,000. It is important that the maximum fine for elections keeps pace with that for referendums to reflect the regulatory similarities between the two types of electoral events and to create consistency for campaigners and parties campaigning at both. We encourage the Scottish Government to consider £500,000 as a starting point for increasing our maximum fine. We would continue to regulate in a fair and proportionate way and only apply a sanction where we consider it appropriate to meet our enforcement aim and

objectives, and when it is proportionate and in the public interest to do so. Digital imprints Q39 summary Question 39: Do you think that the Scottish Government should revoke its own regulations for digital imprints and rely on the provisions of the Elections Act 2022? Question 40: Do you have any further comments on digital imprints? Digital campaigning accounts for an increasingly large proportion of spending reported by campaigners after elections. Requiring campaigners to include imprints on digital campaign material delivers greater transparency for voters, and helps improve public confidence in digital campaigning at elections and referendums.

The Scottish Government introduced new digital imprint requirements ahead of the 2021 Scottish Parliament election which apply to all devolved Scottish elections. The UK Government's Elections Act introduced digital imprints requirements for all UK elections and campaign activity which are expected to come into force in late 2023. The UK Government regime is broader than the Scottish law in two ways. The UK Government's digital imprints regime will apply throughout the year, whereas the Scottish rules apply to the period before Scottish Parliament elections and council elections. The UK Government's regime introduces a wider definition of material requiring an imprint because they require campaigners to include imprints on digital 'political' campaign material that promotes a party or candidate. The Scottish law covers only 'election material' that promotes success at Scottish Parliament or Scottish council elections. In these two ways, the Elections Act provisions to extend imprint rules could offer more transparency than the current Scottish approach.

However, the Scottish law is wider and provides greater transparency in one specific aspect, in that a digital imprint is required on all kinds of election material, including both paid and unpaid material from registered and unregistered campaigners, with some limited exceptions for personal opinion. Under the Elections Act, only paid-for political material by unregistered campaigners requires an imprint. It will be important to avoid the risk of separate legislative regimes applying to the same offence, which risks confusion for campaigners, regulators, and prosecutors. For example, both imprint regimes could apply to a piece of digital political material which promotes a candidate or party generally and at a Scottish Parliament election. If the campaigner did not include an imprint, the Commission and the Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service would potentially have to consider which offence should be investigated, and whether a campaigner in that scenario could have committed two offences under two separate regimes. Administration and Governance Reviews of electoral boundaries Question 41: Do you think the process for approving boundary changes should be changed, and which of the options set out above would you prefer? No change Option 1 Option 2 Option 3 Other option Question 42: Do you have any further comments on this topic? The independence of the boundary review process is important to ensure public confidence in the boundaries used for Scottish Parliament and council elections. The timetable for parliamentary consideration of any boundary recommendations will need to ensure that boundaries are settled in sufficient time for administrators, candidates and parties to plan for any scheduled Scottish Parliament or council election. Governance – The Electoral Commission in Scotland Q43 44 summary Question 43: Should the Scottish Parliament take a greater role in oversight of the Electoral Commission's devolved activities? For example, the Electoral Commission's devolved activities, including their spending plans, being scrutinised by a Scottish Parliamentary Committee. Question 44: Do you have any additional comments on the oversight of the Electoral Commission's activities in relation to Scottish Parliament and Local Government elections? The Commission welcomed the changes in the Scottish Electoral (Reform) Act 2020 which required us to

account directly to the Scottish Parliament for our activities in relation to Scottish devolved elections and receive our funding directly from the Parliament. It is important that the Scottish Parliament can have confidence in our work and plans, and we would welcome additional scrutiny by a relevant committee in the Parliament. In Wales, the Senedd established a committee to scrutinise the Electoral Commission's financial estimates and five-year plans as they relate to devolved Welsh elections and referendums. The Committee also reports to the Senedd on its oversight of the Commission and its scrutiny of its financial estimates. The Scottish Parliament allocated the approval of the Commission's funding to the Scottish Parliament Corporate Body (SPCB). However, in practice the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee (SPPAC) currently undertakes policy scrutiny of our activities, as its remit extends to matters relating to devolved elections, referendums and the responsibilities of the Elections Minister. The SPCB undertakes a wide range of activities, and we understand has limited resource, including time, to scrutinise our activities. It is usual for most legislatures to allocate the approval of estimates and policy scrutiny to two different committees. This model has the advantage of bringing impartiality and objectivity to the consideration of budget estimates, which may be less so in the case of policy scrutiny. In the case of the Scottish Parliament, estimate consideration by the SPCB ensures that all parties in the legislature are involved in consideration of our funding, as all are represented on the SPCB. Currently, the SPPAC does not have representation from all parties in the Scottish Parliament. We believe the body which approves our funding should be cross-party across the legislature. An option to facilitate further scrutiny of the Commission's estimate could be to require, in an albeit already tight timeframe, a subject committee of the Parliament, which would likely be the SPPAC, to undertake at the request of the SPCB a consideration of our estimate submission and provide the SPCB with an opinion on our estimate prior to the SPCB taking a decision. In addition, if the Parliament wishes to formally allocate wider policy scrutiny of the Commission's work to a subject committee, we would support that development.

Developing the role of the Electoral Management Board Q45 46 summary Question 45: Do you have any views on the role and structure of the EMB? Question 46: Should a Deputy Convener post be established, with power to exercise the functions of the Convener of the EMB if they are unable to act? The Electoral Management Board for Scotland (EMB) was first established in 2009 and its role has been set in statute for Scottish council elections since 2011 and for Scottish Parliament elections since 2020. Over that period, the EMB has continued to make a positive contribution to the effective delivery of elections and referendums in Scotland through the provision of advice, support and challenge to Returning Officers (ROs) and Electoral Registration Officers (EROs). At devolved Scottish elections the Convener of the EMB has used their power to direct ROs in the discharge of their responsibilities to ensure a consistent standard of service for voters. This has been undertaken in the interests of the voter and helps maintain the high levels of satisfaction amongst voters we consistently find in our post-poll surveys. Given the concerns about the resilience of electoral services highlighted earlier in this response, we continue to support further steps to ensure that the legal status and funding of the EMB are developed in such a way that it could undertake the management roles it was initially envisaged it would undertake, such as providing oversight of the procurement and delivery of any e-counting solution for council elections. This could also include exploring the scope for the EMB to provide further consistency in electoral administration and improved service to voters by considering any efficiencies and cost savings in

procuring services and goods on behalf of ROs, such as through the centralisation of print contracts for ballot papers and other election stationery. The EMB is currently reliant on the goodwill of councils to support many of its activities. Developing its legal status would enable it to employ staff and contract services directly, enabling it to respond quickly to any unscheduled polls. Irrespective of legislative change, the EMB should develop its role in providing mentoring and support to ROs and EROs across Scotland to ensure that knowledge and confidence in delivering electoral processes is not affected by the turnover of senior council officers. Any expanded role for the EMB would require additional support for the Convener. We therefore support the proposal to appoint a depute Convener. Given the split in responsibilities in Scotland for the delivery of elections and electoral registration services, we recommend that two deputies be appointed, to include an RO and an ERO.

1. Over 2500 candidates stood for election across Scotland in 2022. The survey received 190 responses from candidates across 29 out of 32 local authorities, with 160 respondents answering the question on abuse. Candidates were asked: “On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being no problem at all and 5 being a serious problem, how much of a problem, if any, did you have with threats, abuse or intimidation in this election?” Respondents who rated their experience as a 2 or above were counted as having experienced threats, abuse, or intimidation. Respondents who rated their experience as a 4 or above were counted as having experienced a serious problem ■ Back to content at footnote 1 Page history First published: 15 March 2023 Last updated: 16 March 2023

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Meeting summary Date: Wednesday 23 September 2020 Time: 9:30am to 1:15pm Location: By video conference Date of next scheduled meeting: Wednesday 21 October 2020 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Holmes, Chair Sue Bruce Anna Carragher Sarah Chambers Elan Closs Stephens Stephen Gilbert Alasdair Morgan Rob Vincent Joan Walley In attendance: Bob Posner, Chief Executive (Items 1 to 10) Craig Westwood, Director, Communications, Policy and Research (Items 1 to 10) Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation (Items 1 to 10) Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance (Items 1 to 10) Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services Amanda Kelly, General Counsel (Items 1 to 10) David Bailey, Head of Strategic Planning and Performance Phil Thompson, Head of Research (Items 4 and 5) Sean Usher, Senior Advisor, Governance (Items 1 to 10) Carol Sweetenham, Head of Projects (Item 5) Tracey Blackman, Head of Finance & (Item 5) Dan Adamson, Head of Monitoring and Enforcement (Item 4) Susan Crown, Head of Campaigns and Corporate Identity (Items 4 and 5) Rhidian Thomas, Head of Electoral Commission, Wales (Items 5 and 8) Andy O'Neill, Head of Electoral Commission, Scotland (Item 5) Niki Nixon, Head of External Communications (Items 4 and 5) Orla Hennessy, Media Relations and Public Information Manager (Items 4 and 5) Laura Mcleod, Public Affairs Manager (Items 4 and 5)

Apologies There were no apologies. Declarations of interest There were no new declarations of interest. Minutes of items of electronic business (EC 74/20)

Resolved: That the Commission Board minutes of items of electronic business from 15 June 2020 be approved. An update – the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) review on aspects of electoral regulation (EC 75/20) The Chief Executive and Director of Regulation presented the paper and provided the Board with an overview of the key updates arising from the work of the CSPL. Resolved: Consultation on a prosecutions policy be deferred The Forward Planner be amended to reflect changes in the work programme 2021/2022 Budget and Plan submissions to the Scottish Parliament and Senedd Cymru (EC 76/20) The Board noted that financial timetables in the Scottish Parliament and Senedd Cymru required our budget to be submitted to the relevant scrutiny committees by the end of September preceding the financial year, much earlier than the Westminster process. It was noted that the Board would not be tied to this budget until next year. It was hoped that there would be no major changes in the meantime, but there was the impact of Covid-19 to consider. The proposed budget was in line with what had been contained in the published Corporate Plan (CP1). The Board noted that it had received previous papers on the implications and practicalities of devolved accountability and had set a direction of travel. This paper sought agreement on how those arrangements should apply in the first full year and how they might be taken forward thereafter. The Board also welcomed that the discussions with the devolved administrations had taken place in a very constructive spirit. Resolved: That the overall budget and the individual Estimates based on that budget be approved, with delegation of final approval of budgets to the Chief Executive and

Accounting Officer, in consultation with the Chairs of the Board and Audit Committee, pending advice from HM Treasury and agreement with officials in devolved legislatures and governments on the funding formula That the approach to the information to be submitted with the Estimates be approved, subject to final agreement of the text by the respective two Commissioners with lead responsibilities for the Commission in Scotland and Wales and the Chief Executive That the draft Funders' Memorandum of Understanding be agreed, with delegation of approval of the final document to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair and the respective two Commissioners with lead responsibilities for the Commission in Scotland and Wales Review of Commission Board Effectiveness (EC 77/20) The Chair introduced the Review, and its main recommendations. While the Chair did not necessarily agree with everything in the Review, its principal findings were useful and in line with issues already raised by the Board, some of which were already being addressed. Commissioners discussed the Review. The consensus was it had good points to take away but was not as challenging as would have been desirable in some areas and was therefore of limited value. It was noted that the Review contained recommendations for the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo) and Audit Committee. These would be discussed at the next meetings of these Committees. Action: The Executive Team in consultation with two Commissioners to prioritise which recommendations to take forward in an action plan to be approved by the Board. Resolved: That the report be noted That an action plan be brought to the Board for approval Performance report – Quarter 1 2020/21 (EC 78/20) The Board was informed that the report had been compiled using a new system, Pentana, for the first time. Commissioners were generally supportive of the new format. The Board discussed the various risks highlighted in the report and noted that risks to the reputation of the Commission needed to figure more prominently. It was also noted that the effect of the new No Purchase Order, No Pay policy was an internal metric rather than an overall performance metric. The Board discussed staff turnover and queried how Covid-19 had impacted on it and the ability to recruit high quality staff. Resolved: That the report be noted. Chief Executive's update (EC 79/20) The Board noted the update on operations and matters arising. The Board discussed the preparation for the 2021 polls and the impact of Covid- 19 on all aspects of the democratic process, including on the provision of postal votes and the potential increase in demand. The Board noted the work being done by the Commission to manage the challenges of the 2021 polls. This included plans to publish guidance relating to the impact of the pandemic. The Board noted that the recent All Staff Briefing had been well received, and provided an opportunity to reflect on achievements and forward work programmes. The Board discussed the important work of the Commission's partners in the third sector. A wide range of charities and democracy focused groups assisted the work of the Commission, and the Board requested to be updated on this work as it developed. The Board discussed the Annex to the update, on the policy approach to voter registration campaigns. Commissioners noted support for the shift in focus towards known under-registered demographics. Resolved: That the update on operations, matters arising, and the Policy Approach, be noted. Update from the Chair of RemCo (verbal update) The Chair of RemCo provided an update on the work of RemCo including its last meeting in July. The most significant item related to the Staff Survey and the findings of that survey. The survey results had been positive overall but there were still negative points related to issues including staff progression through the Commission, and diversity. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy would be on the agenda of RemCo in October, as well as pay and the impact of Covid-19 on the work of the Commission. Resolved: That the

update from the Chair of RemCo be noted. Business items taken via electronic means since the previous Board meeting There were no new comments or amendments. Individual Staffing Issue (eEC 72/20) All staff left the meeting except for the Director of Finance and Corporate Services as acting Accounting Officer, and the Head of Strategic Planning and Performance acting as Board Secretary. Resolved: The recommendations of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee be approved, subject to the Commission Chair and the Chair of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee, in consultation with the Director of Finance and Corporate Services as acting Accounting Officer, agreeing conditions to reflect Board's comments on the topic.

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Board minutes: 21 September 2022 You are in the Electoral Commission Board section Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Who was at the meeting Apologies and welcome Declarations of interest Minutes Commission Board action tracker Forward Plan of Board business 2022/23 Chief Executive's update (quarterly) Performance report quarter one 2022/23 Strategy and Policy Statement – responding to the statutory consultation Business planning for 2023/24 Dates of proposed Commission Board and Committee meetings in 2023/24 Update on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) activities Update on Bullying and Harassment Annual review of complaints First published: 9 December 2022 Last updated: 15 December 2022 Meeting summary Date: Wednesday 21 September 2022 Time: 9:30am to 1:15 pm Location: In person and by video conference Date of next scheduled meeting: Tuesday 18 October 2022 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Pullinger, Chair Rob Vincent Sue Bruce Alex Attwood Sarah Chambers Stephen Gilbert Alasdair Morgan Joan Walley Katy Radford Elan Closs Stephens In attendance: Shaun McNally, Chief Executive Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services Craig Westwood, Director, Communications, Policy and Research Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation Zena Khan, Senior Adviser, Governance Tasnim Jahan, Legal Officer [meeting support] Niki Nixon, Head of External Communications [items 1 and 8] Orla Hennessy, Media Relations and Public Information Manager [items 1 and 8] Ryan McCullough, Public Affairs Manager [items 1 and 8] Isabelle Taylor, Communications Officer [items 1 and 8] Pete Mills, Senior Communications Officer [item 1] Alex White, Senior Communications Officer [item 1] Andreea Ghita, Senior Communications Officer [item 1] Mark Nyack, Senior Communications Officer [item 1] Hennie Ward Communications Officer [item 1] Tom Hawthorn, Head of Policy [item 8] Tracey Blackman, Head of Finance and [item 9] Apologies and welcome The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, in particular Sal Naseem, Independent Adviser to the Commission Board on Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), as he participates at his first Commission Board meeting. Chair also welcomed Roseanna Cunningham, who joins as an observer while we await her signed Royal Warrant from His Majesty. The Board acknowledged that this would be Commissioner Alasdair Morgan's last Board meeting as he retires from the Electoral Commission Board serving two terms. Apologies were received from Binnie Goh, General Counsel. The Board welcomed the external communications team, which joined the meeting to provide an introduction and overview to their work. The Board thanked the team for their time and updates and welcomed further updates on future activities.

Declarations of interest The Board noted a declaration of interest from Commissioner Sarah Chambers, she had been reappointed for a second term at the Pensions Regulator.

Minutes (EC 136/22) Resolved: That the minutes of the Board meeting on 20 July 2022 be agreed. Commission Board action tracker (EC 137/22) The Board requested further information on scheduling of the digital campaigns item. It was noted that a guest speaker had now been lined up, with logistics still being planned. Further updates would be provided at the next Board meeting. Resolved: That the Board noted the progress against actions requested by the Board. Forward Plan of Board business 2022/23 (EC 138/22) The Board discussed the Commission's policy priorities and the need to have a scheduled discussion on the Forward Plan of Board business 2022/23, along with a discussion on plans for a Board meeting held in the Speakers constituency for February 2023. Resolved: That the Board discussed and reviewed the Forward Plan of Board business for 2022/23, with pending topical items for scheduling. Chief Executive's update (quarterly) (EC 139/22) The Chief Executive

introduced the report providing updates on operations and matters arising. The Board noted that since this report was written, the Commission's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy was approved by the Equalities Commission in Northern Ireland. The Chief Executive commended the Head of Projects for her resilience in order to achieve the results. The Board was advised that the Commission will be hosting its all-staff conference on the 1 February 2023 in London and will see all Commission staff come together for the first time since the pandemic. It will be an opportunity to hold an award ceremony to identify individuals and teams who have contributed to the organisation. It was noted that several Commissioners had volunteered to support the day. The Board was advised that the post poll reports were published today. The Director, Communications, Policy and Research and the Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance were commended along with their teams for their work on producing the report. The Board noted further updates on the staff pay award, the Commissions IT infrastructure and progress on procuring a new Board paper management system. Other updates were discussed on the campaign, ongoing work with the Elections Act and continued work with Political Finance Online. Resolved: That the Board noted the contents of the report. Performance report quarter one 2022/23 (EC 140/22) The Board was presented with the Finance and Performance report quarter one, 2022/23. Resolved: That the Board noted the contents of the report to track the delivery of our work programme and that the budget was being managed effectively. Strategy and Policy Statement – responding to the statutory consultation (EC 141/22) The Director, Communications, Policy and Research introduced the report, providing the Board with information relating to the Elections Act 2022, giving the UK Government powers to put in place a Strategy and Policy Statement (SPS) as a new part of the Commission's accountability processes. The Board welcomed the paper and the work that had gone into preparing it. It discussed some amendments to the wording of the consultation response, and concerns on how the SPS would affect the daily business of the Commission once it has been finalised. There would be an opportunity to discuss next steps on how the SPS impacts the Board at February's meeting. Resolved: That the Board supports the approach and agree the proposed consultation response. Resolved: That the Board agree to delegate to the Commission Chair and the Chief Executive the final approval of the consultation response, incorporating such changes as are proposed and agreed as part of the Board's discussion. Business planning for 2023/24 (EC 142/22) The Director, Finance and Corporate Services introduced the report which builds on the report that was presented in July on business planning. The Board were asked then to agree the strategic approach to budgets for 2023/24. Resolved: That the Board agreed the Main Estimates for the UK, Scotland and Wales for 2023/24 and budgets for 2023/24 to 2027/28. Dates of proposed Commission Board and Committee meetings in 2023/24 (EC 143/22) The Board received proposed meeting dates for the Board, Audit and Risk Committee and Remuneration and Human Resources Committee meetings for 2023/24. The Board requested some editing to various meeting dates proposed, and agreed to continue holding Committee meetings the day before a Board meeting in order to keep Commissioner travel and accommodation costs down. Action: A revised calendar of proposed Board and Committee meeting dates for 2023/24 be resubmitted to a future Board meeting for agreement. Action owner: Senior Adviser, Governance Update on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) activities (Oral) The Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance provided an oral update on equality, diversity and inclusion activities. As was reported at item 6 of the agenda, it was noted that after consultation which concluded earlier in the year, the Equality Commission of Northern Ireland approved our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

strategy, which is UK-wide, and the Single Equality Scheme for Northern Ireland. The Board noted that we are now preparing for publication and are working on the action plan to deliver against the strategy – the people strategy will be an important mechanism for this work in practice, with EDI forming one of the pillars of that strategy, and a detailed implementation programme to deliver against this is in development. It was noted that the Electoral Commission Northern Ireland also approved our revised approach to the Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA) and associated screening tools and templates. We have already started to use these and are now looking at how we can embed their use into our decision making and supporting this with further training, examples and communication. The Board noted that our EDI group continue to develop our inclusion calendar, with the next series of events planned to celebrate Black History Month in October. As with International Women's Day and Pride, we're planning to run some briefing sessions with external speakers as well as share interesting articles and resources and encourage discussion through our intranet and across teams. It was noted that the Independent Adviser to the Board on EDI would be working with staff colleagues on external EDI initiatives.

Resolved:
That the Board noted the oral update. Update on Bullying and Harassment (EC 144/22)
The Board received an update on the Commissions anti bullying and harassment work noting some relevant staff survey results from 2021. The Board noted the Commissions objectives and approach, overview of activities and measuring impact. It was noted that work done on the dignity and respect policy would be circulated for information.

Resolved: That the Board noted the update. Annual review of complaints (EC 145/22)
The Director, Finance and Corporate Services introduced the report for the period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022. The Board noted that the report addresses the changed approach to complaints that we have been taking over the last year to emphasise lessons learned. Further to this, additional resources have been agreed to improve our handling of complaints further and we are considering further changes to improve customer service including the handling of complaints. Resolved: That the Board noted the complaints received over the past twelve months.

Electoral observer scheme and code of practice consultation response | Electoral Commission Search Electoral observer scheme and code of practice consultation response You are in the Our consultations section Home Our consultations On this page Introduction Clarifying and modernising the application process Clarifying expectations about the role of observers Improving guidance and support on the practicalities of being an observer Establishing a voluntary feedback process for observers Updating the Code of Practice for electoral observers First published: 19 December 2018 Last updated: 19 December 2018 Summary On 9 August 2018 we launched a consultation on reviewing the UK's electoral observer scheme and a revised Code of Practice for electoral observers. We consulted many stakeholders on our proposed changes to the scheme and the Code of Practice. This is our response to the feedback we received during the consultation. Introduction We run an accreditation scheme for electoral observers across the UK and produce a Code of Practice setting out how observers should apply and what they must do. The Code of Practice also provides guidance to returning officers on working with observers. During the summer of 2018, we ran a consultation to review our electoral observer scheme and Code of Practice. The consultation closed on 31 October 2018. Many stakeholders responded, including: UK and Scottish governments Association of s (AEA) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODHIR) the police electoral administrators people who are or have been accredited electoral observers We are grateful to everyone who responded to our consultation and for the feedback they gave us. Overall, the responses were positive and welcomed the changes we have proposed making to the scheme and the Code of Practice. We also received a number of suggestions for other changes we could make, some of which are reflected in the revised scheme and Code of Practice. In other cases we haven't been able to take suggestions forward. For example, it was proposed that observers should have access to greater parts of the electoral process, including access to electoral registers and staff training, but we cannot provide for this without changes to the legal framework. We are now taking forward a number of actions to update the scheme. These include: launching a new online application process for individuals and organisations seeking accreditation as electoral observers from January 2019 redesigning the electoral observer ID badge which will be issued to all observers from January 2019 developing a programme of work to improve the guidance we make available to electoral observers, and those running elections introducing a voluntary feedback mechanism for electoral observers from the next scheduled elections in May 2019 updating our approach to how we handle applications for accreditation of electoral observers Clarifying and modernising the application process What we proposed Moving to an online application process for individuals and organisations seeking accreditation as an electoral observer, but with paper applications still available for those who are unable to access the process online. Consulted on the criteria and process we would use for assessing applications for accreditation and how our decisions could be challenged if we rejected or revoked accreditation. Clarifying and modernising the application process: More detail Summary of the consultation responses There was widespread support for our proposal to introduce an online application process. However, there were strong views that we should keep the paper application to ensure that the process is accessible to all, recognising that there may be some people who are unable to access online services. Respondents made clear that access to our staff for potential applicants should continue so that we can provide support and advice on completing the application process. We received various comments on how we proposed assessing and handling applications. One common theme was how long accreditation for

individuals would be valid for. In particular, a number of respondents asked whether it could last for longer than it does now, with accreditation for individuals no longer expiring at the end of each calendar year. What we are doing to clarify and modernise the application process From January 2019, individuals and organisations will be able to apply for accreditation online. We will also continue to offer a paper form to ensure that the application process is fully accessible. Staff across our offices will continue to provide advice and guidance to anyone who needs help with the application process. We have increased the period of accreditation for individual electoral observers from up to one year to up to three years. This will make the period of accreditation consistent for both individuals and organisations. Accreditation will therefore run from the date of issue to the 31 December of the third calendar year. However observers can choose to limit their period of accreditation to a shorter period, or end it at any time. In our revised Code of Practice we make it clear that all applicants will have their application processed by us and that we will do checks to ensure they meet the requirements set-out in it, including being politically impartial. Our privacy notice also highlights what we will do in terms of checks. However, we will publish our decision making process for accrediting electoral observers on our website, which will enhance transparency. Clarifying expectations about the role of observers What we proposed Simplifying our Code of Practice. Providing a clearer explanation about the electoral proceedings observers are entitled to attend. Clarifying within the Code of Practice what the role of an electoral observer is. Simplifying and improving the guidance for returning officers and their staff to help facilitate electoral observation.

Clarifying expectations about the role of observers: More detail Summary of the consultation responses Our proposal to provide further information and guidance for electoral observers, and for those who deliver elections, was widely welcomed. Those who have already observed at elections told us that having more information on the electoral process would help make observations more meaningful. Some acknowledged that a lot of the guidance materials we already produce are helpful, but that they are not easy to find. We received some suggestions about the type of guidance we could provide, such as handbooks, online tuition videos and training sessions. Some said it would be helpful if more guidance was provided to polling station staff who may not fully understand the role and purpose of electoral observation. Electoral administrators welcomed more guidance for electoral observers. They said that it would help to ensure that electoral observers had a clearer understanding of the electoral process. In particular, they welcomed our proposal to clarify the behaviours expected of electoral observers. They also supported more guidance on facilitating electoral observation. What we are doing to clarify expectations about the role of observers We are reviewing our guidance and considering how we can make it more accessible to electoral observers and to those running electoral events. In the short term, we will make initial improvements ahead of the scheduled local elections in England and Northern Ireland in May 2019. As part of our digital strategy, we are redeveloping our corporate website. Through this work we will ensure that electoral observers and administrators can easily access all of the information they need online. We will make updated guidance and resources available from the summer of 2019. We will email all electoral observers when they become accredited to help them to easily find the guidance they need. This will include a link to the Code of Practice for electoral observation, as well as signposting to information on the electoral process and details of how they can contact returning officers. Improving guidance and support on the practicalities of being an observer What we proposed

Strongly encouraging observers to tell electoral administrators in advance where they plan to visit this ensures that observers can get the most out of their visits.

Changing the design of the observer badges to draw a clearer distinction between Commission representatives and accredited observers. Supporting electoral observers by providing more information on personal safety. Improving advice and guidance to ensure that observers are aware of the standards expected of them and the sanctions for breaching those standard. Clarifying the powers electoral officials have when dealing with misconduct and ensure they can raise concerns directly with us.

Improving guidance and support on the practicalities of being an observer: More detail Summary of the consultation responses Changing the design of the observer badge Our proposal to change the design of the observers badge was welcomed. Many agreed that this would help to draw a clearer distinction between Commission representatives and accredited observers and avoid confusion for those running and working at electoral events. Providing advice and guidance on personal safety Our proposal to provide advice and guidance on personal safety was welcomed, with some respondents suggesting that this should be included in the Code of Practice.

Providing advance notification of observation visits Opinions were divided on the proposal that observers should give advance notice to those running elections in the area they wish to observe. While some observers did acknowledge that it would be a courtesy to do so, they thought it could undermine the purpose of independent electoral observation. There was a strong feeling from those who observed elections that making unannounced visits meant more effective observation and was in keeping with international standards. Unannounced observations would ensure that a true reflection of the voting process could be observed rather than one specifically prepared for independent observers. Many of those who run elections supported the proposal of advanced notice as it would assist in their planning and co-ordination of elections, particularly in relation to count venues. Supporting more meaningful observation could provide information in advance to help observers, such as polling station locations, postal vote opening times and count manuals. Clarifying the standards of behaviour expected of electoral observers A number of respondents welcomed having more information on the standards and behaviours expected of electoral observers, and some thought that this information should be circulated more widely amongst those running elections. Both observers and those running elections told us that such information would help create a better understanding of what is expected from electoral observation. A small number of those respondents who run elections expressed concerns about how they should handle issues relating to misconduct by electoral observers. For example, it was noted that they would be unable to prevent access to any accredited individuals who may have tried to get accredited as an electoral observer with the objective of disrupting proceedings or showing partisan support for those contesting elections. One suggestion was that we should consult with the electoral community when processing applications to ensure the suitability of individuals to be accredited. What we are doing to improve

guidance and support on the practicalities of being an observer Changing the design of the observer badge We are updating our electoral observer badges so that there is a clearer distinction between accredited electoral observers and Commission representatives. The new badges will also include additional security features to help improve the overall security and integrity of the scheme. The new badges will be issued to all observers from January 2019. Providing advice and guidance on personal safety We are reviewing the information we can provide to electoral observers to help with their own personal safety when observing electoral proceedings. We will provide

safety advice when we launch updated guidance for observers, which will be timed to coincide with the launch of our new website in June 2019. Providing advance notification of observation visits We recognise that our proposal to encourage observers to give advance notification was met with strong views. In our experience, observers do benefit from notifying those running elections in the area they intend to observe. However, we recognise that unannounced and unscheduled visits are important to maintain confidence and integrity in the proceedings that are observed. Our Code of Practice makes clear that there is no requirement for electoral observers to notify electoral officials of their intention to observe proceedings. However it also advises that providing advance notification to electoral officials will mean they can provide accredited observers with relevant local information, such as the list of polling stations, which will help to maximise the value of their observation.

Clarifying the standards of behaviour expected of electoral observers The evidence we have seen over the last decade indicates that the overwhelming majority of accredited observers adhere to the Code of Practice, and there have been few reported cases of misconduct. However, we understand the concerns raised by those running elections, as any instances of misconduct have the potential to have a significant impact on the conduct of electoral proceedings. We will look further at the guidance we offer to those running elections to ensure it helps them handle any instances of misconduct. For example, we will publish our process for handling and revoking accreditation. We have already clarified in the Code of Practice the standards expected of electoral observers. We are developing further guidance for electoral observers which will also be clearer on the behaviours expected of them and what the consequences will be for failing to adhere to the Code of Practice and/or acting in misconduct. We encourage anyone who has evidence of breaches of the Code of Practice or misconduct by electoral observers to report it to us by emailing observers@electoralcommission.org.uk so that we can review their accreditation and take action if necessary. Establishing a voluntary feedback process for observers What we proposed Giving electoral observers the option to feed back. Sharing any feedback we receive with those responsible for administering the polls. Establishing a voluntary feedback process for observers: More detail Summary of the consultation responses The feedback we received on this proposal was positive, with many respondents explicitly welcoming the introduction of an option to feed back. They thought it will contribute to more effective and meaningful electoral observation. However, some respondents stressed that this should always be voluntary and that we shouldn't be prescriptive about how observers should provide feedback. What we are doing about establishing a voluntary feedback process for observers We will pilot a feedback option at the scheduled local government elections in England and Northern Ireland in May 2019. Feedback from observers will be an important part of the wider information we collect at electoral events, and will complement the electoral data and information we already collect from returning officers. We will make online tools available for observers to give feedback. However, we will not make it compulsory to do so and will accept reports in any format. We will also share specific and localised observer reports with those responsible for the administration of electoral events to help with their evaluation and future planning. Updating the Code of Practice for electoral observers What we proposed Prior to the consultation, we: amended the Code of Practice for electoral observers to ensure that it is easily accessible for anyone who is interested in observing and for electoral officials simplified the layout and language of the Code of Practice to make it easier to understand strengthened information within the Code of Practice to ensure that

observers are aware of their obligation to remain impartial at all times. We presented the simplified layout as part of the wider consultation in summer 2018. Updating the Code of Practice for electoral observers: More detail Summary of the consultation responses Overall, the changes we proposed making to the Code of Practice were welcomed. We were told that the Code was clear, concise and easy to understand, and would be a practical tool to help with effective electoral observation. We received a number of suggestions about additional supporting materials that could be used to promote and support the Code of Practice, such as fact sheets and a list of 'do's and don'ts' of electoral observation that would work alongside the Code. A number of respondents raised concerns about the requirement for electoral observers to be politically impartial. Some felt observers could apply for accreditation and knowingly disregard this requirement, while others thought it could be a barrier to legitimate observers, particularly international observers who may be politically active outside of the UK. Some suggested that political impartiality should only apply during an election period, rather than for the full length of the accreditation. What we have updated in the Code of Practice for electoral observers We have reviewed the Code of Practice to reflect the feedback we received. The revised Code has now been laid before the UK and Scottish Parliaments. All observers will be required to comply with this Code from January 2019. We are developing supporting materials which will promote and support the Code of Practice. These will include fact sheets explaining electoral processes and safety advice for observers. They will be available when our new website launches in June 2019. We believe political impartiality is an important part of independent and non-biased electoral observation. We expect observers to fully meet this requirement. Being affiliated to a UK registered political party, or a non-party campaign group, does not automatically disqualify a person from being accredited as an electoral observer. However, members, officers or employees of a UK registered political party who would be, or are likely to be, politically active during their accreditation period must not apply for accreditation. If we find evidence that an applicant has previously campaigned, or has been politically active, we will contact the applicant to make sure they are aware of and can meet the requirement for political impartiality during their period of accreditation. We believe this is essential to maintain integrity and confidence in the independence of the electoral observer scheme. If we find evidence that an accredited observer has actively campaigned or shown partisan support at electoral proceedings, we will revoke their accreditation. An observer can also request for their accreditation to be ended if they choose to become politically active. To further enhance the integrity of our observer scheme, we have reviewed how we reject and revoke accreditation. In our revised Code of Practice we make clear that all applicants will have their application processed by us and that we will do checks to ensure they meet the requirements set out in it, including being politically impartial. Our privacy notice also highlights what we will do in terms of checks. However, we will publish our decision making process for accrediting electoral observers on our website, which will enhance transparency.

Appendix A: List of respondents Accredited observer (8) Association of s (AEA) Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council Cabinet Office (Elections Division) Carmarthenshire County Council Democracy Volunteers Electoral Management Board Scotland (EMB) Kings College London Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council Lancaster City Council Manchester City Council, Salford City Council and Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council Newcastle University Northern Ireland Office (Elections Policy Division) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE)

Pembrokeshire County Council/AEA Wales Scottish Government (Elections and Constitution Division) Shaws Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) Single Police Point of Contact (SPOC) (3) UK Parliament (Minister for the Constitution) University of Edinburgh Business School

Commissioners On this page Business expenses: travel and accommodation Salary and fees First published: 30 May 2019 Last updated: 12 December 2022 Description of what we publish We publish information about our commissioners' fees, travel and subsistence costs as part of our commitment to being open about what we do. Fees are the daily rates we pay our commissioners. The House of Commons has set the current daily rate at £390 per day, and £195 per half day, which is equivalent to Band 4 of judicial salaries. We also pay for travel, accommodation, meals and certain other expenses that our commissioners incur while carrying out our work. The limits for these expenses are set out in our policy. We publish an annual total at the end of our financial year. Our financial year starts 1 April, and ends 31 March the following year.

2019/20 travel and accommodation Name Total (£) Sir John Holmes (Chair) 384
Dame Susan Bruce 581 Anna Carragher 1,779 Sarah Chambers 25 Professor Elan Closs Stephens DBE 0 Lord Horam of Grimsargh 0 David Howarth 0 Alasdair Morgan 2,531 Bridget Prentice 0 Rob Vincent CBE 684 Joan Walley 1,424 Alasdair Ross 1,540 Lord (Stephen) Gilbert 0 2019/20 salary and fees Name Total (£) Sir John Holmes (Chair) 80,523 Dame Susan Bruce 12,975 Anna Carragher 12,319 Sarah Chambers 9,399 Professor Elan Closs Stephens DBE 17,337 Lord Horam of Grimsargh 32 David Howarth 20 Alasdair Morgan 10,016 Bridget Prentice 40 Alasdair Ross 9,267 Joan Walley 8,880 Rob Vincent CBE 9,906 Lord (Stephen) Gilbert 7,923 2018/19 travel and accommodation Name Total (£) Sir John Holmes (Chair) 2,859 Dame Susan Bruce 1,339 Anna Carragher 351 Sarah Chambers 4,477 Professor Elan Closs Stephens CBE 0 Tony Hobman 0 Lord Horam of Grimsargh 555 David Howarth 1,192 Alasdair Morgan 5,009 Bridget Prentice 382 Rob Vincent CBE 0 2018/19 salary and fees Name Total (£) Sir John Holmes (Chair) 79,350 Dame Susan Bruce 10,582 Anna Carragher 6,556 Sarah Chambers 6,842 Professor Elan Closs Stephens CBE 13,179 Lord Horam of Grimsargh 3,104 David Howarth 3,678 Alasdair Morgan 9,352 Bridget Prentice 5,764 Alastair Ross 1,624 Joan Walley 979 Rob Vincent CBE 6,821 2017/18 fees, travel and subsistence 2017/18 salary and fees Name Total (£) Sir John Holmes (Chair) 69,874 Dame Susan Bruce 12,828 Anna Carragher 7,164 Sarah Chambers 0 Professor Elan Closs Stephens CBE 14,352 Lord Horam of Grimsargh 5,095 David Howarth 4,717 Alasdair Morgan 8,869 Bridget Prentice 6,416 Alastair Ross 0 Joan Walley 0 Rob Vincent CBE 8,306 2017/18 travel and accommodation Name Total (£) Sir John Holmes (Chair) 1,586 Dame Susan Bruce 5,428 Anna Carragher 1,348 Sarah Chambers 0 Professor Elan Closs Stephens CBE 4,156 Tony Hobman 374 Lord Horam of Grimsargh 0 David Howarth 0 Alasdair Morgan 2,681 Bridget Prentice 544 Rob Vincent CBE 555

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Board minutes: 26 February 2020 You are in the Electoral Commission Board section Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Apologies and introductions Declarations of interest Minutes of the Commission Board meeting of 22 January 2020, note from the informal session on 22 January, and the minutes from the meeting of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee meeting on 5 February 2020 Section 10 assessment Performance report quarter 3 2019/20 Corporate planning 2021/26 Chief Executive's update Forward plan of Board business Action tracker Chair and Chief Executive's meetings and meetings of note in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland First published: 18 June 2020 Last updated: 21 June 2021 Meeting overview Date: Wednesday 26 February 2020 Time: 9:30am to 12:35pm Location: Boothroyd Room, 3 Bunhill Row, London Date of next scheduled meeting: Wednesday 18 March Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Holmes, Chair Alasdair Morgan (save for item 4) Anna Carragher Elan Closs Stephens Joan Walley (save for item 4) Rob Vincent Sarah Chambers Stephen Gilbert (save for item 4) Sue Bruce Bob Posner, Chief Executive Craig Westwood, Director, Communications, Policy and Research Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Amanda Kelly, Interim General Counsel David Bailey, Head of Strategic Planning and Performance David Meek, Senior Adviser, Governance Petra Cress, Head of Planning, Performance and Governance Adrian Fryer, Senior Lawyer (for item 4) Phil Thompson, Head of Research (for item 4) Niki Nixon, Head of External Communications (for item 4) Hamish Love, Senior Adviser, Performance and Insight (for items 5 and 6) Apologies and introductions No apologies. The chair noted that Alastair Ross had, at his request, been released by her Majesty from his Royal Warrant, to take up an advisory position to the Northern Ireland government. The chair thanked him for his service as Commissioner. Declarations of interest No new declarations of interest. Minutes of the Commission Board meeting of 22 January 2020 (EC 10/20), note from the informal session on 22 January (EC 11/10), and the minutes from the meeting of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee meeting on 5 February 2020 (EC 12/20) Action: The Board requested that the notes of the informal session be amended to reflect the correct date of the informal session. Resolved: That the minutes of the Commission Board meeting on 22 January 2020 be agreed. The records of the informal session on 22 January, subject to amendment above, and the minutes of the meeting of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee meeting on 5 February 2020 were noted. Section 10 assessment (EC 13/20 and 13A/20) The General Counsel spoke to the advice contained in 13A/20. The Chief Executive and General Counsel advised the committee of the potential consequences of Commissioner perceived conflicts of interest if any decision was scrutinised, including by the courts. Three Commissioners, Joan Walley, Alasdair Morgan, and Stephen Gilbert, were not present for the rest of the item. The Board agreed to consider the item at this meeting, including the request from the UK Government for a delay to enable them to consider fully the constitutional and legal implications of the Scottish Government's request and the basis on which it is made. Resolved: That, consistent with current information and legal advice, the Commission make necessary preparations in order to enable it to respond in a timely fashion, should the Board decide to approve the request under s.10 to provide advice and assistance to the Scottish Government in connection with a possible referendum question. To consider the request more fully at the 18 March Board meeting or otherwise as appropriate. To ask the UK Government to provide the details of any matters they consider pertinent to the decision once they have considered the implications of the request by close of business on Wednesday 4

March. That the Commission will make all relevant correspondence on the matter open and available to the Scottish Government, and will similarly make available to UK Government any representations made by the Scottish Government. Not specific to this matter, but more broadly on the role of nominated Commissioners, the Chief Executive be asked to consider how best to raise the issue of perceived conflict of interest as it affects nominated Commissioners with Government. Performance report quarter 3 2019/20 (EC 14/20 and 15/20) The Board considered the report, and discussed the distinction between operational work and project work. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services noted that operational work remained on-track, while certain project work had been put on hold so staff could focus resources on the unscheduled UK Parliamentary General Election. The Director of Regulation assured the Board that a dedicated team was working to ensure that delayed work in that directorate was processed as quickly as possible. The Board noted the increased number of Freedom of Information Act requests (FOIs) and Subject Access Requests (SARs) received in Quarter Three, and the decreased response rate to these requests. The Board heard that, with SARs, the challenge was not in finding information we held on these individuals, but in assessing the information to ensure compliance with the request. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services noted that we had trained more staff in how to respond to such requests. The Board considered the activity supporting a feasibility study on options for modernising electoral registration. The Director of Electoral Guidance and Administration agreed to add additional commentary to outline the next steps in this process, now that the first stage was complete. The Board discussed recent fines for parties that had failed to properly declare public funds they had received. The Board suggested that larger parties be included as part of the regular checks of declared spending. The Board received an update on how Brexit on 31 January had affected the Commission. The Board also sought an update on progress of proposed legislative changes. Action: The Director of Electoral Guidance and Administration to add additional commentary to outline the next steps in modernising electoral registration. Resolved: That the paper be noted. Corporate planning 2021/26 (EC 16/20 and 17/20) The Chief Executive outlined the background information that had been prepared for the discussion. The Head of Strategic Planning and Performance provided an overview of the process that the senior leadership group had gone through in building the corporate plan 2021/26. The Board considered the relationship between benefits and drivers. The Board also discussed alternate approaches to the development of this corporate plan, including whether the Commission could engage more deeply with stakeholders, particularly regulators facing similar circumstances, such as OfCom. Part of the development of the plan would include consideration of areas where the work of the Commission overlapped with work undertaken by other stakeholders. The Board noted that information provided in the analysis equipped it well to deal with expected events, but not the “unknown-unknowns”. The Director of Regulation noted the challenging timetable had prevented us from taking a more expansive approach to the development of this plan, but that we would still seek stakeholder input. The Board offered its support in contributing to the development of the plan, such as through consulting with small groups of Commissioners in particular areas. The Board suggested that the state of the electoral administration system was one area that needed to be considered in the development of the plan. The Board sought assurances that changing geographic, social and economic diversity was considered in the development of this plan. The Board noted the increasing concentration of social and economic activity in London and the South-East, and considered how this could affect public engagement and trust. The Board considered we

should include feasibility planning work towards delivering net-zero emissions elections. The Head of Strategic Planning and Performance confirmed that we would use impact assessment analyses against each benefit. Action: Director of Finance and Corporate Services to consider how best to ensure Commissioner contribution to the development of the Corporate Plan. Resolved: That the paper be noted. Chief Executive's update (EC 18/20) The Chief Executive updated the Board on a recent recommendation from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse; "all political parties registered with the Commission in England and Wales must ensure that they have a comprehensive safeguarding policy." It called for the Commission to monitor and oversee compliance with this recommendation. The Board heard that the initial view in response to this recommendation was that it was outside our remit and outside our skills and experience. The Board also noted the large number of political parties, many of which were quite small parties, for whom this obligation would need to be formulated in a proportionate way. The Board heard that staff would be in contact with the inquiry informally regarding this matter, before staff prepared a written response. Resolved: That the paper be noted. Forward plan of Board business (EC 19/20) The Board considered whether there should be more regular, substantive updates on the wider nation based context of the work undertaken in the devolved offices. This would be considered as part of the Board effectiveness review. Action: Add s10 assessment to March Board meeting. Resolved: That the paper be noted. Action tracker (EC 20/20) Resolved: That the paper be noted. Chair and Chief Executive's meetings and meetings of note in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland (EC 21/20) The Chief Executive noted that this paper might be expanded to include details of significant meetings with external stakeholder held by Directors. Resolved: That the paper be noted.

Results and turnout at the 2014 European Parliamentary elections | Electoral Commission Search Results and turnout at the 2014 European Parliamentary elections You are in the European Parliamentary elections section Home European Parliamentary elections First published: 11 July 2019 Last updated: 6 August 2019 Download You can download the full dataset as an XLSX . You can also download our full report , written by Colin Rallings and Michael Thrasher (Elections Centre, Plymouth University, Drake Circus, Plymouth, PL4 8AA). Summary Thirty different parties fielded a total of 119 lists across Great Britain. There were ten individual party candidates in Northern Ireland. UKIP topped the poll in Great Britain and won the largest number of seats. A total of seven parties won at least one seat. There was no change in party representation in Northern Ireland. The 2014 European Parliament (EP) elections gave nearly 46.5 million registered UK electors the opportunity to vote. Some 16.55 million votes were counted in the ballot box, making the overall turnout 35.6%. This was nearly a full percentage point increase on the 2009 contests. Turnout was higher than in 2009 in every country in the UK. In England and Wales the increase was modest; in Scotland and in Northern Ireland it was more considerable. The proportion of ballots that are rejected at the official count continues to be small. At the 2014 EP contests it was about one in every two hundred votes cast. There is though evidence of the rejection rate being somewhat higher where voters are faced with an additional election operating under a different electoral system (e.g. in areas with combined local elections). Over 7.23 million postal votes were issued - 15.6% of the total UK electorate. In 12 local authority counting areas, more than 25% of the electorate had a postal vote; in another 14 fewer than 10% did so. More than two thirds (69.1%) of those with a postal ballot returned it. In contrast, turnout among those required to vote 'in person' was 30.1%. The proportion of postal votes rejected or otherwise not included in the count was 4.4%, ranging from a high of 7.3% in Northern Ireland to a low of 2.9% in Scotland. Postal vote rejection following a mismatch of signature and/or date of birth was much more common than rejection for incomplete information. In up to a third of cases of postal vote rejection voters returned their postal voting envelopes but failed to include either the ballot paper itself or the verification statement or both. Around 0.6% of electors with a postal vote were granted a waiver to use their date of birth as their sole identifier. Some 54,500 electors (0.12% of the total electorate) appointed proxies to act on their behalf. Areas which had local as well as European elections appear to have attracted a greater proportion of their electorate to vote. In particular, turnout was up in local authorities where there were local contests this time but not in 2009. Related content Past elections and referendums Read our reports and view data about past elections and referendums Inquiry report: the voting registration process for EU citizens resident in the UK for the 2019 European Parliamentary elections held in the UK Read our inquiry report about the voting registration process for the 2019 European Parliamentary election Report: May 2019 European Parliamentary elections and local elections Read our report about the 2019 European Parliamentary elections and local elections Results and turnout at the EU referendum View the results and turnout at the EU referendum

Consultation response: Draft performance standards for Electoral Registration Officers | Electoral Commission Search Consultation response: Draft performance standards for Electoral Registration Officers You are in the Our consultations section Home Our consultations On this page Background Summary of consultation responses What happens next Draft performance standards First published: 2 June 2020 Last updated: 10 June 2020 Summary of the consultation outcomes We commenced a 10 week consultation on a draft framework in January 2020 with the intention that we establish a new set of standards which can be used by Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) and us throughout the year to understand and improve their performance, ensuring ultimately that registers are as accurate and complete as possible, enabling everyone who is eligible and wants to, to be able to vote. Overall, the feedback we have received has been positive and respondents welcomed the proposed approach. On the whole, respondents agreed that the standards – with some minor amendments – along with the proposed tools and templates to be provided by the Commission, will support EROs with understanding and improving their own performance. However, as a consequence of the coronavirus pandemic, we recognise that not everyone who would have wanted to respond to the consultation was able to do so. We have therefore decided to defer finalising the standards for a year, to enable further feedback to be provided. Although we are not formally launching the standards this year, we nevertheless still believe it is important to make them and the accompanying tools and templates available as they form a key part of our guidance and support package which aims to assist EROs with planning for and delivering well-run electoral registration services across Great Britain. We will use the draft standards to inform our engagement with EROs over the next year and will report on their effectiveness before finalising them and laying them in the UK, Scottish and Welsh Parliaments by next summer. Background Consultation background We have the power in law to: set performance standards for EROs issue directions to EROs to provide reports on their performance against the standards prepare and publish assessments of their performance against the standards We first introduced performance standards for EROs in July 2008 with the key objective of delivering a greater consistency of practice across Great Britain. We then introduced a revised framework in 2013 to support the transition to individual electoral registration (IER) and then again in 2016, following the introduction of IER. The reforms to the annual canvass being introduced this year provide us with an appropriate and timely opportunity to develop a new performance standards framework. However, we expect that electoral registration in and across Great Britain will continue to evolve and so we are keen to ensure that the new framework is sufficiently flexible to be able to adapt to further changes. Developing the new standards Over the past year, we have been working collaboratively with representatives from across the electoral community – including the Association of s (AEA), Scottish Assessors Association (SAA) and Solace – to help shape the draft standards. After agreeing a set of key principles to underpin the new framework, we established a working group of electoral administrators from across Great Britain and held a workshop with them to scope out what a set of standards might look like. From this, we developed a draft standard around the accuracy and completeness of the electoral registers, which we tested with this group and the AEA, SAA and Solace. Their feedback informed the content of the draft set of standards that we consulted on. Consultation The consultation was sent to a range of stakeholders, including: Ministers and officials in the UK and devolved governments political parties EROs electoral administrators a number of agencies, professional bodies and representative organisations. We received 34 responses to our

consultation from a range of organisations and individuals including: Chloe Smith MP, UK Minister for the Constitution and Devolution Michael Russell MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Government Business and Constitutional Relations Welsh Government various EROs and local authorities the Association of s (AEA) the Scottish Assessors Association (SAA) View the full list of respondents In addition, we also obtained feedback through discussions with stakeholders from across the electoral community during the consultation period. This included attending various meetings – including AEA branch meetings and SAA meetings – to talk about the draft standards and to seek feedback. The consultation asked for views on a number of questions on the proposed performance standards, including: whether the draft standards will support EROs to understand, improve and report on their performance whether our proposed approach to how we engage with EROs and their teams will enable us to provide effective support and challenge We are grateful for the feedback we received, whether by way of written responses to the consultation or through discussions at AEA and SAA meetings. However, as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, we know that not everyone who wanted to respond to the consultation was able to do so. Given the importance of ensuring we can take into account views from as wide a range of interested stakeholders as possible, we have therefore decided to defer finalising the standards for a year, to enable further feedback to be provided. Although we are not formally launching the standards this year, we nevertheless still believe it is important to make them and the accompanying tools and templates available as they form a key part of our guidance and support package which aims to assist EROs with planning for and delivering well-run electoral registration services across Great Britain. We will continue to welcome further feedback on the questions we posed in the consultation during the next nine months, which will also enable us to learn directly from the experience of using the standards to understand, improve and report on performance during the 2020 canvass. We will use the draft standards to inform our engagement with EROs over this period, and will report on their effectiveness before finalising them and laying them in the UK, Scottish and Welsh Parliaments by next summer. Further information on next steps can be found in the ‘What happens next?’ section below.

Summary of consultation responses

Overall, the feedback we have received has been positive and respondents welcomed the proposed approach. On the whole, respondents agreed that the standards – with some minor amendments – along with the proposed tools and templates to be provided by the Commission, will support EROs with understanding and improving their own performance. Respondents also broadly welcomed our proposed approach to engaging with EROs and their teams over the course of the year. View the latest draft of the performance standards for EROs , which have been amended to reflect feedback received during the consultation. It is these standards which will be used in 2020/21 and on which further feedback will be sought to inform the final standards to be laid in Parliaments by summer 2021.

About the draft standards

The new standards focus on the outcomes that should be delivered, rather than the processes that are followed, with the objective of helping EROs and their teams to understand the impact of their electoral registration activities. This should help EROs to make informed decisions on what activities are undertaken, how these activities are carried out and how their limited resources can be deployed efficiently and effectively. Whilst there was general agreement from respondents that the standards focus on the right activities, a number of respondents commented that although the consultation set out our approach to using the standards over the course of the year, there was no specific mention of registration actions impacting on the delivery of Returning Officer functions at an election, which is important in

ensuring that all those who want to vote are able to do so. We have therefore now included specific reference to this as part of the standards, through the addition of the activity ‘Timely and accurate supply of electoral registers to the Returning Officer to support the conduct of elections’. The consultation responses also illustrated some confusion relating to the outcome titled ‘Stakeholders and electors have confidence in the integrity of the electoral registers’, with the use of the word integrity being interpreted as referring to electoral integrity rather than being read in line with the wider definition as was intended. We have sought to clarify this by amending the outcome to focus on the ‘secure management of the electoral registers’ rather than talking about their integrity. On the detail of this standard, we have also now added further references on cyber security processes and maintaining audit trails of how and when data has been transferred in response to feedback, making it more explicit how important these elements are in securely managing the electoral registers. Concerns were also raised by a number of respondents about being able to access, provide and analyse all the data listed in the standards. We believe that access to this range of information, which builds on the data already included in the existing performance standards, will be essential to enable EROs to understand, improve and report on their performance, so have worked with Cabinet Office on a better metrics project to help ensure that this data will be available within software systems and can be easily accessed by EROs when they need it. The additional tools and templates we are providing with the standards, in particular a tool which focuses on how to access, analyse and assess data, should help EROs to make full use of the information that is available to them. There were also some specific suggestions of additional information that could be included to help EROs to understand the impact of their activities – for example, data on the number of ITRs not responded to after the reminder and personal visit stages – and a number of these have now been added in to the standards. Several respondents highlighted the practical difficulties of identifying the number of additions as a result of different targeting approaches. While it will be important for EROs to use the available data on levels of additions and deletions to help them understand the impact of their activities, we have removed the specific reference to the ‘Number of additions as a result of different targeting approaches’ from the standards, recognising that EROs are not able to see from the information routinely available from the IER Digital Service what has driven an application to be made. Using the standards: Electoral Registration Officers EROs will use the data and qualitative information set out in the standards, and any other additional data or information that the ERO feels is relevant, to help them understand the impact of their activities, so they can identify what works, what doesn’t, and where improvements can be made. To help them do this, we committed to developing additional tools and templates to sit alongside the standards, including a resource on using data, key performance indicator setting guidance and a reporting template. Respondents welcomed the proposal for additional tools and templates to support EROs in using the standards. In addition to the tools highlighted in the consultation, respondents asked for further guidance on how to use the standards and in particular how they can measure their impact and evaluate their activities. To respond to this, we will now also develop a ‘How to’ guide on using the standards which aims to help EROs and their teams understand what each element of the standards is trying to achieve and will provide examples of what the different items of data and information we list should show them, and how these can be used to help them understand the impact of their electoral registration activities. Our consultation also set out that whilst we

recognise the benefits of EROs using targets for their registration activity locally, we remain of the view that it would not be appropriate to set performance targets at a national level, given the activities and impacts will vary significantly by local area reflecting the particular demographics and circumstances EROs are each working within. We are, however, keen to support EROs with establishing a baseline of their own performance and setting targets which take into account their specific circumstances, and will be providing guidance and resources to assist with this. In particular, several respondents highlighted that they would like to be able to use data to compare their performance with other EROs. By transparently reporting on and publishing data, we hope to be able to support this activity, and will consider further how we can help to facilitate useful comparison as part of our ongoing support and challenge work.

Using the standards: Electoral Commission

The consultation set out our proposed approach to using the standards to inform how we engage with EROs and their teams over the course of the year – not just during the annual canvass period – with the objective of working with all EROs and their teams at least once every two years, continuing to use risk assessments to help prioritise the order, frequency and intensity of our engagement. Respondents broadly welcomed our proposed approach to engaging with EROs and their teams. One respondent, the AEA, highlighted that there will be a need for us to work closely with key stakeholders to understand where support and challenge is needed, ensuring that we capture those who need more frequent support. The risk-based approach is designed with this in mind, to help identify what level of support is required, and we continue to welcome working with others to help ensure that we identify where there are particular challenges so we can target our support and challenge as appropriate. Respondents also commented that when gathering information from EROs and their teams, we must be mindful of electoral cycles and other demands on the ERO, and allow sufficient time for them to submit the information required. As highlighted in the consultation, it is not the Commission's intention that EROs would routinely collate and provide us with all the information listed within the standards; instead, we will work with EROs and their teams to analyse the data and information to help us understand their performance and identify any issues or concerns. We will, however, still want to collect data from all EROs, to help us understand the state of the electoral registers across Great Britain, but we will consider the timing and number of these requests in order to keep them as straightforward for EROs as possible. We also set out that we intend to summarise the data and information gathered through our engagement with EROs and their teams to inform regular progress reports, rather than produce an annual assessment and summary of the performance of EROs. Through our reporting, we want to provide reassurance to the public and key stakeholders (such as political parties and elected members) that EROs are doing everything they can to ensure that everyone who is eligible and wants to vote is able to do so, and to highlight any instances where this is not the case. Respondents were keen that reporting should be used to report on the positive work and successes, and not to name EROs that have issues. While we remain focussed on supporting EROs to understand and improve their performance, we nevertheless have a responsibility to be transparent about where issues arise and will continue to use the standards to challenge EROs when needed, including making clear in our reporting where we find that the standards are not being achieved. We will, however, ensure that our reporting will also be used to celebrate success and share examples of good practice. More generally, we are committed to working with the AEA, SAA and Solace to look at how we can work together to most effectively identify and share good practice in electoral registration, which will be of particular

importance as lessons start to emerge from the first year of operation of the reformed canvass processes, and this work is an area that respondents were keen to see us expand into. What happens next While we are not seeking to finalise and lay the standards in Parliaments this year, we nevertheless want to make them available as they stand now, reflecting the fact that, with our guidance and resources, they are a key part of our guidance and support package which aims to assist EROs with planning for and delivering well-run electoral registration services across Great Britain. We will also be publishing additional tools and resources by the end of June. These products, which include a 'How to' guide on using the standards, key performance indicator (KPI) setting guidance and reporting templates, aim to help support EROs and their teams with using the standards to set targets and help them baseline their performance. This will give EROs a strong starting point for using the standards in future years to understand their data and any trends or variances, and to help them identify what works and what doesn't. We will use the standards in this period to help establish a picture of individual EROs' performance during the first reformed canvass as well as to understand more generally how the new processes are operating in practice. Taking a risk based approach, we will engage with a range of EROs throughout the canvass period and into early 2021, using the standards to inform our discussions. To prepare, we will let EROs know ahead of the discussion the types of information that we will want to discuss with them, which will vary depending on the point in the cycle we are engaging at, to help them understand the areas we will want explore, including the data that would be useful to look at. And whilst we will continue to report on electoral registration matters, in recognition of the fact the standards have not have not yet been laid in Parliaments, as well as recognising the wider impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the delivery of electoral registration services, we will not make any formal assessments of performance in the first year. Instead, we will use our reporting over this period to highlight the outcomes of our engagement with EROs, focussing on the activities being carried out and any trends, issues and challenges identified, as well as to draw out successes and examples of good practice. We will also continue to report more widely on the canvass as we have done in previous years, which will include an assessment of how the reformed canvass is operating in practice, which we aim to publish by the end of May 2021. We also intend to use this period to seek feedback on the effectiveness of the standards for understanding, improving and reporting on performance, ensuring that the standards work from the ERO perspective as well as from our perspective before they are finalised. We will gather feedback in the course of our discussions with EROs and will also seek to provide an opportunity more generally for wider input on how the standards are working. Download the draft performance standards New performance standards for Electoral Registration Officers View the accessible version of the standards Accessible version of the draft performance standards Outcome: electoral registers are as accurate and complete as possible, ensuring that everyone who is eligible and wants to vote is able to do so What inputs are needed? ERO understanding and delivery of role and responsibilities Management and oversight of delivery of the electoral registration service, including the statutory functions of the ERO, and stakeholder engagement. Planning Maintaining a plan for registration throughout the year, ensuring it is kept under review and evaluation is undertaken, with lessons learnt fed back in. Resource Identification and allocation of budget and staffing for electoral registration activities Training Identification and delivery of training to meet the needs of both permanent and temporary staff What activities are being undertaken? Identification of those not registered, including hard to reach groups:

Using available data and information sources, identify those not registered, including hard to reach groups Develop and maintain a public engagement strategy, ensuring planned activities are tailored to meet the needs of different groups of electors What information is needed to understand the impact of these activities? Analysis of the scope and usefulness of data and information Ward level analysis of the registration area Identification of priority areas to target registration activity Evaluation of communications channels and approaches, including cost/benefit analysis of previous activity, supporting development of engagement strategy and activities Undertaking year-round registration activity: Maintain the property database Contact potential eligible electors, including carrying out work to target hard to reach groups Ensure those no longer entitled to be registered are identified and removed Manage special category electors What information is needed to understand the impact of these activities? Number of properties with UPRN/as a percentage of properties Analysis of any issues reported with the allocation of properties to polling districts to reflect relevant electoral boundaries The accuracy and usability of data sources used Analysis of response rates by channel, to understand impact of different approaches Number of ITRs sent (by channel) Number of ITRs followed up Number of ITRs not responded to after the reminder and personal visit stages Number of electors whose identity has not been verified and have yet to provide documentary evidence Number of registration applications received Number of additions to the register Number of reviews of registration and number of deletions as a result Number of deletions not as a result of a review, by type Number of renewals sent Number of special category elector applications processed Number of special category electors renewed Administering the canvass: Using available data and information, identify the most appropriate method to canvass properties in your area Make arrangements to deliver the planned canvass activities Undertake the planned canvass activities What information is needed to understand the impact of these activities? The accuracy and usability of local data sources used Results of data matching (national and local) Number of households intended for each route Analysis of available communications channels (e-communications, telephone, mail), to inform contact with individual properties Number of households canvassed, by route and channel Number of communications sent, by route and channel Number of responses by route and channel Assessment of success of canvass communication channels used Number of canvassers recruited and trained Evaluation of canvasser performance What difference is being made? The demographics of the registration area and the needs of groups of electors within it are understood, enabling services to be targeted and designed to meet the needs of residents Barriers to registration are minimised, enabling all eligible individuals to register Potential new electors are identified and are given every opportunity to register to vote Changes in the registration status of individuals are captured and applied to the register in a timely manner Elections are effectively supported by the register How can we determine the success of our work? Performance against the KPIs/objectives set out in your registration plans Evaluation of public engagement activities undertaken, including of changes made to the register as a result of the activity Changes in levels of registration within and across the registration area, both generally and within identified under-registered groups An assessment of levels of additions and deletions, during the canvass and throughout the year A year-on-year analysis of additions and deletions Assessment of the numbers of electors who tried to vote on polling day but were unable to do so as a result of not being registered to vote Outcome: Absent voting is accessible, ensuring that everyone who is eligible and wants an absent vote is included on the relevant absent

vote list What inputs are needed? ERO understanding and delivery of role and responsibilities Management and oversight of delivery of the absent voting function, including the statutory responsibilities of the ERO, and stakeholder engagement.

Planning Maintaining a plan throughout the year, including arrangements for managing the absent voting process. Resources Identification and allocation of budget and staffing for absent voting activities. Training Identification and delivery of training to meet the needs of both permanent and temporary staff. What activities are being undertaken? Supporting electors to engage with the absent voting process:

Develop and implement a communications plan to ensure that electors are aware of the absent vote options available to them Ensure that all electors can access the absent vote process What information is needed to understand the impact of these activities?

Evaluation of information made available to electors on the absent voting process to help them understand the options available to them Number of absent vote applications from different elector groups (overseas, service), by type (postal or proxy) Number and type of complaints received about ability to access the absent vote process

Administering absent vote processes: Process new applications Process requested changes to absent voting preferences Maintain absent vote records and lists Develop and implement processes to identify and address potential integrity issues What information is needed to understand the impact of these activities? Number of absent vote applications received by type (postal or proxy) Number of absent vote applications rejected Number of absent vote confirmations sent Number of changes to voting arrangements processed Number of absent vote refresh notices sent, followed up and responses processed Number of postal vote applications for postal votes to be redirected to one address Number of postal applications from one address Number of proxy applications from one address Number of emergency proxy applications by type Number of applications referred to the police for investigation What difference is being made? Electors are able to make an informed decision on what voting method is best for them Barriers to absent voting are minimised, enabling all eligible individuals to apply Changes to voting arrangements are captured and applied in a timely manner The integrity of absent voting records and lists is maintained How can we determine the success of our work? Performance against the KPIs/objectives set out in your plans Analysis of complaints and feedback received about ability to access the absent voting process Assessment of the numbers and types of errors in the absent voter lists Outcome: Stakeholders and electors have confidence in the secure management of the electoral registers What inputs are needed? ERO understanding and delivery of role and responsibilities Management and oversight of delivery of the electoral registers, including the statutory functions of the ERO, and stakeholder engagement.

Planning Maintaining a plan throughout the year, including details of the publication and supply of the register. Resources Identification and allocation of budget and staffing for electoral registration activities. Training Identification and delivery of training to meet the needs of both permanent and temporary staff.

What activities are being undertaken? Publication and supply of the electoral register: Maintain record of those who are entitled to receive the electoral register Securely supply the electoral register to recipients Timely and accurate supply of electoral registers to the Returning Officer to support the conduct of elections What information is needed to understand the impact of these activities? Evaluation of arrangements for publication of the revised register and monthly updates to the register Evaluation of arrangements for supplying the register to those entitled to receive it Number of requests received, number of requests approved and when supplied Audit trails showing how and when data has been transferred Evaluation of methods for

transferring data Processes to ensure cyber security Timing of provision of the registers Information provided to recipients on appropriate use of the register What difference is being made? Everyone who is entitled to be supplied with the register receives data on time and in an appropriate format Electors have confidence in how their data is compiled, accessed and used Personal data is processed lawfully and transparently How can we determine the success of our work? Performance against the KPIs/objectives set out in your plans Analysis of complaints received from register recipients in relation to the provision of registers Analysis of complaints from electors about how their data is processed Stakeholders providing feedback Stakeholders providing feedback We received 34 responses to the consultation: UK and devolved governments (4) Chloe Smith MP, UK Minister for the Constitution and Devolution Michael Russell MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Government Business and Constitutional Relations Welsh Government officials (Local Government Democracy Division) Cabinet Office officials Representative bodies (4) Association of s (AEA) North East and Yorkshire Branch of the AEA Scottish Assessors Association The Runnymede Trust EROs and local authorities (26) Aberdeen City Council Ashford Borough Council Bristol Council Bromsgrove District Council/Redditch Borough Council Ceredigion County Council Cheshire West and Chester Council Chorley Council Cornwall Council Eastbourne Borough Council/Lewes District Council East Herts Council East Staffordshire Borough Council Gravesham Borough Council Halton Borough Council Herefordshire Council London Borough of Camden London Borough of Waltham Forest Luton Council Moray Council North Herts District Council Pembrokeshire County Council St Albans City and District Council Swansea Council Torbay Council Wealden District Council Wellingborough Council (one response from the Electoral Services Manager and one from the Electoral Services Officer) We also attended the following meetings to obtain feedback through discussions with stakeholders from across the electoral community: AEA branch meetings: Eastern, East Midlands, London, North West, Scotland and Northern Ireland, Southern, South East, South West and West Midlands Scottish Assessors Association Electoral Registration Committee Wales Electoral Coordination Board Wales Electoral Practitioners Working Group Related content Consultation: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Statutory consultation on guidance for Returning Officers: Assistance with voting for disabled people Draft guidance for Returning Officers: Assistance with voting for disabled voters (statutory consultation) Cabinet Office consultation: The Wales Act 2017 (Consequential and Saving Provisions) Regulations 2018 Read our response to the Cabinet Office consultation from February 2019

Appendix 8 Electoral Commission decision-making - Managing legal and reputational risks | Electoral Commission Search Appendix 8 Electoral Commission decision-making - Managing legal and reputational risks You are in the Code of Conduct for Electoral Commissioners section Home Commissioners Code of Conduct for Electoral Commissioners On this page Introduction Approach to managing legal and reputational risk Annex to Appendix 8 Fairness in Commission decision-making First published: 18 June 2023 Last updated: 23 June 2023 Introduction The Electoral Commission was established to be an independent and authoritative public body, with Commissioners who bring senior leadership experience and political expertise. In order to maintain public confidence in the electoral system and democratic process, Commissioners must observe the highest standards of propriety and maintain the Commission's reputation for independence and impartiality. This includes controls on the previous and current political activities of Commissioners, including nominated Commissioners once appointed. High profile and politically sensitive matters occasionally come before the Board for decisions. Some such decisions will give rise to an increased likelihood of allegations of conflict and bias in the decision-making and bear serious legal and reputational impacts for the Commission. It is important that the Board's decision-making process is as robust as possible to ensure that confidence in such decisions can withstand external scrutiny. The annex to this note provides information on the common law duty of fairness in decision-making and the circumstances that increase the likelihood of claims of bias and / or conflict which are relevant to the Commission. Approach to managing legal and reputational risk In order to manage the risk of challenge based on allegations that a decision has been tainted by a conflict of interest or bias, the following approach is to be adopted: Early consideration must be given to whether the decision gives rise to significant risk of claims of conflict and bias and legal and / or reputational risk. If any Commissioner or staff member considers there is a likelihood of allegations of conflict of interest or bias, the matter must be raised with the Chair, Chief Executive, Board Secretary, and General Counsel (if not the same person) for advice and recommendations. Based on advice and recommendations, the Board will then be in a position to consider its risk appetite in relation to the specific matter in-hand. The level of legal and reputational risk the Board is willing to accept from potential allegations of conflict and bias will depend on the circumstances, nature, and particular risks associated with each decision. If, following consideration of any advice and recommendations, the Board is of the view that a decision before it gives rise to a significant risk of claims of conflict and bias and legal and / or reputational risk, then the Board must consider what mitigations could be put in place to address or reduce the risk. As an overriding principle, the Board's default position is that all Commissioners should be able to be involved in all decision-making. The Board will, therefore, always consider in the first instance whether the risks can be effectively mitigated to enable all, or as many as possible of, the Commissioners to be involved in all aspects of the decision-making. While the potential mitigations that may apply to a particular decision will vary depending on the circumstances of that decision, the mitigations the Board will need to consider include: Making declarations of interest and obtaining waivers from those affected by the decision. Managing discussions so that a Commissioner may contribute to the overall strategy or provide expertise, but is excluded from the decision-making part of the deliberation. Recusals by some Commissioners from participation in discussions and decision-making. Delegating the decision or aspects of the decision-making to the Executive. If the Board conclude that the risk of

claims of conflict and bias and legal and / or reputational risk cannot be effectively managed, then the Board must recuse affected Commissioners from the deliberations and decision if that recusal would reduce such risk. Annex to Appendix 8 Fairness in Commission decision-making There is a common law duty on public bodies to make decisions in a manner which is 'fair'. This includes duties on decision makers to approach decisions with an open mind and not to be a judge in their own cause (whether pecuniary or not). The test for establishing a conflict of interest or bias is set out in *Porter v Magill* [2001] , whether a: "fair minded and informed observer", having considered the facts, would conclude that there was a "real possibility" of bias." Applied to the Commission, the test is not whether Commissioners think they are conflicted or biased, but whether an external "fair minded and informed" member of the public would draw that conclusion. If so, the legitimacy of the decision will be drawn into question. The fair-minded and informed observer test in *Porter v Magill* has also been adopted by the courts to determine whether there is a possibility of bias arising from 'predetermination' or having a 'closed mind'. For local government decision-making, s.25 Localism Act 2011 provides clarity by making it clear that prior indications of a view on a matter do not in themselves amount to 'predetermination' for certain local government decisions. It does not, however, remove the requirement for decision-makers to be open-minded. There is no such statutory protection in PPERA and so the Commission will need to demonstrate that decision-makers had been open-minded and that a fair-minded and informed observer would not consider that there was a real possibility of bias. If the Commission were to make a decision 'unfairly' there would be a serious risk of successful legal challenge. Fairness is more than a legal requirement, it also ensures wider trust in the decision-maker(s), the process, as well as the decision itself. Circumstances that increase the likelihood of claims of bias and / or conflict While decisions that could give rise to claims of conflict and bias come up relatively rarely, the implications of legal challenge and the reputational risk associated with such claims would have serious impact, not just for the Commission, but for the affected electoral event, individuals, political parties and campaigners, and the democratic process as a whole. There are no detailed statutory rules on the participation or exclusion of Commissioners from deliberations and / or decisions. Once appointed, and irrespective of any subject lead or political nomination, all Commissioners are jointly responsible for Commission decisions and bound by collective responsibility. Equally, there is no requirement for all Commissioners to be involved in all decisions, the quorum is a minimum of six (although non-nominated Commissioners must equal or outnumber nominated Commissioners). The Board has also delegated certain decisions and responsibilities to the Executive to perform (see the scheme of delegation in Part 4 of the Corporate Governance Framework). The Commission has the power to regulate its own procedures to manage the legal and reputational risks arising from its decisions. In doing so, it is important that both the Commission and individual Commissioners consider carefully whether there are any organisational or personal circumstances that increase the likelihood of complaints of conflict and bias and legal and / or reputational risk in respect of particular decisions. Whilst everything will depend on the facts, case law highlights the following: membership of professional, political or other organisations would not give grounds for an allegation of bias, without something more. Similarly, a court is unlikely to object to a person's participation in decision-making on the grounds of their religion, ethnic or national origin, gender, age, class, financial means or sexual orientation. In order to manage the legal and reputational risks,

Commissioners should be aware of the factors that have led to successful claims against individuals or organisations. These factors may not always lead to a successful claim as it will depend on the surrounding circumstances and degree. The following are non-exhaustive illustrative examples of factors, drawn from case law, which may increase the likelihood of claims of conflict and / or bias in Commission decision-making:

- A pecuniary or proprietary (and in certain circumstances, non-pecuniary) interest in the outcome.
- Promotion of the same cause as those affected by the decision, for example a long-standing association with one side of a debate, issue, or cause.
- Critical or supportive comments taking a position on an issue which may indicate predetermined conclusions.
- Involvement in decisions that could be seen as promoting a political policy or furthering a manifesto commitment of a political party which a Commissioner is a member.
- Personal acquaintance with, or antagonism against, a person or organisation involved.
- Financial transactions or relationships with organisations or individuals involved.

Where Commissioners are aware of such circumstances, they must seek advice from the Chair, Chief Executive, Board Secretary or General Counsel.

Objective: A modern and sustainable electoral system | Electoral Commission

Search Objective: A modern and sustainable electoral system

You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23 On this page What we are working to achieve Work done to achieve this aim Performance indicators Ongoing and future work

First published: 4 July 2023 Last updated: 27 September 2023 What we are working to achieve We need to make sure our electoral system keeps pace with digital developments. We need to capitalise on the scope for greater compliance, transparency and the financial savings technology offers, while working to retain voter confidence in the electoral system. We also need to modernise the electoral system to ensure it is environmentally sustainable. We are working towards a modern and sustainable electoral system by: harnessing data and technology to meet the needs of voters, campaigners and electoral administrators understanding, calling for action and acting on the changing risks to the election system from the misuse of data and technology continuing to build strong relationships and streamlining working practices with all bodies that are part of the electoral system supporting governments and the wider electoral community to adopt a strategy and implementation plan which meets environmental standards required of our electoral system. Work done to achieve this aim The Commission submitted written evidence to the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee's inquiry on electoral registration, including how public data could be more effectively used to improve the accuracy and completeness of electoral registers. As well as providing expert advice and recommendations for improving the current system, we continue to explore the feasibility of modernising the voting and registration process. We will be carrying out accuracy and completeness research on the electoral registers to update our evidence-base on the state of the registers and how the current system is working in practice and could be improved. Performance indicators Indicator Target 2022-23 Meeting requirements of existing and emerging or new environmental legislation N/A – This will be developed when the UK Government's target is published N/A This indicator is intended to help the Commission measure and report its environmental impact, and to meet its requirements from existing and new environmental legislation. Targets will be developed and baselined during the first three years of the corporate plan, depending on published government targets. The Commission writing for the Institute for Welsh Affairs Without an immediate election on the horizon many involved in this work, including the Electoral Commission, are thinking about where the work to engage young people in our democratic process needs to go next. The Commission writing for the Institute for Welsh Affairs Ongoing and future work We are currently updating our accuracy and completeness research, which will help us to understand the health of the UK's electoral registers. The updated findings for both Great Britain and Northern Ireland will be published in autumn 2023. We will continue to engage with the UK Parliament's Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Select Committee's enquiry around possible changes to voter registration systems across the UK. The Commission's feasibility studies on better use of public data and automated or automatic registration will continue to underpin our approach in this area. The Commission will continue to invest time and resources in building relationships with other regulators and stakeholders to understand their views and identify opportunities for collaboration. Navigation Previous Next Objective: Fair and effective electoral law Enabling activity: Independence and integrity

What we do in referendums | Electoral Commission Search What
we do in referendums You are in the section Home On this page Before the
referendum During the referendum After the referendum First published: 31 May 2019
Last updated: 15 September 2019 Overview of what we do in referendums For a
referendum to take place in the UK, the UK Parliament has to pass legislation about
it. We start work on a referendum when the UK Parliament has passed this legislation,
and we know what our role in the referendum is. Our role in referendums is different
to our role in elections . Although we don't run elections, we do run national
referendums held under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000
(PPERA) , or have other responsibilities, depending on the legislation. Our Chair or
someone our Chair appoints, is the Chief Counting Officer for PPERA referendums. The
Chief Counting Officer is responsible for the conduct of the poll, can issue
directions to Counting Officers, and also certifies and announces the results of the
referendum. Before the referendum Before the referendum, we: look at the wording of
the proposed referendum question to make sure it is easy for voters to understand and
as part of our assessment we carry out research with the public produce guidance and
resources for the Counting Officers responsible for administering the referendum and
issuing directions as necessary (in the case of PPERA referendums) give guidance to
people campaigning in the referendum, so they know what the rules are run campaigns
so people know when the deadlines are for registering to vote, and applying for
postal and proxy votes appoint a lead campaigner for each side of the referendum
debate publish information about the donations political parties, campaigners and
other groups receive, and how much money they are spending design the ballot paper
During the referendum During the referendum, we: work with Counting Officers to make
sure the referendum is run well look at how well the Counting Officers are doing, and
whether they are working to our performance standards make sure people have all the
information they need to vote, including how to find their polling station answer the
questions people ask us on polling day visit polling stations on polling day, and
observe how well run they are When the polls close on the referendum polling day, we
certify and announce the results of the referendum (in the case of PPERA
referendums). After the referendum After the referendum, we: publish reports on how
well-run the referendum was, and recommend what would improve future referendums
publish information about the donations political parties, campaigners and other
groups receive, and how much money they spent publish electoral data including the
size of the electorate, turnout, the number of rejected ballot papers and information
on postal voting

Interests, gifts and hospitality | Electoral Commission Search

Interests, gifts and hospitality You are in the section Home On this page

Shaun McNally Ailsa Irvine Louise Edwards Craig Westwood Kieran Rix Binnie Goh, General Counsel First published: 30 May 2019 Last updated: 20 February 2023 Why we publish interests, gifts and hospitality We are independent, and impartially is important in everything we do. Our Executive Team tell us their interests, and record all of the gifts and hospitality they receive, including any they refuse. We then publish this information, to show we are independent and impartial. Shaun McNally, Chief Executive Interests Board Member: Association of Chief Executives Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Interests None Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation Interests None Craig Westwood, Director, Communication, Policy and Research Interests Trustee, Poet in the City – a charity which works to create new audiences for poetry, since September 2016 (Pro bono) Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services Interests Independent Member, Audit & Risk Assurance Committee, Office for Environmental Protection Binnie Goh, General Counsel Interests Trustee of Vibrance, a Social Care charity Related content Travel and subsistence Our Executive Team Meet our Executive Team, and find out more about them Our Senior Leadership Team Meet our Senior Leadership Group, and find out what they're responsible for Chief Executive's external meetings Find out about our Chief Executive's external meetings

Consultation on revised enforcement policy | Electoral Commission [Search](#)
Consultation on revised enforcement policy You are in the Our consultations
section Home Our consultations On this page What we're consulting on How to respond
Changes to the enforcement policy View the revised enforcement policy Questionnaire
First published: 16 January 2023 What we're consulting on As the regulator of
political finance in the UK, we ensure that parties and campaigners follow the law.
If we believe that the law may have been broken, we can take action. This gives
voters, parties, and campaigners confidence that the system is fair. The Political
Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) requires us to provide guidance
on our investigation powers, and sanctioning of potential offences and contraventions
of the act. We publish a statutory enforcement policy, which we refer to when running
an investigation. We regularly review the policy and have just completed our latest
review. We are running a public consultation on the changes. Your views will help us
make this policy as clear and helpful as possible, so that our approach to
enforcement is transparent, and can be easily understood. How to respond This
consultation is open from Monday 16 January until Friday 31 March 2023. You can
respond by filling in our online form emailing your views to
epconsultation@electoralcommission.org.uk writing to us at: Enforcement Team The
Electoral Commission 3 Bunhill Row London EC1Y 8YZ If you have any questions or
require any help to be able to respond, please get in touch on 0333 103 1928. Changes
to the enforcement policy We have reviewed our enforcement policy. The revised
version doesn't represent significant changes to our operational work, but makes
clear how we already work. We're asking for your views to help make the document as
clear as possible. Some of the changes we have made include: Revised how we explain
our approach to enforcement. This makes it clear how the enforcement policy sits
within a wider context. Revised how we explain our approach and added direct
references to impartiality. We have made it clear that we will only take enforcement
action when it's necessary and proportionate. Included a new section on our
forfeiture approach. This is a process of removing impermissible funds from the
system and is usually voluntary. We feel it is helpful for campaigners if we explain
our approach. Included recognition of the impact investigations can have on those
involved, and that we will be sensitive to this. We have also included reference to
our commitment to recognising and taking account of diversity. Removed an annex
advising interviewees on the interview process. This is already provided to anyone
invited for interview during an investigation. Other minor wording changes to improve
clarity and provide as much certainty as possible for campaigners. For example, in
what circumstances we consider opening an investigation, and our approach to
disclosure of information. View the revised enforcement policy View the revised
enforcement policy Questionnaire Related content Enforcement Find out about privacy
and enforcement Party registration decisions View our decisions on political party
names, descriptions and emblems View current applications View the political party
names, descriptions and emblems which we are currently considering as part of our
assessment process Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a
political party, individual or other organisation

Northern Ireland Assembly Parties Panel minutes: 28 January 2020 | Electoral Commission Search Northern Ireland Assembly Parties Panel minutes: 28 January 2020 You are in the Party panels section Home How we make decisions Party panels First published: 6 November 2020 Last updated: 3 February 2021 Meeting overview Date: 28 January 2020 Time: 9:30am Location: Boardroom, Ormeau Business Park, Belfast Date of next scheduled meeting: 9 June 2020 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Alliance Party: Sharon Lowry and Scott Redenbaugh DUP: Allan Ewart Green Party: Liz Byrne Sinn Féin: Gary Fleming SDLP: Catherine Matthews UUP: Nicholas Trimble The Electoral Commission: Anna Carragher, Commissioner Cahir Hughes, Head of Electoral Commission NI Mairaid McMahon, Manager Roisin McDaid, Senior Officer (Political Parties Liaison) Hannah Greenfield, Information and Support Officer Electoral Office for Northern Ireland Virginia McVea, Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland Royal Mail Claire Connolly and Scott Forsyth Welcome and introductions The Chair, Anna Carragher, welcomed everyone to the meeting and round table introductions were made. Anna introduced Mairaid and Hannah to the table as new members of staff at the Electoral Commission. Notes of previous meeting held on 1 October 2019 An amendment was tabled to item 6.1, to make it clear that the Codes of Practice on spending by candidates and spending by parties, if approved, would only apply at local government elections in Northern Ireland where the regulated period was combined with the regulated period for another election. Issues raised by the political parties No items had been raised by the parties in advance of the meeting.

December 2019 post-election review – 12 December UK Parliamentary General Election

The Chair invited feedback from the Panel on all aspects of the 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election. She noted that the discussions would inform the Electoral Commission's report into the election, and that any further feedback could be provided to the Commission in due course.

Registration

The Electoral Office for Northern Ireland (EONI) has investigated a number of allegations made on two radio shows on 20 December and 23 December. The Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) had prepared a report for the Secretary of State which addressed these and she outlined the content of the report to the Panel. She suggested that there were two systemic issues that emerged during the election: that members of the public did not know their Digital Registration Number (DRN); and that some students were not able to provide the evidence of residence required to process their application. The CEO highlighted the surge in applications to join the register in the run up to the election. A total of around 84,500 applications were made during the general election campaign. Over 40,000 of these were made in the last six days before the registration deadline. The EONI plans for installing extra phone lines was delayed by the election but this work should be completed in the near future. The CEO commended staff at the EONI who had worked very hard over the period running up to the election, particularly given the proximity of Christmas. The Chair asked if the Panel had any comments on registration. One party suggested that some proxy voters had been unable to utilise their proxy votes at polling stations. The CEO advised she would look into it further. Another party raised a concern around EONI's capacity to cope with the number of registrations made. The Chair noted this had been a UK wide issue. The CEO advised that all applications for registration made before the deadline had been processed in time. Another panel member was concerned that some members of the public didn't understand the postal vote application process. The CEO stated the EONI will be reviewing their letters.

Nominations

There was a request made for counting agents to be able to register by email due the centralisation of EONI in Belfast. The CEO advised that she was planning to address this by running more pop-ups in local

council offices. Postal voting A Panel member asked for data about the number of postal votes applied for, issued and utilised and the CEO advised she would report back to the next meeting. Campaign issues and campaign material The Chair discussed the issue of unsavoury campaigning during the election throughout the UK. One party highlighted that third party campaigners don't have to register until they spend over £10,000. Roisin acknowledged this and stated that campaigning for or against a candidate has a lower threshold. Roisin also advised that the Electoral Commission carry out campaign monitoring and contact organisations during the campaigns.

Candidate mailing (Royal Mail) This was dealt with under item 6. Public awareness There was a suggestion that more effort should have been made to raise public awareness of DRNs. Cahir advised that the Electoral Commission would bear this in mind in future public awareness campaigns. Polling stations There were some issues raised regarding the electoral registers available in polling stations. The CEO indicated that she was aware of these and would seek to address them in future. The CEO noted that whilst she had received some complaints from members of the public regarding the polling stations used, there was limited flexibility and choice given the last-minute nature of the election and the fact it was held in the run up to Christmas. The count There was general agreement from the panel that the count was well run, and members commended the CEO for this. Commission guidance No issues were raised Update from the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland The CEO discussed the data that would be available during the canvass. The canvass is due to start in July and the EONI expect most registrations will be made online. There may be some training opportunities available for Single Transferable Vote counting, and Panel members would be informed in due course. Update from Royal Mail A Panel member raised concerns with Royal Mail over inconsistencies in the rules about what constituency names were allowed on the election communications. This had meant that some election materials were sent very late. Scott noted these concerns and noted that work was ongoing to clarify this for the future. Royal Mail raised issues with the way that poll cards were delivered to them. Whilst they are generally received sequentially, for this election there was no order, which meant that poll cards were sent out in an ad hoc manner. This also created confusion in households where some electors received their poll cards in advance of others. A Panel member noted that some election communications had been delivered to the wrong addresses, and Royal Mail stated this was due to a change in processing which is being looked into. Electoral Commission Updates Roisin brought attention to the financial returns deadlines: Quarter 4 2019 donation and loan returns These must be submitted to the Commission by Thursday 30 January UKPGE Party Campaign Spending Return Parties that spent £250,000 or less on campaigning at the UK Parliamentary general election must submit their spending return to the Commission by 12 March 2020. The Electoral Commission submitted the draft codes of practice to the Minister for Cabinet Office in July 2019. Cabinet Office officials came back with a number of suggested modifications. The Electoral Commission are currently working their way through these. The amended drafts will be submitted to the Minister to lay before Parliament. If approved, the codes will apply to UK Parliamentary and Northern Ireland Assembly elections. The UK wide report on the European election was published in October. It identified two key issues that had a detrimental impact on voters: the difficulties experienced by some EU citizens living in the UK who wanted to vote in the European Parliamentary elections in the UK; and the difficulties experienced by overseas British voters who were unable to return postal votes in time to be counted. The report also showed that overall levels of voter confidence in the running of these elections were lower than at other recent

polls. Research carried out for the Commission showed that public confidence that the European Parliamentary elections were well-run had fallen by more than ten percentage points since the elections in 2014. AOB The Electoral Commission provided an update on PFR online. Significant progress has been made over the last year with developing both the registration and the financial reporting side of the online system. It will make it quicker and easier for parties and campaigners to register with the Commission and to report financial information, enhancing their ability to comply with their legal obligations. After input from the party user group, the Electoral Commission plan to roll out the new system in January 2021 instead of January 2020 to provide additional time for development and user testing. Parties can submit their reports for the unscheduled elections in 2019 on the old system. Training and familiarisation will be provided for the new system in the summer/autumn of 2020.

Next meeting dates As the previously published date of Tuesday 24 March was no longer suitable, it was agreed that Hannah would contact Panel members to agree an alternative. Tuesday 9 June Tuesday 6 October

Search Campaign spending: Political parties and non-party

campaigners You are in the section Home On this page Data in this section

Elections Referendums Chart: Spending by party and election Spending by party and

election Spending breakdown First published: 11 July 2019 Last updated: 14 June 2023

Summary box Before elections and referendums, there is a regulated period for the

campaign that puts a limit on spending. These limits apply to candidates, political

parties and non-party campaigners. Spending limits vary for different elections. Data

in this section Spending by party and election Spending breakdown Intro Every year,

we publish specific guidance for elections happening that year. That guidance sets

out: the particular spending limits that apply the period that the limits apply for

the reporting deadlines for those elections Election campaign spending During

election campaigns spending limits apply to political parties and non-party

campaigners. They must record what they spend on certain activities to promote

themselves, or criticise other parties, during the regulated period. Political

parties have to: record what they spend during the election campaign report their

spending to us in a spending return Non-party campaigners have to register with us if

they plan to spend over a certain amount during the campaign. These amounts are:

£20,000 in England £10,000 in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland Lead campaign group

Registered campaigners in a referendum can apply to become the lead campaign group

for one side of the debate. This is also known as being the designated organisation.

Lead campaign groups: have a higher spending limit than other registered campaigners

get funding to send information to voters can be involved in referendum campaign

broadcasts can use certain public rooms for free receive a grant from us Campaign

spending at past elections and referendums You can view spending at past elections

and referendums on Political Finance Online , so you can see what political parties,

campaigners and other groups are doing. Chart: Spending by party and election This

chart shows the combined total spending by political parties in elections. You can

view the data based on type of election, and whether the election is held in Great

Britain, Northern Ireland or both. Chart: Spending by party and election Spending

breakdown This chart shows the total spending broken down into categories. You can

view the data based on type of election, political party and whether the election is

held in Great Britain, Northern Ireland or both. Spending breakdown Related content

Campaign spending: Candidates Find out about how candidates spend money on election

campaigns View donations and loans Annual accounts Find out about political parties'

annual accounts Political Finance Online Find out how political parties are spending

their money, and the donations they're receiving on Political Finance Online

Response to the UK Government consultation on a draft Strategy and Policy Statement for the Electoral Commission | Electoral Commission Search

Response to the UK Government consultation on a draft Strategy and Policy Statement for the Electoral Commission You are in the Our responses to consultations section Home Our responses to consultations On this page Independence of the Electoral Commission Accountability of the Electoral Commission The Commission's approach to this consultation The Commission's response to the draft Strategy and Policy Statement Delivery of the Government's executive priorities Restatement of the Commission's existing functions and duties The Commission's role across the United Kingdom The principles of neutrality and impartiality Enforcement Guidance The responsibilities of other organisations First published: 16 September 2022 Last updated: 7 October 2022 Overview The Elections Act 2022 introduced a new power for the UK Government to put in place a strategy and policy statement for the Electoral Commission. The statement can contain UK Government guidance that the Commission is required to have regard to in the discharge of its functions. The UK Government has published a draft strategy and policy statement and is consulting on its content with three statutory consultees: The Electoral Commission, the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission, and the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Select Committee of the UK Parliament. The Commission has submitted the below consultation response outlining its views.

Independence of the Electoral Commission The Electoral Commission is the statutory body which oversees elections and regulates political finance in the UK. It works to promote public confidence in the electoral system and ensure its integrity. As the UK's political finance regulator and the body that oversees free and fair elections, the way the Commission works and its decisions must remain independent, and its independence must be clear for voters and campaigners to see. This underpins fairness and trust in the electoral system, as well as public and cross-party confidence in the Commission's work. It is fundamental to maintaining confidence and legitimacy in our electoral system that an electoral commission remains independent from governments and acts impartially and with integrity to fulfil its duties. The introduction of a mechanism such as a strategy and policy statement – by which a government can guide the work of an electoral commission – is inconsistent with that role. Parliamentarians from all political parties made clear statements during the parliamentary consideration of the Elections Bill that the independence of the Electoral Commission is vital to the functioning of a healthy democracy. Ministers too were clear during the passage of the Bill, and with the Commission since Royal Assent, that they value and want to uphold the independence of the Commission. The opening section of the draft statement describes the Commission as the "independent regulatory body". It goes on to state that the "statement does not seek to interfere with the governance of the Commission and the Commission remains operationally independent." Members of the Commission Board wrote to the Secretary of State in February 2022 to set out their concerns about the proposed powers included in the Elections Bill (now the Elections Act), and this remains the firm view of the Commission.

Accountability of the Electoral Commission The Commission values scrutiny of its work and welcomes and engages with the routes and processes that are already available to the UK Parliament and other legislatures to hold it to account. This includes frequent engagement with select committees and public bill committees through written and oral evidence sessions, in addition to regular scrutiny of financial and business planning by the cross-party Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission. Now that the Elections Act has become law, any strategy and policy statement drafted by the Government and designated under the Act

will form part of that process of accountability to the UK Parliament, in particular through the Speaker's Committee. Once a strategy and policy statement has been approved by Parliament, the Commission will have a duty to have regard to it in taking forward its work, and will ensure that this duty is met. The Commission will continue to act in an independent and impartial way in order to help maintain public confidence in elections across the UK. In taking independent decisions about how to deliver its important roles and functions – including statutory obligations not mentioned in the statement – the Commission will continue to balance the needs, views and interests of all members of the electoral community. These include each of the UK's parliaments and governments, but also electoral administrators, the regulated community of parties, candidates and campaigners, and voters themselves. The Commission will report annually to the Speaker's Committee on how it has had regard to the statement. The Commission will remain accountable to the Scottish Parliament and the Senedd for its work in relation to Scottish and Welsh elections, including work that is directly funded by the Scottish Parliament and the Senedd. The Commission's approach to this consultation The Commission has UK-wide responsibilities, and important distinct responsibilities in each of the four parts of the UK. It is accountable to and funded separately by the UK Parliament, the Scottish Parliament and the Senedd. Its work is directed to meeting the needs of a broad range of stakeholders. Earlier this year the Commission set out its proposals for delivering these responsibilities in its five-year Corporate Plan for the period from April 2022 to March 2027, including a separate plan which covers the Commission's activities in Wales . These plans are the result of broad engagement with the electoral community, and they have been considered and approved by each of the three parliaments to which the Commission is accountable. The Commission's plans set out how it will deliver against five strategic objectives: Accessible registration and voting Transparent political campaigning and compliant political finance Resilient local electoral services Fair and effective electoral law A modern and sustainable electoral system The Commission's response below therefore focuses on where the guidance set out in the draft strategy and policy statement departs from these agreed, balanced and independent plans that have already been considered and approved by respective parliaments. It comments on the approach the Government has taken to using this new legislative power; highlights some areas where amendments are required; and notes practical issues relating to the workability of the draft statement. The Commission has not yet been required to have regard to a strategy and policy statement. Once a final statement has been approved by Parliament and designated, the Commission will give consideration to it, and to what bearing the statement should have on the Commission's existing and approved plans. This response focuses on what is specifically within the draft statement. However, the Commission would welcome the opportunity to discuss with the Government how best to bring about wider improvements to the democratic system. For example, paragraph 13 refers to combatting foreign interference in UK elections. The Commission has recommended changes to the law (echoed by recommendations by the Committee on Standards in Public Life) that would bring about significant improvements in this area, but this requires action from the Government to bring forward legislation to strengthen the regulatory framework. Similarly, paragraph 25 refers to clarity on the law. Since 2016 the law commissions have recommended changes to clarify the law. These have been widely welcomed and supported. The Commission would welcome the opportunity to work with the Government to develop workable proposals for modernising and simplifying legislation that would bring clarity where it is greatly needed. In the view of the Commission,

these and other issues can better be progressed by working together rather than through a strategy and policy statement. The Commission's response to the draft Strategy and Policy Statement As this is the first draft strategy and policy statement to be considered for approval by Parliament, it is particularly important to ensure it is absolutely clear, so that the Commission is able to account for it when reporting back to Parliament on how it has had regard to it. There are a number of aspects to the approach taken by the Government which may raise issues if taken forward in the final statement. Specifying the Commission's priorities The statement in some places – most notably paragraphs 4 and 5 – appears to seek to substitute the independently agreed priorities for the Commission with a requirement to have regard to the Government's view of what those priorities should be and how they should be resourced. The first section of the draft statement seeks to set out "the Government's view of the Electoral Commission's priorities and functions that support the Government's priorities in relation to elections, referendums and other matters in respect of which the Commission has functions". This wording is different to the description of the scope of the statement in new section 4A of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA). This provides that a statement may set out firstly the Government's strategic and policy priorities in relation to elections, referendums and other matters in respect of which the Commission has functions; and secondly the roles and responsibilities of the Commission to enable the Government to meet those priorities. It will be important to understand how this wording in the statement reconciles with the wording in the Act. This will be particularly important for proper parliamentary scrutiny of the statement. In addition, although the statement indicates that "this is not an exhaustive list of all the Commission's duties and responsibilities and does not suggest that the Commission should cease to carry out any of its other statutory duties", it makes clear that some of the responsibilities that Parliament has legislated to give to the Commission should be considered a lesser priority. It specifically says in paragraph 3 the Government's view that "these priority functions should be the focus of the Electoral Commission's work and allocation of resources". Commission's priorities summary The Government should make clear how its statements on priority setting are consistent with the Commission's independence and with the Act. In particular, it should be clear that the Commission should not be fettered in the exercise of those of its statutory duties that are not covered in the statement and that the Commission remains free to prioritise and resource those other functions in accordance with its independently agreed plans. Delivery of the Government's executive priorities Delivery of the Government's executive priorities Under the heading "Executive priorities in relation to elections as approved by Parliament" Section 2 of the draft statement sets out the UK Government's priorities in relation to elections, including reference to the Conservative Party's 2019 general election manifesto (paragraph 7). This includes guidance that the Commission should "support the Government's delivery of legitimate executive priorities in relation to elections during this Parliament, including changes brought by the Elections Act 2022 and as listed below" paragraph 8). The Commission will continue to deliver the statutory functions and responsibilities that Parliament has given it, including changes brought by the Elections Act 2022, and the Commission will respond to and reflect any changes to legislation that Parliament has approved. As the statutory regulator, the Commission will also continue to provide independent advice to the Government and Parliament about the implications of proposals for changes to policy or legislation, drawing on relevant experience and expertise. However, the effect of this section of the

statement would be to legally require the Commission to have regard to supporting the delivery of policies that have not yet been approved by Parliament. It would not be appropriate for an independent regulator to be given such direct responsibility for delivering the policy priorities of the Government, including manifesto commitments or other policy proposals that may not yet have been considered or approved by Parliament.

Delivery of gov policies summary

The strategy and policy statement should be amended to make clear that the Electoral Commission will not be required to have regard to supporting the delivery of policies that have not yet been approved by Parliament.

Restatement of the Commission's existing functions and duties

Restatement of the Commission's existing functions and duties Anything included in the final strategy and policy statement approved by Parliament will require the Commission to have regard to it and be accountable not only to Parliament but also potentially through the courts. Care must be taken not to needlessly introduce uncertainty or confusion over the Commission's functions or duties, through restating them in different and expanded wording. This creates confusion for stakeholders and the public, and will also increase the potential for legal challenge on the nature of the Commission's functions and obligations under the statement; any differences in description may be exploited to undermine or challenge the Commission's decisions.

Furthermore, in some parts of the statement examples are given to illustrate a general point but the duty of the Commission extends across the full range of its activities. For example, paragraph 18 refers to responsiveness to the public and the public interest which is central to all parts of existing agreed plans, yet the only example given in the statement refers to support for Returning Officers. Similarly, paragraph 19 refers to value for money which is also a core element of the Commission's legal duties and existing plans, yet the only example given in the statement refers to relates to use of powers under section 10 PPERA. It is not clear why these individual examples have been highlighted given that the Commission aims to operate consistently across all its functions in these and other areas.

Summary:

Restatement of the Commission's existing functions and duties The strategy and policy statement should be amended to accurately reflect the wording of the Commission's responsibilities, as legislated for by Parliament, to avoid needlessly creating confusion for stakeholders and risk of legal challenge.

The Commission's role across the United Kingdom

The Commission's role across the United Kingdom The draft statement includes reference to the Commission's responsibilities across all parts of the United Kingdom. As currently drafted this would require the Commission to have regard to "the importance of acting for all parts of the UK equally" (paragraph 23). The Commission's published and approved corporate plans set out clearly how it will deliver its statutory functions and priorities in each part of the UK, and across the UK as a whole. This includes responsibilities carried out in the devolved nations with accountability to the UK Parliament, and also those activities for which the Commission is funded by and directly accountable to the devolved parliaments. It is unclear what acting "equally" for all parts of the UK would mean in practice, how this relates to the responsibilities in other parts of the UK and to other legislatures, how this could be assessed or what it is specifically intended to achieve. The Commission's work programme varies depending on the scheduled and unscheduled polls taking place, and also the needs of stakeholders and priorities of the respective governments. In addition, while work on particular polls and governmental policy priorities are funded by their respective parliaments, some cross-cutting aspects of the Commission's work are funded by the three parliaments, paid on the basis of a jointly agreed formula. This therefore creates a risk that UK

Government guidance through this statement has a bearing on work undertaken for the other legislatures to which the Commission is accountable. The draft statement does not currently recognise this complexity. Summary: The Commission's role across the United Kingdom The strategy and policy statement should be amended to ensure that the purpose and intent behind the requirements relating to "all parts of the UK" are clear for Parliament, devolved legislatures, and the Commission. The principles of neutrality and impartiality The principles of neutrality and impartiality The draft statement includes an explanation of the Government's view of the core principles that should be prioritised by the Commission in the exercise of its functions. This includes guidance that the Commission should "uphold and demonstrate the principle of political impartiality by ensuring that the Commission and its staff communicate and treat all operations, decisions, regulated entities and political matters neutrally and impartially" (paragraph 16). The Commission's current approved corporate plans set out clearly its view and understanding of the importance of acting impartially and with integrity, including taking decisions on the evidence and being transparent about the reasons for them. As an expert body, we base our policy positions and recommendations on independent and impartial analysis. It is unclear what additional expectation is required of the Commission to act 'neutrally' as well as 'impartially'. It is also unclear how 'neutrality' could be seen to be consistent with the Commission's functions, including for example its role in advising governments and parliaments on changes to improve the democratic process. The principles of neutrality and impartiality The strategy and policy statement should be amended to ensure wording on impartiality is consistent with the Commission's existing legal role. Enforcement Enforcement The draft statement includes several references to proportionate enforcement including: "the need to avoid disproportionate sanctions against genuine mistakes where reasonable steps have been taken to comply with the new digital imprint regime" (paragraph 14) "the need for the Commission to balance the impact of its enforcement policy on providing an effective deterrent for deliberate breaches of electoral law and not unduly discouraging participation in public life" (paragraph 20a) "The Commission should be sensitive and proportionate to the voluntary nature of much of political parties' infrastructure" (paragraph 20a) "best practice from other regulators (such as the 'Macrory principles'), including where appropriate the use of requests for improvements before resorting to fines and the need to conduct investigations in a timely manner" (paragraph 20b) The Commission is already required by law to prepare and publish guidance on the use of its powers to investigate and sanction potential offences and contraventions of PPERA. The Commission has consulted on and published this guidance in its Enforcement Policy . This clearly and publicly sets out the Commission's approach to enforcement activity, which already covers the factors of proportionality and deterrence, including that it will: Regulate in a way that is effective, proportionate and fair. Use advice and guidance proactively in order secure compliance and to give those it regulates a clear understanding of their regulatory requirements. Undertake supervisory work to ensure that regulated organisations and individuals meet their legal requirements. Take enforcement action, including using investigatory powers and sanctions, where it is necessary and proportionate to do so in order to meet its enforcement aims and objectives. Take the facts of each situation into account. Including such specific guidance as to how the Commission should ensure proportionate enforcement of the law, and what factors it should consider when investigating potential criminal offences, risks impacting the operation of the Commission's duty to take decisions on enforcement action in line

with its enforcement policy. Further, it is already open to anyone to challenge an enforcement decision if they are not satisfied that the Commission has acted proportionately or consistently with this published statutory policy. The inclusion of specific factors in the statement could lead to an increased risk of legal challenge to operational decisions about investigations and enforcement. It could be seen to establish an alternative set of standards that may undermine the Commission's statutory enforcement policy. It could also create legal uncertainty over the application of regulatory requirements on the regulated community and affect voter confidence in the electoral system.

Enforcement summary

The strategy and policy statement should be amended to remove points of guidance on the operation of the Commission's enforcement responsibilities, which risk undermining its approved statutory enforcement policy.

Guidance Guidance

The draft statement includes several references to the development and publication of guidance and performance standards by the Commission to support campaigners, Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers to comply with the law:

"In particular, the Commission should support Returning Officers in ensuring the secrecy of the ballot inside polling stations, by making it clear in both advice and guidance that any breach of the secrecy laws or attempt to influence someone's vote while in the polling booth is an offence." (paragraph 5a)

"In particular, with regards to guidance on qualifying expenses in Part 1 of Schedule 8A of PPERA, the Commission should include clear and comprehensive guidance about the test of who should count as "the public at large or any section of the public"." (paragraph 13b)

"The Commission should also support compliance with the regime and recognise the importance of protecting free speech by individuals when producing the statutory guidance for the digital imprint regime."

(paragraph 14) "For example, the Commission must have regard to the importance of accurate and prompt election results through supporting Returning Officers' conduct of counts and setting adequate performance standards for Great Britain."

(paragraph 18) "the Commission should provide guidance that sets out the rules as simply as possible and offers practical advice, with illustrative examples, of how to comply with the rules, as legislated by Parliament"

(paragraph 24) Guidance issued by the Commission reflects the processes and requirements set out in law that have been approved by Parliament. It sets out where statutory requirements or offences are specified in legislation, and also makes clear where it is suggesting best practice that goes beyond any minimum requirements set out in law. These points of practice set out in the statement are already incorporated in the Commission's agreed corporate plans and current guidance. The Commission continuously reviews and updates its advice, guidance and performance standards, including consulting with campaigners or electoral administrators to ensure it understands and meets their needs. While the Commission may provide illustrative examples where it is possible and likely to be helpful for campaigners or electoral administrators, it may not be appropriate or possible in all instances, such as for unscheduled polls or in relation to new types of campaigning.

Summary: Guidance

The strategy and policy statement should be amended to remove points relating to the content or format of the Commission's guidance or performance standards.

The responsibilities of other organisations

The responsibilities of other organisations

The draft statement includes several references to other organisations with statutory responsibilities for delivering elections or enforcing the law, for example:

"The Commission should support this work and candidates facing intimidatory or abusive behaviour by updating guidance in the 'Joint Guidance on Intimidation for Candidates' jointly produced with the National Police Chiefs Council, Crown Prosecution Service and the College of Policing."

(paragraph 11) “Where decisions are taken by the prosecuting bodies not to take forward prosecutions, and where the Commission is aware of a decision not to prosecute and it is appropriate to do so, the Commission should ensure the record is clear that individuals or organisations do not remain under criminal investigation.”

(paragraph 21) The Commission would be required to show how it has had regard to the statement, but will not have powers to direct other organisations to ensure that they also follow these specific points of guidance. For example, the Commission cannot require the National Police Chiefs Council, Crown Prosecution Service and the College of Policing to update their guidance, and yet would be accountable through the strategy and policy statement for ensuring it is updated. In areas where it already works to support the police the Commission will continue to do so, but as it cannot seek to direct police priorities it is not clear what more the statement aims to require it to do. Similarly, there is no requirement for the police or prosecuting authorities to tell the Commission if they have decided not to bring a prosecution. Even if that were common practice, it would not be appropriate for the Commission to act as a spokesperson for another enforcement or prosecuting authority by communicating their decisions. Other organisations summary The strategy and policy statement should be amended to ensure that the Commission is not given inappropriate responsibility for the actions or decisions of other bodies. The Government should also ensure that any other bodies referenced in the strategy and policy statement are satisfied that their roles and powers are accurately represented.

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Importantly, the work we conducted found that most of the reforms are feasible from a technical perspective and could (with the possible exception of systems designed to enable better detection and management of duplicates) be implemented without radically altering the structure of the electoral registration system in the UK. In particular, technology already employed by the IER Digital Service could form the building blocks for reforms including better use of data by EROs, automated/automatic registration and the integration of electoral registration into other public service transactions. However, as part of the project, we also considered whether a centralised register, or system of joined-up electoral registers, would offer any additional benefits for electoral registration or electoral reform more broadly.

Although the Co-ordinated Online Record of Electors (CORE) was legislated for in 2006 by the Electoral Administration Act (intended to make it easier for political parties to verify the legitimacy of their donors), the provisions were never commenced and the project was abandoned in 2011. We concluded that a greater degree of centralisation could offer some benefits, particularly in terms of simplifying the infrastructure needed to support reform. In addition, the combination of unique identifiers and some form of joined-up registers allowing EROs to compare information about entries across all 372 registers could reduce the risk of some electors voting more than once at a relevant election. Reforms along these lines could also enable us to know how many people are actually registered twice (legally) and additionally provide the potential basis for any move towards different ways of voting in the future. However, these potential benefits need to be balanced against the impact of further centralisation on the structure of electoral registration in the UK, including the potential loss of local knowledge about under-registered groups; and the security risks around the management of personal data.

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Report: How the 2012 Police and Crime Commissioner elections were run | Electoral Commission Search Report: How the 2012 Police and Crime Commissioner elections were run You are in the Police and Crime Commissioner elections section Home Police and Crime Commissioner elections On this page About this report Background to the elections Legislation for the elections Participation at the elections Why people did not vote People's experience of voting Legislation for the elections Participation by voters Participation by candidates and campaigners Trust in the delivery of the elections No undue influence Recommendations Download our full report First published: 26 June 2019 Last updated: 15 August 2019 About this report This report provides our assessment of how well the first ever Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) elections held on 15 November 2012 across England (excluding London) and Wales, were run, and how well the framework for the new PCC elections was established. It includes assessment of three UK Parliamentary by-elections in Manchester Central, Corby and Cardiff, a local mayoral election in Bristol, and a local referendum in Hartlepool to decide whether to keep the directly elected mayoral structure, which were also held on 15 November. Our analysis reflects the experience of voters, based on public opinion research and electoral data provided by Local Returning Officers (LROs), as well as feedback and views about the administration of the election from candidates and agents, those responsible for delivering the poll, and other participants. Background to the elections Following the May 2010 UK Parliamentary general election, the UK Government published its programme for government, which included a commitment to 'introduce measures to make the police more accountable through oversight by a directly elected individual, who will be subject to strict checks and balances by locally elected representatives' ¹. As the lead department for policing, the Home Office published a White Paper, Policing in the 21st Century: Reconnecting police and the people, for consultation in July 2010. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility (PRSR) Bill was introduced in the House of Commons on 30 November 2010. The PRSR Bill provided for the election of PCCs to replace police authorities in 41 police force areas in England and Wales from May 2012. The 41 police areas in England and Wales vary considerably in size and population from Greater Manchester with two million electors to Dyfed Powys with under 400,000. In September 2011, during its passage through Parliament, the UK Government tabled amendments to the Bill to change the date of the first PCC elections from 3 May 2012 to 15 November 2012. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act received Royal Assent on 15 September 2011. Legislation for the elections The detailed rules for the PCC elections on 15 November 2012 were contained in secondary legislation. Despite recognition by the UK Government of the importance of ensuring that detailed rules were clear at least six months before polling day, several key pieces of legislation were not laid until much later: The Order setting out the detailed rules for the conduct of the elections was laid in the UK Parliament on 15 May 2012 and came into force on 25 July, just over ten weeks before the start of the election period. The Order setting out the maximum amounts available to Returning Officers (ROs) for recovering costs for their services and running the election was made on 12 September 2012 and came into force the next day, just 3 and a half weeks before the start of the election period. The Order 2012 specifying a bilingual ballot paper to be used for the PCC elections in Wales was laid in the UK Parliament on 29 October 2012, and came into force on 31 October, just 14 days before polling day. Participation at the elections Just over 36 million people were registered to vote in the November 2012 PCC elections. A total of 5.49 million votes were cast in these elections, representing a turnout of just 15.1% – the lowest

recorded level of participation at a peacetime nonlocal government election in the UK. Turnout at the three UK Parliamentary by-elections ranged between 18.3% in the Manchester Central constituency and 44.8% in the Corby constituency. Turnout at the first mayoral election in Bristol was 27.9%, and at the local governance referendum in Hartlepool turnout was 18%. More than 5.8 million postal votes were issued for the PCC elections - 16.1% of the eligible electorate. Approximately 2.8 million postal votes were returned for the PCC elections. Postal votes accounted for 48.9% of all votes counted, and the remaining 51% of votes were cast by voters or appointed proxies at polling stations. Just under 50% of electors issued with a postal ballot returned it. Only 9.2% of 'in person' electors used their vote. One hundred and ninety-one candidates were nominated and stood for election to the 41 PCC posts. In addition, 34 candidates stood in the three UK Parliamentary by-elections, and 15 candidates stood in the mayoral election in Bristol. Thirty eight of the 41 November 2012 PCC elections were held using the Supplementary Vote electoral system, and of those, five were concluded without having to proceed to a second round because the winning candidate received more than 50% of valid first preference votes cast. Three PCC elections were held using the first-past-the-post electoral system as they had only two candidates standing. Why people did not vote The most commonly cited reasons for not voting in the PCC elections related to a lack of awareness (37%), primarily a lack of information about the elections and not knowing who the candidates were or where to find information about them. This figure was over five times greater than the proportion of non-votes who gave a similar response following the May 2012 local elections (7%). Over a quarter (28%) of people said that they knew 'nothing at all' and 48% knew 'not very much' about what the PCC elections were about. Only 24% said that they knew 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount' about the PCC elections. There is some evidence to suggest that the lack of information about the elections and candidates had a more significant impact on participation among groups who are traditionally more likely to vote in elections. 'Circumstances' was the second most common reason given by respondents for not turning out to vote (31%), with non-voters in England more likely to cite this as a reason than those in Wales (32% compared to 20% in Wales). The proportion of non-voters who cited circumstantial reasons for not voting in November 2012 was significantly less than the proportion that cited this as a reason following the May 2012 polls (53%). People's experience of voting Voters continue to report high levels of satisfaction with the process of casting their vote. Both polling station and postal voters remain positive about their experience. Nearly all polling station voters were satisfied with their experience (94%) and 96% said it was a convenient way to vote. Similarly, 97% of postal voters were satisfied with voting in this way and a similar proportion (96%) also said that it was a convenient way of casting their vote. Ninety-four per cent of those who voted in the PCC election said that they found the ballot paper easy to complete, with 77% finding it very easy. Our research also indicates that voters understood how to complete their ballot papers for the mayoral election in Bristol and the local referendum in Hartlepool. 155,883 PCC ballot papers were rejected at the first stage of the count - 2.8% of all votes cast. Although higher than recent polls using the first-past-the-post electoral system, this figure is comparable with other elections held under the Supplementary Vote system (SV). The proportion of ballot papers rejected at the first preference stage of the count ranged from 1.7% in Humberside to 7.2% in North Yorkshire. Anecdotal evidence from candidates, LROs and observers suggests that a significant proportion of rejected ballot papers were deliberately spoiled by electors wanting to register their concerns about the elections, although it has not

been possible to quantify the extent of this activity through available electoral data. The PCC elections were new elections, for a new role, which took place at an unfamiliar time of year and were held using SV, with which many voters were not familiar. It was therefore important that voters had sufficient information about the voting system, the issues, and the candidates that were standing, to allow them to make an informed decision and be able to participate with confidence. The Commission ran a public awareness campaign to make people aware of the elections and explain how to participate in them. This included sending an information booklet to all households in areas where elections were taking place containing information on the date of the elections, the subject matter and how to complete the SV ballot paper. While this information is important for voters, it is the parties and candidates themselves that give people a reason to vote; there is little evidence that public awareness campaigns alone – whether run by the Government, the Commission or the LRO – provide voters with the motivation to vote. In most other elections with large geographic constituencies, 3 1.28 candidates would be provided with a means of raising awareness among all voters that they are standing for election, to communicate their policies and to encourage people to vote. This has taken the form of a free mailshot (e.g. UK general election) or booklet with address from each candidate (e.g. mayoral elections). However, the UK Government took the decision not to provide candidates with this for the PCC elections and instead chose to build a central website containing information from candidates and a phone line that the public could use to order printed material. Legislation for the elections Although the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act received Royal Assent in September 2011, more than a year before the elections, the detailed secondary legislation was not in place until much closer to polling day. There was no reason why the Government wasn't able to avoid such late confirmation of the detailed framework for the conduct of the PCC elections. The legislation was framed using existing legislation, requiring relatively straightforward amendments to reflect the specific requirements for the PCC elections. Better planning, and a more collaborative approach to legislative development across (and between) Government departments, and greater clarity about policy goals is needed to support more effective and timely delivery of legislation for future polls. We propose to return to these issues in more detail to inform the planning process after May 2014 and to make public our assessment of the state of readiness for combination, in time for the 2016 elections. Participation by voters The expected level of participation in the November 2012 PCC elections was one of the most salient issues for elected representatives and media commentators during the months leading up to polling day, and the historic low turnout of just 15.1% was a concern for everyone who cares about democracy. It is important to use the evidence and data available from these elections to understand why participation was so low, in order to be able to identify whether changes to policy and delivery approach could help improve participation at future elections. The Government should not take for granted that people will automatically feel able to participate in new elections. A perceived lack of information about the contests and the candidates for these elections was the main reason that people said they did not vote. In particular, only 22% of people said they had enough information on candidates to be able to make an informed decision. We do not believe that the information needs of voters at these elections were adequately considered when deciding whether or how to support the provision of candidate information directly to electors or households. Although improved delivery of information about candidates would not in itself be enough to improve turnout, it would address the unacceptably low levels of

information/awareness and provide a better basis for encouraging participation in future elections. This conclusion suggests some significant implications for the management and delivery of all new elections proposed in future. Decisions about information for voters at new elections should be supported by much more thorough analysis by governments of what kind of information people need to participate and make an informed choice, and how they should be able to access that information. The UK Government will need to begin planning now to carry out an analysis of options for providing information in advance of the 2016 PCC elections. We have a rich set of data from these elections about electors' views and needs which is available to inform that analysis. Any proposals for new polls – including referendums – also need to be supported by a robust analysis of the information needs of voters. Electoral data and our research with voters indicates that those who generally vote found the supplementary vote electoral system and ballot paper for the PCC elections easy to use and to complete without making mistakes. While rates of rejected ballot papers for the first preference stage were within the range recorded at other UK elections using preferential voting systems⁴, they were higher than for elections using the first-past-the-post electoral system. The number and proportion of ballot papers which were not included in the count suggests that there is, however, still scope for further improvements to the design and wording used on ballot papers to reduce the risk of electors inadvertently spoiling their ballot paper. Participation by candidates and campaigners Many of the rules for the qualification and nomination of candidates at the PCC elections were significantly different from those in place for other elections in the UK. Some of these differences – notably the stricter disqualification rules for people with certain previous convictions – were not well-understood by candidates, leading to confusion and, in one well-publicised case, a candidate remaining on the ballot paper despite acknowledging his disqualification. The Commission has begun a comprehensive review of the procedures used for standing for election in the UK. As part of this review, we will take into account the views and experience of candidates at the first PCC elections in November 2012. Our review will consider any barriers which prevent people from putting themselves forward as candidates for election, and whether there are any unnecessary barriers which could be removed. The review will include qualifications, disqualifications and the requirements for becoming nominated as a candidate, as well as the benefits and support available to candidates once nominated. We expect to publish any recommendations for legislative change by the end of 2013. There is, however, one specific issue which must be addressed before the next PCC elections in May 2016. Important lessons need to be learned by the Commission, political parties, Returning Officers and the UK Government about how best to ensure prospective candidates fully understand the rules surrounding eligibility to stand as a candidate. While the primary responsibility for ensuring individual candidates understand whether they are qualified or disqualified will continue to remain with them and their election agents, it is clear that a small but significant number of people were unable to access accurate advice about whether the disqualification relating to convictions for imprisonable offences applied to their specific circumstances. Trust in the delivery of the elections For the PCC elections, the UK Government designated 41 Police Area Returning Officers (PAROs) by Parliamentary Order, whose role it would be to coordinate the administration of the election across each police area as well as serving as the LRO in their own authority. This statutory management structure was different from the UK-wide regional structures in place for European Parliament elections and the May 2011 Referendum on the voting system for UK parliamentary

elections, and also from the regional structure used for National Assembly for Wales general elections. For most Returning Officers, especially in England, formal coordination and management at a sub-regional level was a new experience. Nevertheless, our assessment is that this structure generally worked well for these elections, and Returning Officers and the Commission have each learnt from the experience of the 2012 polls to improve management and coordination for the May 2016 elections. The UK Government also needs to ensure that it learns lessons about its role and approach. In two police areas, unanticipated changes in local authority management personnel meant that the PARO was no longer able to carry out the role. In both cases, the PARO acted from a different authority to the PARO electoral services team. While these changes certainly presented some risk to the successful delivery of the elections in those areas, we are not aware of any significant negative impact on the administration of the elections which is attributable, solely or in part, to the change in management structure. Overall, based on analysis of the performance of LROs and PAROs, our assessment is that the administrative aspects of these elections were well-run. Research with the public also indicates high levels of satisfaction with the administration of the elections. Given the high-profile concerns about the provision of information about the elections and the candidates discussed previously in this report, it is important to reiterate that LROs and PAROs were not themselves responsible for those aspects of the elections. Nevertheless, we have identified two specific aspects of the administration of the elections which need to be reviewed in more detail to identify improvements for future PCC elections. First, postal voters need to receive the right instructions for marking their ballot papers based on the voting system in use in their police area (first-past-the-post or supplementary vote). Second, LROs and PAROs should review and evaluate their plans for managing the verification and counting of votes to identify efficiency improvements in advance of the next PCC elections. Many counts took significantly longer than expected to conclude. Turnout for the May 2016 polls, however, may be higher than in November 2012, particularly if the PCC elections are combined with other scheduled polls, and the administration of the count will be more complex as a result of the combination. PAROs and LROs will need to ensure that their count processes are as accurate and efficient as possible, to reduce the risk of negative perceptions about the quality and competency of electoral administration overall. The Commission has started work on an analysis of the most efficient procedures for managing the count at major polls, with a view to identifying more accurately the resources required, and to understand how spend relates to the detailed activities undertaken in respect of verification and count processes and how effectively they have been delivered. We will carry out case studies at the scheduled 2013 and 2014 elections to collect and assess financial and other information to enable us to develop a robust count model to be issued in good time for use at the 2015 UK Parliamentary general election. No undue influence Despite proactive efforts by Returning Officers and the police to minimise the risk of electoral malpractice, there remains a worrying contrast between the low levels of recorded cases of alleged electoral malpractice, and the higher levels of concern about electoral fraud expressed by respondents in our post-election survey. It is, nonetheless, important to recognise that very few allegations have been recorded in relation to the November 2012 PCC elections. The Commission has begun a comprehensive review of potential vulnerabilities within the current voting system and processes, which will aim to achieve consensus about the best balance between ensuring the integrity and the accessibility of electoral processes in the UK. It will consider whether any changes to legislation or practice are needed to

ensure confidence in the integrity of elections in the UK. We intend to publish this review in time for legislation to be brought forward during the life of this UK Parliament if necessary. We have also agreed a new code of conduct for campaigners with the parties represented on the UK Parliament Political Parties Panel. The code has been sent to all registered political parties in Great Britain, and Returning Officers will draw it to the attention of all candidates and parties contesting elections from May 2013 onwards. Any concerns that the code has been breached will be raised with the relevant party or campaigner if appropriate, and we will agree appropriate actions to remedy or prevent a reoccurrence of any breach. We will publish the outcome of any such breaches in our statutory reports for future elections.

Recommendation 1: Improving planning and management of legislation for future elections

For future elections where new or amended legislation is required, the relevant Government department responsible for those polls must learn from the experience of the 2012 PCC elections to put in place better medium-term planning for the delivery of all necessary legislation. Not later than two years in advance of polling day for any scheduled elections, the Minister responsible for the elections policy should set out a plan for how they intend to manage the policy development, drafting and legislative scrutiny processes required to meet the following key milestones and deadlines:

- Confirmation (whether by Royal Assent to primary legislation or laying secondary legislation for approval by Parliament) of the campaign funding and spending rules at least three months before the start of the regulated period. Where elections are held for the first time, or where the campaign funding and spending rules are materially different from those at previous elections, the rules should be confirmed at least six months before the start of the regulated period.
- Confirmation of all detailed rules for the conduct of and funding for the delivery of the polls (including any orders required to specify bilingual ballot papers and forms in Wales) not less than six months before polling day.
- Not later than 18 months before polling day we will review the Government's proposals and publish a report setting out our assessment of progress towards meeting those milestones and deadlines. It will be particularly important for the Home Office to set out clearly by May 2014 how it will work with the Cabinet Office and the Welsh Government to manage the development of any changes to the legislative framework for the May 2016 PCC elections, so that the challenges of combining the poll with the poll for the scheduled National Assembly for Wales general election and local government elections in England can be addressed.
- We will review the UK Government's plans by November 2014 and publish our assessment of progress towards meeting the key milestones and deadlines for the May 2016 PCC elections.

Recommendation 2: Improving access for electors to information about candidates at future PCC elections

The UK Government should amend paragraph 52 and Schedule 8 to the Police and Crime Commissioner Elections Order 2012 to ensure that electors are sent printed information about candidates standing for election as PCC in their force area. This should take the form of a booklet with addresses from each candidate sent by the relevant Police Authority Returning Officer to every household in the police authority area. The UK Government should ensure that these changes are made to the 2012 Order by November 2015, in line with the timescales set out in our Recommendation 1 above for improving planning and the management of legislation for the May 2016 PCC elections.

For any new elections which are proposed in future, the relevant government should make clear at the time of introducing legislation how they will ensure that electors have appropriate access to information about candidates. In doing so the relevant government should draw on data collected by the Electoral

Commission and others from the November 2012 elections, and should consider: The extent to which electors have reliable and easy access to online or other non-physically published sources for information about candidates. The extent to which candidates themselves can feasibly communicate messages directly to electors, taking into account the geography of police force areas and the statutory limits on campaign spending. How best to inform electors about how they can access information about candidates, including simplifying the process as much as possible for electors.

Recommendation 3: Ensuring cost-effective and neutral public awareness information about future elections The Home Office and Electoral Commission both ran public awareness campaigns ahead of the election. Whilst both campaigns achieved awareness of their respective messages, it would have been more cost effective having one integrated campaign from an independent source that covered awareness of the elections, what the elections were about, the date, candidate information and the voting system. We have demonstrated our experience and capacity to deliver cost-effective and neutral public awareness activity at a wide range of UK elections and referendums. Parliaments should continue to give the Electoral Commission statutory responsibility for providing information for voters about elections and how to vote in them, and it would not be an appropriate or sensible use of public funds for governments to duplicate that activity. No government should commission public awareness activity for future elections or referendums, including the May 2016 PCC elections.

Recommendation 4: Ensuring that ballot papers for future elections are accessible and well-designed The UK Government should review options for the design and wording of ballot papers for future elections using the supplementary vote electoral system, in order to reduce the risk of ballot papers not being counted because they have been incorrectly completed. The Government's review should: Consider evidence from the range of elections held using the supplementary vote electoral system, including local authority mayoral and London mayoral elections and the November 2012 PCC elections. Consider both single column ballot paper designs (using numerals to record first and second preferences) as well as double column designs (using crosses). Consider the potential combinations of elections using the supplementary vote electoral system at the same time as those using the first-past-the-post system. Include research with voters and input from plain language and accessibility experts to ensure that the design and wording of ballot papers for future elections is simple and straightforward to use by as wide a range of people as possible. The UK Government should publish the results of its analysis and consult on any proposals for changes to the design and wording of ballot papers for elections using the supplementary vote electoral system not later than November 2014, 18 months before polling day for the scheduled May 2016 PCC elections. If the Government decides not to carry out this review, we will undertake our own design and research with voters on ballot paper designs for elections using the supplementary vote system. We would begin this work by October 2013 and would publish any recommended designs for consultation by November 2014. Any changes to the prescribed form for the ballot paper to be used at the May 2016 PCC elections should be clear (whether in primary legislation which has received Royal Assent or secondary legislation which has been laid before Parliament) no later than the beginning of November 2015, six months before polling day for the next PCC elections. The Government should ensure that forms produced in accordance with the legislation are correct and accurate as soon as possible, and ensure that they can be used for the next set of PCC elections in 2016 and any by-elections which might take place before then.

Recommendation 5: Ensuring that candidates have access to guidance and advice on the rules on standing

for election as a PCC The Commission will work with Returning Officers, political parties and the UK Government to develop proposals to ensure that all candidates for future PCC elections continue to have access to guidance and advice about standing for election. In particular, we will review feedback and the results from our survey of candidates to identify opportunities for providing more specific advice about the circumstances in which people might be subject to a disqualification on the basis of a previous conviction. We will work with others to develop proposals to supplement the guidance and advice we provide on electoral law, ensuring that expertise on relevant aspects of criminal justice law can be made available to those who need it. The UK Government should consider whether further clarification of provisions for filling a vacancy in the office of Police and Crime Commissioner are required to cover circumstances where a candidate is discovered to be disqualified after the deadline for withdrawal of nominations but before the poll. The Government should ensure that any changes to the law are made so that the rules are clear by November 2015, six months before the next PCC elections. Recommendation 6: Ensuring effective management and coordination for future PCC elections The UK Government should review its approach to supporting the management and coordination for future PCC elections, drawing on lessons identified in this report and any other feedback from local Returning Officers and Police Area Returning Officers (PAROs). The UK Government should consult Returning Officers, professional associations, the Commission and the Welsh Government in order to develop a comprehensive plan for the management and coordination of the May 2016 Police and Crime Commissioner elections covering: The appointment of PAROs. Contingency arrangements for areas where nominated PAROs leave the authority for which they acted as Returning Officer. Support and briefing for PAROs. The UK Government should publish its plan for the management and coordination of the May 2016 Police and Crime Commissioner elections by May 2014, in line with the timescales set out in our Recommendation 1 above for improving planning and the management of legislation for the May 2016 PCC elections. Recommendation 7: Improving the administration of future PCC elections Returning Officers in England and Wales should ensure that they review and evaluate their approach to planning and the delivery of the 2012 PCC elections, to identify what worked well as well as areas where performance could be improved. The Commission will review procedures for managing the count at major polls, with a view to identifying more accurately the resources required and understanding how spend relates to the detailed activities undertaken. We have also previously identified a need to review how our guidance and performance standards framework should operate for polls where there are statutory office holders with a power to direct local Returning Officers. We will issue any revised guidance, performance standards and supporting materials for the 2016 PCC elections no later than December 2015. Download our full report 1. The Coalition: our programme for government; Cabinet Office page 13 http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/coalition_programme_for_government.pdf ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. The Police and Crime Commissioner Elections Order 2012; The Police and Crime Commissioner Elections (Local Returning Officers' and Police Area Returning Officers' Charges) Order 2012; The Police and Crime Commissioner Elections (Welsh Forms) Order 2012. ■ Back to content at footnote 2 3. Freepost mailing facilities or booklets are provided to candidates at elections to the UK Parliament, European Parliament, London Mayoral, and Northern Ireland Assembly and local councils in Northern Ireland. ■ Back to content at footnote 3 4. Including the Supplementary Vote and Single Transferrable Vote systems. ■ Back to content at footnote 4 Related content Report: How the 2016 Police and Crime Commissioner elections were run Read

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Electoral Fraud Data You are in the Electoral fraud data section Home Our research Electoral fraud data On this page 2022 elections Cases where the suspect accepted a police caution Outcomes of all reported cases Types of electoral fraud allegations First published: 24 February 2023 Last updated: 31 March 2023 Summary The UK has low levels of proven electoral fraud. There is no evidence of large-scale electoral fraud in 2022. Most cases (93%) resulted in the police taking no further action or were locally resolved through words of advice to those involved. 2022 elections In May 2022, elections took place in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales Northern Ireland Assembly Local councils (England, Scotland and Wales) Local mayors (England) Combined Authority Mayors (England) There were also 6 UK parliamentary by-elections during 2022. A total of 193 cases of alleged electoral fraud were investigated by the police during 2022. Police issued one caution in relation to a case of alleged electoral fraud in 2022, and court proceedings have been initiated in relation to one other case. This table shows the number of cases of alleged fraud reported to us by the police for elections held in 2022. Election Number of cases Local election 179 Non-election specific (e.g. rolling registration) 8 Local by-election 2 Northern Ireland Assembly 1 Local mayoral 1 Local referendum 1 Other 1 Cases where the suspect accepted a police caution Durham local election The suspect in this case wanted to stand as a candidate in a local election. An allegation was made that she had forged a signature on a nomination form. The police spoke to the man whose signature was allegedly forged. He confirmed that he had not signed the form. The suspect admitted that she had forged his signature but believed that he would have supported her. She accepted a police caution for the offence. Outcomes of all reported cases Around two thirds of cases (61%) resulted in the police taking no further action. This means that the cases were not investigated further by the police because there was no evidence, there wasn't enough evidence, or an offence wasn't found. This table and chart show the number and outcome of the cases that were reported to the police in 2022. Outcome Number of cases Percentage of total No further action 119 61% Locally resolved 62 32% Under investigation 8 4% Other 2 1% Caution 1 1% Court proceedings initiated 1 1% Download our electoral fraud data Electoral Fraud Data 2022 Types of electoral fraud allegations Almost two third thirds of cases (64%) reported in 2022 were related to campaigning offences. Most of these were about: s not including details about the printer, promoter or publisher on election material - an 'imprint' Someone making false statements about the personal character or conduct of a candidate. This table and chart show the number of cases and types of offences that were investigated in 2022. Offence type Number of cases Percentage of total Campaigning 123 64% Voting 38 20% Nomination 18 9% Registration 13 6% Other 1 1% Personation A total of 13 cases of alleged personation fraud were recorded by police forces in 2022. The offence of personation involves someone pretending to be someone else so they can use that person's vote. This can happen at a polling station, with a postal vote, or a proxy vote (where a voter has appointed someone else to cast their vote for them). Just over half of those cases (7) involved allegations of personation in polling stations. All those cases resulted in the police taking no further action because there was no evidence or insufficient evidence. This table shows the number of personation allegations and their outcomes. Personation type Number of allegations Outcome type and number Polling station 7 No further action: 7 Postal 3 No further action: 2 Under investigation: 1 Proxy 3 No further action: 2 Locally resolved: 1 Election Petitions An election petition is a legal challenge to the result of an election. There was one petition following

elections held in 2022. Aston Ward of Birmingham City Council The petition claimed that the two successful Liberal Democrat candidates at the May 2022 election in the ward had made false allegations that one of the Labour candidates had bribed voters with packets of dates. The petition asked the court to void the outcome of the election. However, the Liberal Democrat candidates submitted doorbell video footage as evidence. This showed the Labour candidate and his supporters giving voters packets of dates with Labour stickers on them. Given this evidence, the Labour candidate applied to the court to withdraw the petition which the court granted.

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You are in the Party panels section Home How we make decisions Party panels First published: 14 July 2020 Last updated: 14 July 2020 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Conservative Party: Alan Mabbett OBE (AM), chair of meeting Labour Party: Andrew Whyte (AW) Scottish National Party: Scott Martin (SM) Plaid Cymru: Geraint Day (GD) Electoral Commission: Craig Westwood, Director of Communications, Policy & Research (CW) Louise Edwards, Director of Regulation (LE) Charlene Hannon, Head of Guidance (CH) Laura McLeod, Public Affairs Manager (LM) Minutes of the last meeting and actions arising (PPP 3/09/2019) The minutes were agreed. LE provided an update on the action regarding PPP engagement with police SPOCs. LE offered to put the parties in touch with the SPOCs, but asked for more detail on the issues the parties wanted to discuss. AM explained the SPOC conference had provided a unique opportunity for parties to interact with SPOCs face-to-face. SM agreed it was particularly useful learning experience and to understand how deal with specific issues and gave the example of treating. SM highlighted that it had been useful to receive the case update and suggested this could be sent through by email in future. LE agreed to talk to the SPO, Garry Cann and put the parties in touch. Post general election review AM asked about duplicate registrations and suggested that despite the high numbers of people registering in the run up the election, it would be likely the vast majority won't be new registrations, but from people already on the register, who had been reminded to register. CW explained the Commission's public awareness campaign had achieved 2.6 million applications to register vote, but that the data on duplications was not yet available. CW explained the Commission was in the process of gathering evidence to inform its statutory report on the election that will be published in spring. He explained this included research with overseas voters, EROs and ROS and for the first time, included a survey of SPOCs. He welcomed any feedback from the parties. AW asked about the inconsistency of local authorities accepting scanned copies of applications to register to vote, noting the issue was with the guidance. CH explained this was covered in the guidance, but could be addressed through the Commission's support and improvement work. CH agreed to explore how the message could be strengthened in the guidance. SM noted the issue with accessing registers, particularly given the election took place during the annual canvass. AM, AW and GD agreed that all parties had the same issue in getting the updated registers in a reasonable timeframe and highlighted the difficulties that this presented, particularly given resources in electoral service teams. SM noted the ongoing issue that EROs continue to reissue registers without any explanation, rather than by an update. CH stated all registers would have been published by 1 December 2019. AW asked if the Commission had identified any regulatory trends or offences at the election. LE explained that the 2019 election had the highest number of registrations of non-party campaigners register for an election. LE noted the social media ad libraries had been a useful tool during the campaign and would be used to compare spending. AM suggested it would be interesting to see how many candidates failed to submit any adverts. Update on PFR online LE outlined the project is well advanced on the registration side and will be launched at the start of the parties financial year, January 2020. She noted parties can focus and submit reports for the unscheduled elections in 2019 on the old system. GD raised the issue of guidance on the Commission's website and suggested it should be ranked in the order it is likely to be used. He noted the recent general election guidance had appeared on page two. AM agreed it should have a higher ranking automatically. CH explained the Commission

was aware of this and working with developers to find a solution and make the algorithm smarter and user friendly. AM suggested that PPP members receive correspondence or an email when any new guidance is issued. LE offered to take this away to consider the possibility for future ERO Performance Standards Consultation CW highlighted the Commission's open consultation on new performance standards for Electoral Registration Officers. He explained the proposed standards are focussed on the outcomes that should be delivered, rather than the processes that are followed, with the objective of helping EROs and their teams to understand the impact of their electoral registration activities. CW welcomed any feedback from parties and noted the consultation would close on 31 March. Commission Update Report Regarding policy development grants, CW explained the Cabinet Office had drafted an amendment Order, which will give effect to the Commission's recommendations for changes to the scheme. He confirmed work is on-going with the Cabinet Office to ensure this is completed by the required deadline. LE updated on the Codes of Practice on election spending and explained a final draft would go to the Minister for the Constitution and Devolution by March. She asked for input on how to share updated Codes with the parties. AM suggested it would make sense to take time to reflect on the 2019 UK Parliamentary general election before submitting the Codes. AW agreed. LE explained the Commission is currently planning to review the conference stand rate this year, and will consult with parties. LE asked if by end of summer was going to be viable and offered to send a more granular timetable to PPP members. AM raised the issue of defining parliamentary lounges, that were not a fixed stand. AW gave the example of how a LGA stand would factor into sponsorship and suggested parties need additional guidance. LE offered to take this away and report back with a timetable. Forward looking Commission activity CW explained the Commission had agreed with the Speakers' Committee to submit an interim corporate plan. CW highlighted the next six months would be spent producing a new five-year corporate plan, noting the welcome opportunity to take a fresh view of the challenges and opportunities ahead for the democratic processes. He suggested the September PPP meeting would be an opportunity to get parties' input into the plan. SM, AM, AW, GD all agreed. AM raised the issue of fixed thresholds and explained that the original legislation envisaged a single electoral register. LE noted the Commission has to use single registers to check donations. CW explained the benefits of modernising the registers would have for a number of stakeholders. Any other business SM noted the commitment to have an Association of s representative at the next meeting, after May local elections. AM asked for an update on the work on the Commission's new Enforcement Policy. LE confirmed the Commission planned to consult later this year and re-offered the PPP members the opportunity to meet once the consultation opens. LE highlighted Majella La Praik would be on maternity leave from March, and recruitment for her cover will begin shortly. Commission actions Status To put PPP members in touch with Deputy Chief Constable Gary Cann, lead for election related crime at the National Police Chief's Council. Ongoing: Louise has spoken to Gary Cann and will put parties in touch To invite a representative from the Association of s to attend the PPP meeting in June Completed: Peter Stanyon will attend the June meeting Provide a timetable for the review of Party conference stands Ongoing: update to be provided at meeting Provide detail on how many of the applications to register to vote at the 2019 UKPGE were duplicates. Completed To use the September meeting to discuss the Commission's next five year corporate plan with parties Ongoing: to be added to agenda for September meeting

Response to the draft Senedd Cymru (Representation of the People) (Amendment) Order 2020 | Electoral Commission Search Response to the draft

Senedd Cymru (Representation of the People) (Amendment) Order 2020 You are in the Our responses to consultations section Home Our responses to consultations On this page Forms Payments to Returning Officers (Part 6) Codes of Practice (Part 7) Other matters not included in the draft Order First published: 8 September 2020 Last updated: 8 September 2020 Summary This response sets out our views on the draft Senedd Cymru (Representation of the People) (Amendment) Order 2020. We further welcome the separate discussions that are taking place with Welsh Government and others to respond to the current COVID-19 crisis, and to ensure that the May 2021 elections can be delivered effectively in the interests of voters, campaigners and administrators. We recognise that these discussions may give rise to further legislation and, in this case, early clarification in regards to your intentions would be helpful in order that we take this into account in our planning. We have also included comments on a provision that has not been included in this draft Order, but we feel is an important requirement for all elections: digital imprints. We would be happy to discuss the points set out in this response with Welsh Government officials, if it would be helpful to do so. Forms From our review of the draft Order, we identified a number of technical inconsistencies in the drafting in relation to the home address form between regional party list candidates and constituency candidates. We have provided more detail on these technical inconsistencies separately to officials. As soon as practicable after the legislation comes into force we will make any amendments necessary to nomination and consent to nomination forms. These amendments will reflect the change in law relating to candidates being able to withhold their home address and the change of wording on the consent to nomination to reflect the disqualification amendments. Payments to Returning Officers (Part 6) We fully support and recognise the important and vital role that Returning Officers and Regional Returning Officers in Wales play in the democratic process. They are critical to delivering well-run elections and referendums which produce results in which voters and campaigners can have confidence. As a matter of principle, we believe that ROs should be independent from both local and national governments when delivering their statutory electoral administration duties. The independence of the RO is necessary to ensure that elections are effectively administered and conducted in voters' best interests. It also avoids any perception of bias and helps to promote public confidence and trust in the process. There is also a risk that confidence in the impartiality of ROs could be damaged, if their only payment for carrying out election duties is through their contract of employment by the local authority which appointed them to their substantive role. These were the views we expressed in December 2019 as part of our written evidence to the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee on the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill , and in our earlier response to the Welsh Government's consultation document – Electoral Reform in Local Government in Wales in October 2017. Any changes to the current management framework for the delivery of elections in Wales, including to the current arrangements for funding elections and payments to ROs for their services, must not weaken the independence and accountability of those responsible for delivering polls, or the perception of this by voters and campaigners. The proposal to replace the RO fee with an amount payable to all electoral teams involved running the Senedd elections in 2021, could bring this independence into question, if paid to the local authority, as proposed. We think it is important to be clear that ROs are not employed by councils when they deliver official election or referendum

duties and that they are independent statutory office-holders, accountable to the courts for the delivery of their official duties. As is the case under the current system, a payment to ROs of some description helps to denote the different and independent status of the role. It is also important that an appropriate person with the right skill set should carry out the role of Returning Officer and Regional Returning Officer, and should be remunerated accordingly to ensure this. It is possible that removing a personal fee may discourage experienced and capable senior officers from willingly putting themselves forward to undertake the important role of Regional Returning Officer.

Codes of Practice (Part 7) We are content with this provision. We have, however, identified what we believe is a minor drafting error where there may possibly be a closing bracket missing from new 13(1)(b) ‘.....(supplementing the definition in article 63(3)).....’. Other matters not included in the draft Order Presentation of political parties’ identifiers on nomination and ballot papers

As part of the consultation on the draft Senedd Cymru (Representation of the People) (Amendment) Order 2020, it has been proposed that candidates standing at Senedd elections be allowed to use the prefix “Welsh” (when using the language name), or the suffix “Cymru” (when using the Welsh language name), if they are standing on behalf of a registered political party. It is our understanding that the aim is to ensure that voters can easily recognise “devolved branches of UK-wide political parties” in order to avoid confusion for voters. We feel that the proposal requires further clarification, and in particular to demonstrate how it will help to avoid voter confusion. As you know, the requirements for registering a party name are outlined in section 28(4) and paragraph 2 of Schedule 4 of PPERA, and the requirements for descriptions are outlined in section 28A(2) of PPERA. We would welcome clarification on how the Welsh Government’s proposal is likely to interact with these rules. For instance, as parties in Wales can be registered with a name in and a name in Welsh, or just a single name, the conduct order would need to specify under what circumstances “Welsh” or “Cymru” could be prefixed to a party’s name. This is especially the case where a party’s name is expressed in neither or Welsh (such as for a party named “Britannica”), or is expressed bilingually (“Llais Gwynedd - The Voice of Gwynedd”). A similar provision was made ahead of the Scottish Parliamentary elections in 2015, and Welsh Government may find it helpful to take into account how this change was made in developing its own provisions for the Senedd elections in 2021. For elections to the Scottish Parliament, where the word “Scottish” is not part of the registered party name, the party name on the nomination form can have the word “Scottish” included in front of it. If the registered party name starts with the word “the”, the word “Scottish” can be inserted after the word “the” on the nomination form. This is the case for both constituency candidates and for party regional lists. Welsh Government may want to consider specifying something similar when prefixing the word “Welsh” to a party name in conjunction with the word “the”. Imprints on non-printed campaign material

Digital campaigning is an increasingly important aspect of election campaigns in the UK but, as you’ll be aware, the imprint rules don’t currently apply to digital election campaign material. This affects voters’ ability to see who is behind the campaign material they see online, and it affects the ability of the Electoral Commission, police and prosecuting bodies to enforce the law. Therefore, extending the imprint rules to digital election campaign material should be a priority for all the Governments of the UK. We are disappointed that the draft Order does not make provision to extend the imprint rules to non-printed campaign material and that such requirements will not be in place for the Senedd elections in 2021. The Scottish Parliament passed the Referendums (Scotland) Act

(RSA) in January this year. This Act allows the Scottish Parliament to hold referendums on matters which have been devolved to Scotland. The RSA contains provisions for imprints on both printed and digital referendum material. Digital material that promotes a particular outcome in a Scottish referendum will need an imprint but individuals are exempt from the requirement to include imprints if they are expressing their personal opinions and publishing the material on their own behalf on a non-commercial basis. However, individuals with senior compliance or decision-making roles in registered referendum campaign organisations cannot benefit from this exemption. They will have to include imprints on digital material. The Scottish Government intends to introduce digital imprint rules for devolved Scottish elections, and in time for the 2021 May Scottish Parliament elections. We are discussing their proposals with them. On 12 August, the UK Government published a public consultation on its technical proposals for a digital imprints regime for the elections it has competence for. The consultation asks readers to answer a series of questions about the proposals. The deadline for responding is 11:45pm on 4 November. The Electoral Commission will be responding. We would encourage Welsh Government to take account of the provisions that have been put in place or are being considered by other UK legislatures and consider introducing similar provisions for elections in Wales in the future.

Response to the UK Government policy consultation: Protecting the Debate | Electoral Commission Search Response to the UK Government policy consultation: Protecting the Debate You are in the Our responses to consultations section Home Our responses to consultations On this page Applying electoral sanctions to existing criminal offences Intimidation of voters – undue influence Increasing transparency in digital election campaigning First published: 15 October 2018 Last updated: 29 August 2019 Overview This response sets our our advice on three proposed changes to electoral law to protect candidates and voters from intimidation. We are responding to this consultation as Parliament has given us a role to keep electoral law under review and to recommend changes where we think they are needed. Summary Applying electoral sanctions to existing criminal offences Candidates and campaigners have a key role in encouraging people to participate in elections and referendums. Activities for or against candidates and campaigners must not bring into question the integrity of the electoral process. We agree with the Government that allowing electoral sanctions to be applied as well as criminal sanctions could act as a strengthened deterrent against intimidating candidates or campaigners. Removing the right to vote would be a disproportionate sanction, but stopping someone from standing for election may not be a sufficient deterrent for people who do not want to become a candidate. The Government should consider whether increasing the maximum sentence for serious offences relating to elections, as recommended by the UK's Law Commissions, would also act as a strengthened deterrent against intimidation. Intimidation of voters – undue influence Voters should be protected from being intimidated to vote in a particular way or not to vote. We welcome the UK Government's review of the offence of undue influence and continue to support the modernisation and simplification of all aspects of this offence. Any changes to the current laws on undue influence must be clearly and simply defined with workable definitions. We continue to recommend that any changes should be made as part of a comprehensive reform of all electoral offences, as set out in the UK Law Commissions' 2016 recommendations. Many electoral offences are complex, out of date and not easily understood and reforming undue influence alone risks adding further complexity without addressing many of the problems with the legislation. We would be pleased to work with the UK government and with prosecutors and police, who can advise on how the law will work in practice. Increasing transparency in digital election campaigning We have recommended since 2003 that the imprint rules be extended to digital material. Extending the imprint rules to digital material is urgent. This gap in transparency is affecting voter confidence and our ability to enforce the rules. All non-printed election and referendum material should contain an imprint. Any new regulations should be drafted as general principles to make them platform neutral and to future-proof them for changes in technology. The UK Government should give the Electoral Commission wider powers to compel information outside of an investigation, including from digital platforms. The imprint rules for printed election material in the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) should be commenced for Northern Ireland. The imprint rules in Northern Ireland should be the same as the rest of the UK. Applying electoral sanctions to existing criminal offences Question 1: Do you agree that the new electoral offence should apply to electoral sanctions to existing offences of intimidatory behaviour, such as those identified by the CSPL, listed in Annex A, and equivalent offences in Scotland and Northern Ireland? We agree that electoral sanctions should be applied to these existing offences. It is important that people are deterred from intimidating candidates so that people can stand for election and campaign without fearing abuse

or intimidation. Voters must have confidence in the candidates standing in elections and those campaigning in a referendum. Seeing or hearing about intimidation should not stop them from voting, nor should it influence how someone votes. Applying electoral sanctions should deter some people from engaging in behaviour that intimidates candidates. Any changes to the legislation would need to be applied by the Welsh and Scottish Governments for the relevant elections in Wales and Scotland. The legislation in Northern Ireland would need to be changed by the UK Government through the Northern Ireland Office. We agree that the UK Government should examine existing legislation and make sure that the 'new' legislation reflects any future criminal legislation. Penalty for the new offence Question 2: We propose that the new electoral offence will attract the sanction of being barred from standing for elected office for five years. Do you agree? We agree that if an individual is found guilty of a specified offence they should be prohibited from standing or holding any elected office for a period of five years. Applying this sanction would make sure that there is consistency with other relevant sanctions for corrupt practices such as undue influence which is also about intimidation, although of voters. Without this sanction there would also not be consistency across different elections and referendums for someone being automatically disqualified from standing for election if they had been convicted of any of the offences listed in Annex A. Question 3: Do you think the new electoral offence should remove an offender's right to vote? We do not agree that an individual found guilty of intimidation should have their right to vote removed.

Corrupt practices under the Representation of the People Act 1983 (RPA), which have a sanction of removing a person's right to vote, are those which abuse someone's right to vote. Intimidating a candidate or campaigner does not do this. However, stopping someone from standing for election for five years may not be enough of a deterrent for people who have no intention of putting themselves up for election. We think that this area needs to be explored further to see if there is another, more suitable, sanction that could also or instead be used. Prison sentences could be a more effective deterrent. A person who has been found guilty of any offence and is detained in prison is not allowed to vote. The UK's Law Commissions have recommended increasing the maximum sentence in cases of serious electoral fraud to 10 years. The Government should consider whether to apply this maximum sentence to intimidation offences set out in Annex A that are committed during election and referendum periods. Which elections would be covered? Question 4: We think that offences committed against candidates and campaigners during all types of polls should attract the additional electoral sanctions. Do you agree? If not, please explain.

Intimidating candidates and campaigners is not acceptable at any poll. Offences committed against candidates and campaigners should attract the additional electoral sanctions for all types of poll. It is important to ensure consistency across all polls. Consistency will prevent confusion as to when, and at what elections, the sanctions apply. It will also send a clear message to campaigners and voters that intimidation is unacceptable behaviour and has serious consequences. Question 5: We propose that offences against campaigners during a referendum campaign should attract the additional electoral sanctions. Do you agree? If not, please explain. We agree that electoral sanctions should apply to offences against campaigners during a referendum campaign. Applying these electoral sanctions should deter some people from engaging in behaviour that intimidates campaigners. Who would be protected? Question 6: We propose that the existing definition of when someone becomes a 'candidate', with reference to any election campaign, would be clear and workable for the electoral offence. Do you agree? If not, please explain. We do not agree that the

existing definition of when someone becomes a candidate will be workable for the new electoral sanction. This is explained in our response to questions 8 and 9. Question 7a: Do you think the new electoral offence should extend to campaigners? If so, please explain which campaigners you think should fall within the scope of the new electoral offence, given the above considerations. If not, please explain. Question 7b: If you think that campaigners should be included, do you have a suggestion as to how this could be done for use in the relevant legislation? We agree that protection of new electoral sanctions should be extended to campaigners. When defining a campaigner, and who should fall within the scope of the new sanctions, the UK Government may want to consider the approach taken in the Postal Voting Bill. This is Private Members Bill introduced under the 10 minute rule and due a second reading on 26 October. Instead of using the term 'campaigner' it defines 'a person who engages in activities for the purpose of promoting a particular outcome at a relevant election'. This was drafted with input from the Cabinet Office. We would be happy to work with the UK Government on any amendments to the legislation which would enable the new electoral sanction to be applied to campaigners. Applicable time period Question 8: Do you agree that protection should start from the period of notice of elections? If not, please explain. Question 9: Should there be a period before notice of election for a scheduled poll, for example during the long campaign period, during which this offence applies? If so, what would be a suitable time period of protection? If not, please explain. We do not agree that the provision should be tied to the notice of election. Protection should cover people who have publicly stated they are going to stand for election but their candidacy has not officially commenced for the purpose of electoral law. The earliest day someone can become a candidate for the purpose of electoral law (for example in relation to the regulation of their campaign spending) is either the last day for publication of the notice of election or, at a UKPGE, the day of dissolution of Parliament. Protection therefore could start at the point of becoming a candidate under electoral law. However a person might declare their candidacy publicly prior to this. For example the lead up to a UK parliamentary general election where there is a long campaign. During this period the spending rules apply and people are actively campaigning, but their candidacy has not officially commenced. This means that someone could be subject to intimidation during this time but before becoming a candidate under electoral law. They would not be protected by the electoral sanctions if it was to start from the period of notice of election. The Government should consider whether there needs to be a defined start date from which the new electoral sanctions could be applied. For example, it could be for the prosecution and sentencing judge to determine if a person was subject to intimidation because of the fact they were a candidate, based on the specific circumstances in each individual case. Question 10a: Do you agree that protection, under the new electoral offence, should end seven calendar days after the close of poll? Question 10b: If not, when do you think protection under the new electoral offence should end? If the protection of a new electoral sanction were to end seven days after the close of poll, there is a risk that elected representatives could be subject to intimidation. This could mean that they are prevented from carrying out their elected mandate. Ideally, there would be no end date to the application of the new electoral sanctions. The Government should ask further advice from the police, prosecutors and the judiciary should advise on how this could be achieved in practice. Question 11: Do you agree that protection, under the new electoral offence, should apply during the referendum period, as determined by the relevant referendum legislation? If not, please explain. The protection should start once the relevant

legislation setting the date of the referendum has come into force. Once the date of the referendum has been set in legislation everyone knows when polling day is and that referendum is definitely going ahead. Therefore, regardless of whether the regulated period for referendum campaign spending has started, campaigners can start campaigning and may be at risk of being intimidated. Ensuring the offence applies only in appropriate cases Question 12: Do you agree that a new electoral offence should only be applicable in cases where a candidate or campaigner is intimidated because they are a candidate or campaigner? We agree that the new electoral sanction should only apply when a candidate or campaigner is intimidated because they are candidate or campaigner. We think that the police, prosecutors and the judiciary should advise on how this could be achieved in practice as they will be the enforcers of the new electoral sanctions. Intimidation of voters – undue influence Simplifying the law on undue influence Question 13: Do you agree that the law of undue influence requires greater clarity in its application? If not, please explain. We agree the law of undue influence requires greater clarity and we support a revised and more clearly defined offence. Simplifying undue influence would deliver one of the UK's Law Commissions' proposals, recommendation 11-4, for comprehensive electoral law reform. The Government should also bring forward proposals for implementing the other recommendations published in February 2016. There must be trust and confidence in the integrity of the electoral process. Modern and clear electoral law offences are a central part of ensuring this. People who must comply with the law, and those who enforce the law, need to understand what behaviour is prohibited and the associated punishments. We said, in our 2015 response to the Law Commissions' consultation on electoral law reform that the offence of undue influence is perhaps one of the most complex of all electoral law offences and we would support simplification. We also supported the simplification and modernisation of the offences of treating and bribery. These are also complex offences closely linked to undue influence. We remain concerned that the changes proposed by the UK Government would not go far enough to simplify the current range of electoral offences. We continue to recommend that any changes to undue influence should take place as part of a comprehensive reform of electoral offences, alongside a simple, modernised process of challenging an election. Reforming undue influence alone risks adding further complexity without addressing many of the problems with the legislation. Question 14: If it is decided to simplify the existing offence of undue influence, we do not propose to materially change the element of the offence relating to physical acts of violence or threat of violence. Do you agree? If not, please explain. We agree that physical acts of violence or threat of violence should stay in the offence of undue influence. However it should be simplified and clearly defined. We think that the suggested definitions of physical acts of violence or threat of violence set out in the consultation document are a useful basis for simplification. Question 15: Any act, whether lawful or unlawful, which is intended to cause harm to the individual and is carried out with the intention to make a person vote, vote in a particular way, or deter them from voting and should be captured within this offence. Do you agree? If not, please explain. We agree these should be covered by the offence. The UK Government should also revisit and simplify the definition of harm. The Oxford Dictionary contains three definitions of "harm": physical injury, especially that which is deliberately inflicted; material damage and; actual or potential ill effects or danger. It is important that it is clear which of these definitions apply to the offence of undue influence. Our understanding is that harm is meant to be broader than just physical injury. Therefore, any definition of harm put forward by the UK Government should

include all three of the definitions listed above. The consultation question does not refer to the offences of loss, damage or temporal and spiritual injury. These are captured under the existing offence of undue influence. It should be clear whether these will be included under the definitions of harm or duress, or removed from the offence entirely. We would be concerned if they were removed entirely. Question 16: We propose to retain reference to ‘direct and indirect’ acts which cause the elector harm. Do you agree? If not, please explain. We believe that this reference should be retained. What constitutes ‘direct and indirect’ acts must be clearly defined. We believe an ‘indirect’ act is difficult to define and must be considered as part of clarifying the offence of undue influence. We think that the suggested definitions of direct and indirect acts which cause an elector harm set out in the consultation document are a useful basis for simplification. Question 17: We propose that the redefined offence retains reference to offences committed by or on behalf of a perpetrator in relation to acts that cause the elector harm. Do you agree? If not, please explain. We agree that reference should be retained to “offences committed by or on behalf of a perpetrator”. Question 18: We propose that the scope of section 115(2)(a) continues to include those acts which are carried out before and after the election. Do you agree? If not, please explain. We agree that this offence should cover acts carried out before and after the election. There should be no uncertainty as to what is an offence. In our 2015 response to the UK’s Law Commissions’ consultation on electoral law reform, we asked that additional consideration be given to the issue of when electoral offences can be committed. We still hold this view. The law currently takes a variety of different approaches to when electoral offences can be committed. Some offences may be committed ‘before, during or after an election’, some can only be committed ‘before or during an election’ and others can only be committed ‘at an election’. There may be justifiable reasons for different approaches being taken for each offence, or it may be that a more consistent approach should be taken. Either way, we would like to see greater clarity in the law on the timing of when offences are committed to ensure greater consistency. People who must comply with the law, and those who enforce the law, need to understand what behaviour is prohibited and the associated punishments. Question 19: Do you agree that the offence should continue to cover actions of duress? If not please explain. We agree that the offence should continue to cover duress with a clear definition. We said in our 2015 response to the UK’s Law Commissions’ consultation that duress should be retained. Consideration should be given to its definition to avoid complicated drafting and to separate it from ‘duress’ as used in criminal and contract law. The law should stop anyone from forcing a person to vote for a particular candidate or to not vote at all. However, it is important that when defining a simplified undue influence offence, it does not conflict with the right to freedom of expression. Many people will legitimately want to persuade others to vote for certain candidates, and any restrictions on this freedom will need careful consideration. We are conscious that there are some electors who may be more vulnerable to pressure or undue influence because of their personal position within a family, social group or wider community, who might benefit from greater protection. We would expect any modernised definition of undue influence or duress to be capable of identifying and being applied to this type of influence. Question 20: Any redefined offence would still look to cover actions of trickery. Do you agree? If not, please explain. We agree that the actions of trickery should remain and should be clearly defined. The UK government could use the simplified definition of the actions of trickery set out in the consultation document rather than the existing definition: ‘any fraudulent device

or contrivance'. We think that the suggested definitions of the actions of trickery set out in the consultation document are a useful basis for simplification.

Intimidation at polling stations Question 21: Do you agree that the scope of the offence should remain the same, subject to including a specific reference to intimidation at polling stations? If not, please explain. Question 22a: Do you agree that the offence should specifically capture intimidatory behaviour carried out inside or outside of the polling station? If not, please explain. Question 22b: If so, do you agree that the definition should include behaviour which falls below the current requirement of physical force, violence or restraint? We do not agree with adding a specific reference to intimidation at polling stations to the offence of undue influence. Simplifying and modernising the offence of undue influence, and providing clear definitions, should ensure intimidation at polling station is covered without needing to make a specific reference to it. However, if the UK Government decides to include specific reference to intimidation at polling stations there must be a clear, workable definition of what activity should and should not be prohibited. We agree that electoral law should include offences that deter and punish intimidation and coercion of voters, which can be used by police forces and prosecutors in addition to general public order offences. However, we also agree with the 2016 UK's Law Commissions' concerns about lowering the bar of undue influence to include any behaviour which could be reasonably considered as intimidation at a polling station. The Law Commissions highlighted that perceptions of what is "intimidation" will vary, and therefore must be clearly defined. This will ensure that rights to free speech and assembly are not infringed. It would also be important to ensure that people understand what is "outside a polling station". Consideration of additional electoral law offences We want the UK Government to consider creating the following postal voting offences: In our response to the recommendations from Sir Eric Pickles' 2016 review of electoral integrity we supported extending the offences contained in Section 66 of the RPA to postal voting. The secrecy of the ballot protections that apply to in person voting, would then apply to postal ballots. There should be greater consistency and equivalency between offences which may be committed in a polling station or at a count, and elsewhere, including in a voter's home. We recommend that the UK's Governments should change the law so that candidates, parties and campaigners are not allowed to handle or take completed absent vote applications or postal ballot packs from voters, but ensure sufficient safeguards are in place to protect legitimate assistance. Increasing transparency in digital election campaigning The PPERA and the RPA contain powers for the Secretary of State to make regulations requiring imprints on non-printed election and referendum material. This applies to digital material, and it can also include audio material. Our view is that any new regulations should cover all non-printed material. Question 23: Do you as a voter believe that the current system as applied to printed election material promotes transparency and gives confidence in our systems? The imprint rules for printed election material ensure voters can check the source of election material, and allow the police, prosecutors and us to enforce the spending rules. Extending the imprint rules to digital material is urgent. This gap in transparency is affecting voter confidence and impacting our ability to enforce the rules. The imprint rules have two purposes. They ensure that voters can find out who is behind the election material they receive. And they allow the police, the CPS, the Procurator Fiscal, the PSNI and us to track campaigners' spending so that we can enforce the spending rules. Without the imprint rules, campaigners could run campaigns without ever having to identify themselves as the source. This is currently the case with digital material.

At the beginning of 2018, we contracted the research company GfK to carry out research with the public. Our aim was to find out what the public knew and understood about political finance regulation in the UK and digital campaigning at elections and referendums. The findings confirmed the need for digital imprints. It showed that participants were more likely to pay attention to digital material, were concerned about its source and thought the imprint rules should be extended to digital material.

Question 24: Should the imprint rules in PPERA be commenced for Northern Ireland? The imprint rules in PPERA should be commenced for Northern Ireland. Voters in Northern Ireland should know who is behind campaign material. The imprint rules in section 143 PPERA originally applied across the whole of the United Kingdom in February 2001. Following representations from the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties, the Election Publications Act 2001 suspended the provisions from April 2001. This was because a large amount of election material for the 2001 UK Parliamentary general election had already been printed without an imprint, so could not be used. In 2006, SI 2006 No. 3416 reinstated section 143 PPERA provisions in Great Britain only. We do not know why the Order did not extend the provisions to Northern Ireland. Where party and non-party campaigner election material in Northern Ireland lacks an imprint, we have no powers to investigate and sanction a campaigner under PPERA. This means there is no deterrent in Northern Ireland, as there is in the rest of the UK, for failing to include one. The UK government must commence the imprint rules for Northern Ireland.

Question 25: Should the imprint rules for Northern Ireland elections be the same as for the rest of the United Kingdom? The imprint rules for all campaigners in Northern Ireland should be the same as for the rest of the United Kingdom. Making the imprint requirements in the Electoral Law Act 1962 the same as those in section 110 RPA would provide further clarity. This would help simplify electoral law as the UK's Law Commissions have proposed. Currently in Northern Ireland an earlier version of Section 110 RPA is in force for imprints on candidate material for UK Parliamentary and Northern Ireland Assembly elections. This is because the Election Publications Act 2001 suspended the application of the new version of section 110 RPA (introduced under section 136 and Schedule 18 PPERA). Under SI 2006/3416, the new version of section 110 RPA was brought into force only in Great Britain (not Northern Ireland).

Principle and purpose Question 26: What are your views on whether imprints should be required on all digital electoral material or only where spending on such material has been over a certain threshold? All digital election and referendum material should include an imprint. Any new regulations should ensure that individuals expressing personal opinions are not covered. All digital election and referendum material should include an imprint. The current rules for printed election material do not specify a minimum spending threshold before a campaigner must add an imprint. We do not think that any new rules for digital material should be different from the rules for printed material.

Specifying a spending threshold creates other problems. A campaigner may spend very little, or nothing (apart from staff time), on creating a campaign message that reaches a lot of voters because that they can achieve wide organic reach. We do not think it is right that because they have spent nothing on creating and distributing the message, they should not have to identify themselves as its source. Further, we would not know what, if anything, a campaigner has spent on digital election material. Campaigners are not required to report their spending during an election or referendum campaign. This means we would not know whether a campaigner had passed the threshold, and therefore whether they had committed an offence by not including an imprint. This would undermine the purpose of extending the requirement to digital

material, and make it difficult for the police and us to enforce the new rules. It is important that any new imprint rules do not affect voters' right to engage in political debate online during election and referendum campaigns. Any new rules should not cover individuals expressing personal opinions. When should imprints be required? Question 27: Should any new rules on digital material only apply to what we would already consider to be "electoral material" or should broader categories be considered? The UK Government should use the regulation-making powers in the PPERA and the RPA to make imprints on non-printed election material a legal requirement.

Regulating broader categories of political advertising requires more thought and more scrutiny. Extending the imprint rules to non-printed material is urgent. Therefore, we think that the UK Government should use the existing regulation-making powers in the PPERA and the RPA. But those powers only allow the Secretary of State to draft regulations that apply to "election material" as defined in the PPERA, and to material that is intended to promote or procure the election of a candidate in the RPA. Regulating wider forms of political advertising would require amending primary legislation, which would take much longer than introducing regulations. Regulating broader categories of political advertising requires more thought and more scrutiny. This would be a much different form of regulation than the current rules. The UK's governments and legislatures would need to consider which principles should underpin any new rules for regulating wider political speech. They would need to ensure that the rules do not curtail free speech, and to consider the practicalities of enforcing any new rules. We think that more would need to be done to explore this idea.

Question 28: Do you agree that the requirement for imprints on election material can arise all year round, not just during election periods? We agree with the Government's interpretation of the PPERA imprint requirements. Sections 143 and 143A do not specify a particular time period when the imprint rules apply. The requirement to include an imprint arises where the material can be reasonably regarded as intended to promote or procure electoral success for particular parties or categories of candidates, and the material relates to an election. These two tests may be met before the regulated period for that election has started. We think that the RPA imprint requirements apply during the specific timeframe when people are formally treated as candidates. Under section 110 RPA, imprints are required on any material which can be reasonably regarded as intended to promote or procure the election of a candidate at an election. Section 118A defines the earliest date on which a person can become a candidate for a UK Parliament or local election. There are no candidates before that date. Therefore, it is the earliest date on which an imprint is required.

This means, for example, that there are no imprint requirements for material promoting a candidate in the long campaign period at a UK Parliamentary general election. We think the Government should consider this further, because there is an inconsistency in the law if the pre-candidacy spending rules apply whilst imprint requirements do not apply. What forms of digital communications should be covered?

Question 29: Should we prioritise regulating certain forms of digital communications over others? If so, please give reasons. Certain forms of digital communication should not be prioritised over others. Digital campaigning is constantly evolving. If certain digital communications are prioritised, they may become outdated in the next few years. This would make any new rules outdated and unworkable. Political campaigns use a variety of digital channels to communicate their campaign messages to voters. They currently use email, websites, website advertising, search advertising and social media posts. Digital campaign messages can consist of text, photo, graphics, video, audio, slideshows, and various combinations of these formats. We have observed

in our monitoring of election and referendum campaigns the evolution of social media advertising from posts consisting of text only to embedded video. This shows why it is important that any new imprint rules for digital and other non-printed material should cover all kinds of digital communications. This will also help to future-proof the new regulations for changes in technology and media. How should the imprint be incorporated? Question 30: What sort of mechanisms for including an imprint should be acceptable? Are there any technical difficulties that would need to be overcome to include text which is not accessible without a further step? Question 31: Would you find an imprint in an overarching space such as a 'bio' sufficiently visible? We support the principle that a campaigner's full details should be part of the campaign message itself. We do not think that an imprint in an overarching space is sufficiently visible. Until now we have said in our guidance that it is acceptable to include a full imprint on a 'bio' or 'profile' page if it cannot be part of the message itself. We took this approach during the Scottish Independence Referendum because it was a pragmatic solution to the (then) 140-character limit . It has worked until now. But advertisers can remove the imprint from 'bio' or 'profile' information at any time. This is not a solid basis for transparency. And it is a platform-specific solution, which may not work for newer forms of social media. We think that the law should move away from platform-specific solutions. Digital media and digital campaigning are constantly evolving, and this includes technical facilities to put an imprint on election ads. Therefore, any new imprint requirement should be 'platform-neutral'. In other words, it should apply to any kind of digital campaign message on any platform, and it should be part of the message itself. On platforms with word or character limits, like Twitter for example, a video or photo embedded in or attached to the message would allow a full imprint to be displayed. This could also be achieved with the dropdown boxes some platforms use to give users information about the advertising they see. Question 32: How can these mechanisms be future-proofed in expectation of developments in media and technology? Any new regulations should be drafted as general principles to make them 'platform-neutral'. The regulations should say that the technical design of digital imprints must allow machines to read, record and store them. The Government should consider carefully how to specify in regulations the circumstances in which non-printed material is, or is not, considered to be published. In the longer term, the UK government should consider amending the regulation-making powers in the PPERA and the RPA so that the rules can be kept up-to-date with technological developments. This could include giving us the regulation-making powers or a power to make a Code of Practice for imprints. We think that any new regulations should apply to all digital material on different platforms and media. This could be achieved by drafting general principles for including an imprint rather than specific rules for different media. This approach would help to make the new regulations 'platform-neutral' and future-proof them. The explanatory notes and memorandum for the regulations could contain examples of how they apply to different forms of digital advertising. We can use our guidance to explain at elections and referendums how the rules apply to the digital channels that campaigners are using at that time. Regulations made under the powers in section 143 PPERA and in section 110 RPA may specify the circumstances in which non-printed material is, or is not, considered to be published. This will be an important part of future-proofing the regulations, and we think the Government should consider carefully how to specify those circumstances. We will work with the Government on how to specify them. Any new requirement should say that the technical design of digital imprints must allow machines to read, record and store them. A number of organisations have recommended

creating a central database of all election and referendum advertising. The technical design of digital imprints should allow them all to be stored in one place, should this be necessary at some point in the future. At this stage, we think that the right approach is to use the regulation-making powers in the PPERA and the RPA to make imprints on digital material a legal requirement. But advances in technology mean that both we and the UK government will need to keep the rules under regular review. It is likely that the UK government will need to amend them at some point despite its best efforts to future-proof them. For this reason, the UK government should consider whether to introduce primary legislation, when the opportunity arises, to amend the regulation-making powers in the PPERA and the RPA. The current powers were drafted at a time when print advertising was the main form of election advertising. They require the Secretary of State to model regulations for non-printed material after the rules for printed material. This may not give the Secretary of State enough discretion in the future to introduce regulations that are up-to-date with developments in technology. In the longer term, the UK government should also consider either transferring the regulation-making powers to the Electoral Commission, or giving us a power to make a Code of Practice for imprints. We would be responsible for ensuring compliance with the new digital imprint requirements. And we have a duty to keep the law under review. We would therefore be best placed to know if and when the regulation-making powers needed to be used to update the regulations. Alternatively, a power to make a Code of Practice would allow us to provide additional statutory guidance for campaigners on how and when to include an imprint on digital material. And this should be able to be amended more easily than the requirements in legislation. Who should be responsible for including the imprint? Question 33: Should those who subsequently share digital electoral material also be required to include an imprint and, if so, whose details should be on it - theirs or the original publisher? Individuals who subsequently share material on a personal basis should not have to include an imprint. But where campaigners distribute a new election or referendum message that involves sharing material from another, unrelated organisation because they think it will enhance their electoral chances, they should have to include their own imprint on the new message. Individuals who want to share material from campaigners they know and trust. We think this is an important aspect of democratic engagement. Individuals would be deterred from sharing election material online if they knew they had to put their own imprint on it. As long as the material they share has the campaigner's imprint on it, this is enough. Enforcement and redress Question 34: Do you think the responsible bodies have sufficient enforcement powers? Our current powers would be adequate for enforcing any new digital imprint regulations in the course of an investigation, but not where we haven't opened an investigation. The UK government should give us wider powers to compel information, including from digital platforms. The UK government should increase the maximum fine we can impose for breaches of the imprint rules. The UK government should give us the power to investigate and sanction breaches of the candidate rules in the RPA. We have powers to investigate and sanction campaigners for breaching the imprint rules in section 143 PPERA. This includes being able to fine a campaigner up to £20,000 for failing to include an imprint. Only the police and prosecutors are able to investigate, prosecute and sanction breaches of the imprint rules in section 110 RPA. We consider the powers we have to enforce the imprint rules for printed materials to be adequate. We can compel any person or organisation to give us information during an investigation. In most cases where there is a clear case of a failure to include an imprint, we would open an

investigation. We would expect to be able to do the same with digital platforms under our existing powers. However, outside of an investigation we can only compel bodies regulated under PPERA to give us information about income and expenditure. Our powers to require information do not extend to third parties such as newspapers or digital platforms. This means that currently we would not be able to obtain information about the source of an advert which had no imprint. The ability to find out the identity of campaigners outside an investigation is also relevant for enforcing the spending rules. We think that we should have the power to compel digital platforms, and others, to give us information we need to perform our statutory functions, such as advertisers' contact details or amounts spent on distributing election material. This would allow us to effectively monitor campaign activity and take action to prevent non-compliance where possible at an early stage. We have previously said that our maximum fine of £20,000 for each offence is too low. When considering how much to fine a campaigner for failing to include an imprint on campaign material, one of the factors we take into account is how many people may have seen it. Digital campaign messages can potentially reach many more people than a newspaper advert. And as they can be delivered directly to a handheld device, voters have less control over whether they see them. Our maximum fine should reflect these factors. It should therefore be increased. We have previously recommended that we should be given powers to investigate and sanction breaches of the candidate rules in the RPA. We have seen some high-profile alleged breaches of the candidate rules, mostly at national elections, where referral for criminal prosecution was not considered to be in the public interest. But it may have been appropriate to investigate further and issue a civil sanction if we had had the power to do so. This is why we repeat this recommendation here.

Related content

- [Consultation: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy](#)
- [Statutory consultation on guidance for Returning Officers: Assistance with voting for disabled people](#)
- [Draft guidance for Returning Officers: Assistance with voting for disabled voters \(statutory consultation\)](#)
- [Our response to the Assembly Commission's consultation 'Creating a Parliament for Wales'](#)
- [Read our response to Assembly Commission's consultation from April 2018](#)

Response to consultation on Code of Practice for Non-party s | Electoral Commission Search Response to consultation on Code of Practice for Non-party s You are in the Our consultations section Home Our consultations On this page Background How we developed the Code for consultation Main changes to the Code after consultation Themes raised through consultation Annex A First published: 19 April 2023 Last updated: 26 April 2023 Summary Some individuals and organisations that are not political parties campaign on issues or causes around elections without standing candidates themselves. They play a significant role in providing voters with information and a diversity of voices. The Commission calls these individuals and organisations non-party campaigners. In electoral law they are called third parties.

The Elections Act 2022 includes new requirements for registration and spending by non-party campaigners. The Act also introduces a duty on the Electoral Commission to produce a Code of Practice on the laws relating to non-party campaigner spending.

Between 24 November 2022 and 20 January 2023, we conducted a consultation on the draft Code of Practice. The consultation received 17 responses from academics, trade unions, and a range of charities, and other non-party campaigners. We set out below a summary of the key themes and issues that emerged in the consultation, and how we have considered them all in updating the Code and in our wider work to support campaigners

We are grateful to everyone who provided us with feedback. We have used this to inform the further development of the Code, and to make it as clear and helpful as possible. We recognise how important it is that the people who will use the Code support it.

[View the Code](#)

[Background](#)

The Elections Act 2022 requires the Commission to produce a Code of Practice on the laws relating to non-party campaigner spending. This is a legal guidance document that must include what qualifies as expenses, reporting controlled expenditure, and joint campaigning. The Code will apply to elections to the UK Parliament and the Northern Ireland Assembly. The Commission must have regard to this Code when exercising its functions under Part 6 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA). It is a statutory defence for a non-party campaigner to show that they complied with this Code in determining whether their campaign activity was regulated. The law sets out statutory requirements on the Commission for conducting its consultation on the draft Code. This involves consultation with Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission, the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee and 'such other persons that the Commission consider appropriate'.

[How we developed the Code for consultation](#)

Before we commenced with the development of a draft Code, we held a series of roundtables with parties and campaigners to discuss the new laws affecting their activities. We used this pre-consultation phrase to draw on their expertise, as well as our experience of regulating elections to produce a draft Code that would be subject to a public consultation. As well as inviting written and verbal feedback, during the formal consultation period we held a number of roundtables with individuals and campaigners. This included events in Wales and Scotland, to ensure we heard perspectives from the regulated community across the UK.

Main changes to the Code after consultation

Overall, feedback was positive, and stakeholders felt the Code was 'drafted clearly and concisely, given the complexity of the underlying statutory regime', but there were areas where it could be made easier to use. In some places additional clarity was sought; in others requests were made for further information to make it clearer for non-party campaigners to understand the law and how to apply it in practice. In response to this feedback, we have made changes to the draft Code. We go through the detail of these below, but in summary the main changes include:

Updating the structure to make it easier for campaigners to read and

simpler to navigate – using more signposting to help them understand related sections of the law. Making it clearer that the purpose test is defined in PPERA, and adding in more detail on the four factors that should be considered when determining whether campaign activity is regulated. Clarifying how activity can be regulated retrospectively. Redrafting the section in the Code that sets out the meaning of the public and how campaigners can determine whether their activity is available to the public, or to a section of the public. Including more information to help campaigners understand the rules on joint campaigning and in what situations they apply. Within this report, we have highlighted where we agree with recommendations to improve the Code's purpose intelligibility. We have also set out why, in some circumstances, we have retained the draft Code's original wording. In some cases, we were unable to make the amendments suggested because they conflicted with the law in PPERA or with the scope of the Code-making power. In other cases, pieces of feedback were incompatible with each other. Many of the respondents asked for more examples and case studies to be included in the Code. While we have attempted to include a wide and comprehensive range of examples, our guidance can go into greater detail than it is possible for a Code of Practice that provides a statutory defence. We therefore intend to include detailed case studies and more examples in the guidance that will accompany the published Code. These will provide further support and clarity to non-party campaigners. Themes raised through consultation Purpose test Background The non-party campaigning laws only apply to regulated campaign activity. Not all campaigning activities that non-party campaigners carry out are regulated. Spending on campaign activities by non-party campaigners is only regulated if it can reasonably be regarded as intended to promote or procure the electoral success of: one or more political parties political parties or candidates who support or do not support particular policies or another particular category of candidates by influencing voters at an upcoming election to vote in a particular way. This is a statutory test set out in PPERA and is commonly known as the 'purpose test'. When we first drafted the Code we included detailed examples to illustrate how campaigners should apply the test. Feedback revolved around two key areas. The scope of the purpose test Some respondents raised concerns about the inclusion of the phrase 'influencing voters...to vote in a particular way' within the description of the purpose test. They felt that the draft Code appeared to widen the definition of the purpose test beyond that which exists in PPERA. In addition, unions and charities also raised concerns that the example which stated that a campaign aiming 'to change political parties' or candidates' views on a policy or issue' broadened the scope of the purpose test and would result in '[al]most all advocacy campaigns' undertaken by non-party campaigners being regulated. This, in turn, could deter such campaigners from participating in the democratic process. We have therefore updated the wording to clarify and provide assurances to campaigners that the Code does not widen the scope of the test beyond PPERA. In addition, a number of stakeholders explained that they found the four factors outlined in the Commission's existing guidance a practical and easy way to understand how to apply the test to their activities. Although these factors are not defined in legislation, they are consistently used by the Commission in determining whether an activity meets the purpose test. We have restructured this section around those four factors and used accompanying examples to illustrate how campaigners can apply the test. These changes will allow non-party campaigners to more easily and confidently determine whether an activity can be 'reasonably regarded' as meeting the purpose test and would therefore be regulated. Understanding how the purpose test applies for a retrospective regulated period When

we drafted the Code, we included information to explain how non-party campaigners should consider any campaign activity that takes place before an election is announced. We know from our ongoing engagement with campaigners that this is something a number find increasingly difficult to apply in practice. There was widespread support for this ‘very helpful’ part of the Code. In particular, respondents welcomed the clarity that campaign activity that took place during a retrospective regulated period would only meet the purpose test if ‘it could reasonably be regarded as intending to influence voters to vote in a particular way at a relevant election’. Some respondents asked for the Code to further clarify how campaign activity would be regulated in retrospective regulated periods where the retrospective period also covered local or council elections. This is called a ‘combined regulated period’. We have therefore made clear that issue-based campaigning – as opposed to campaigning with the aim of influencing a voter to vote in a particular way – is unlikely to meet the purpose test in circumstances where there is no upcoming election, even if the activity subsequently falls in a retrospective regulated period. We have also provided examples of campaign activity that would be regulated as a result of a retrospective regulated period. Public activities and material not publicly available Background Election material that meets the purpose test and takes place during a regulated period will only be regarded as regulated campaign activity if the material is made available to the public, or a section of the public. The ‘public’ has no statutory definition in PPERA. Stakeholders are therefore required to consider it to ‘have its usual meaning’. We know that stakeholders find it hard to determine whether their activity is available to the public, or a section of the public, as opposed to a closed group, such as members, which can include large numbers of people. The rise of digital campaigning and the use of social media at elections in recent years has added additional complexity for campaigners when making their assessment. Supporting campaigners to understand what is regulated When drafting the Code, we aimed to provide additional clarity to support campaigners to understand what is regulated, and make it applicable to the modern realities of campaigning. This included how to assess material only made available to closed groups, such as members, or those who had agreed to receive such material. Whilst feedback on the draft wording was mixed, respondents largely found that our description of what would be considered ‘material not publicly available’ was ‘not sufficiently clear’. A number expressed concern that the language gave them less certainty over when material would be considered publicly available, and therefore regulated. We have therefore made a number of changes to make it easier for campaigners to understand and apply to their activities. We clarified that canvassing and market research seeking views from members of the public public rallies and events and the production of material (digital or print) which is made available to the public at large or any section of the public, will only be regulated campaign activity where they meet the purpose test and take place during a regulated period, but the meaning of the public is an important part of determining whether these three types of activities are regulated. We have added a series of examples of common campaign activities and an explanation of when these would be considered available to the public (and therefore regulated campaign activity) or restricted solely to members or supporters. More generally, several respondents explained how difficult it was for smaller non-party campaigners or specific groups to restrict material to members or supporters in practice, particularly in online and digital spaces. They cited the increased administrative costs involved in controlling access to material and suggested the wording should

focus on who the non-party campaigner intended to see the material. However, we do not think that this approach, focusing on the intention of the non-party campaigner, is compatible with the law as set out in PPERA. Rather PPERA is concerned with the factual reality of whether the campaign material is ‘made available’ by the non-party campaigner to the public, or a ‘section of the public’. Some respondents raised concerns about situations where material shared by campaigners with members and supporters could inadvertently become available to those outside of these groups, for example if copies of members’ magazines or screen-grabbed images of digital content shared to closed groups were shared more widely without the campaigner’s permission. We will seek to address these concerns in more detailed case studies and examples in our guidance that will sit alongside the Code. Notification and reporting thresholds

Background The Elections Act introduces new requirements for spending and reporting by non-party campaigners. Non-party campaigners intending to spend more than £10,000 on regulated campaign activity in the period before a UK Parliamentary general election (UKPGE) or a Northern Ireland Assembly election must notify the Commission. This is known as the ‘notification threshold’. A non-party campaigner that is permitted to spend more than £700 on regulated campaign activity may spend up to £10,000 across the UK without notifying the Commission. Registered non-party campaigners who spend more than £20,000 in England, or more than £10,000 in Scotland, Wales, or Northern Ireland, must record and report their spending and donations. These are known as the ‘reporting thresholds’. They are defined in PPERA as the ‘lower tier expenditure limits’. Given their vital role in providing voters with information and a diversity of voices, it is important that non-party campaigners understand the law and are not deterred from campaigning. In our drafting of the Code, we wanted to take the opportunity to provide campaigners with clarity over the new requirements. Understanding the notification and reporting thresholds The majority of respondents gave feedback that the draft Code effectively explained what is meant by notification and reporting thresholds, with one submission welcoming this ‘appropriate and helpful guidance’. We have therefore made minimal amendments to this section of the Code. A few respondents asked for greater clarity on when non-party campaigners who meet the reporting threshold would be required to submit quarterly donation reports to the Commission. Under the Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011, registered non-party campaigners were required to submit quarterly donations returns to the Commission, beginning 12 months before a scheduled election date. Following that Act’s repeal, the date of the next UK parliamentary general election is no longer scheduled in law. We have amended the wording to provide more clarify that we are referring to the final year before a UK parliamentary general election, specifically ‘when a UK parliamentary term enters its fifth year’. One submission noted the risk of non-party campaigners unwittingly exceeding the notification and reporting thresholds as a result of the rules on joint campaigning, without incurring spending directly themselves. We have highlighted this risk in the revised Code, and have also signposted non-party campaigners to the section on joint campaigning to help campaigners understand the link between the joint campaigning rules and the notification and reporting thresholds. What type of spending is controlled expenditure

Background Controlled expenditure is any spending incurred in respect of regulated campaign activity. We know that non-party campaigners can find it difficult to understand how to assess, calculate and account for their spending, and what qualifying expenses fall within, and outside the regulatory regime. When we drafted the Code, we included detailed information on how to consider campaign activity before an election is announced, the reusing of items from a previous election, items

provided free of charge or at a discount and on overheads that we know campaigners are most likely to use. The types of campaign spending and activity that must be reported The majority of respondents told us that they found this section of the Code clear, and that it '[provided] clarity about what is controlled expenditure'. Some respondents explained that the phrase 'long running campaign' in the draft was unclear, and did not help them to understand whether existing campaigns would be regulated. We have therefore replaced 'long running campaign' with 'ongoing campaign', to make it clear that it is not the length of time that a campaign has been running that would determine whether or not it was regulated. Campaigns that begin before an election is announced, and remain unchanged following an election being announced, are unlikely to be regulated so long as their activity does not meet the purpose test. Some respondents suggested that our explanation of when an ongoing campaign's activity might become subject to regulation and incur controlled expenditure was not sufficiently clear. We have therefore revised this section to provide assurances that, during a regulated period, an ongoing campaign would need to alter its activity in such a way so as to meet the purpose test in order for its activity to become regulated. Assessing, calculating and accounting for spending and expenses Several responses asked for additional case studies and tools to help campaigners, calculate and account for their spending. This included a request for a spending calculator tool within the Code as well as detailed examples that illustrate spending in various different scenarios, including small-scale costs, such as the staff time cost of sending a single email or social media post. We appreciate the value to campaigners of having detailed examples and case studies to refer to. However, it is not possible to address every possible scenario within a statutory Code. We will therefore seek to address this in the additional guidance and case studies that will sit alongside the Code to help non-party campaigners assess what expenses need to be reported. Several respondents asked us to provide more clarity on what costs would be considered 'overheads' and for the Code to be more explicit about how they should report such expenses. We have amended the wording to give assurances that spending on overheads that remains the same before and during the regulated period is not likely to be regulated. Targeted expenditure Background Regulated campaign spending by all registered non-party campaigners during the regulated period for a UKPGE that is aimed at promoting the electoral success of one particular registered political party or any of its candidates is called targeted spending. We know that non-party campaigners find the laws on targeted expenditure complex to navigate in practice. In our drafting, we wanted to provide as much clarity to support them to understand the targeted spending limits and in what situations authorisation from a political party would be required. Understanding targeted spending While some respondents felt that the 'targeted spending' concept had been clearly defined, responses from charities and trade unions raised concerns that the draft Code appeared to expand the range of activities that might incur targeted spending. In particular, they were concerned by wording that related to '[a] campaign on a particular issue that is so closely and publicly linked to one particular political party that it is synonymous with that party is likely to be considered targeted spending.' They argued that this broader definition of targeted spending risked a 'chilling effect' on campaigners. Some respondents were concerned that campaigners whose policy positions were adopted by a political party would inadvertently find their campaigns regulated as a result and be discouraged from continuing to campaign. There were concerns that this could effectively give political parties 'the right to veto issues-based campaigning by non-party

campaigners'. We recognise that the original drafting unintentionally risked both confusing and deterring potential non-party campaigners – particularly those carrying out issues-based campaigns. We have therefore changed the wording to: 'campaign activity on a particular issue that is so synonymous with one particular political party that it can be reasonably regarded as intended to influence voters to vote for only that political party or its candidates, will be considered targeted spending.'

This provides clarity and reassurance of the law. The targeted spending limits for non-party campaigners and when authorisation is required In general, respondents felt that this section of the draft Code was clear. One respondent noted that the draft Code did not mention Section 94D PPERA, which covers how to calculate the lower limit for targeted expenditure. They said this law was confusing for campaigners. The draft Code refers to specific targeted expenditure limits in s94D PPERA but as with other variable expenditure limits set out in PPERA, it would not be suitable to include within a statutory Code as the limit for targeted expenditure is subject to change at each election. We therefore intend to provide further clarity in our accompanying guidance, which we can keep updated with the relevant limits for each election.

Joint campaigning At recent elections we have seen low levels of campaigners engaging in joint campaigning. We know from our conversations with stakeholders that they find the law in this area to be complex, with the effect of limiting joint campaigning activities. We therefore wanted in the Code to provide as much certainty as possible over the current laws. We aimed to make this section of the Code as accessible to campaigners as possible to give campaigners greater confidence about whether their cooperation with fellow campaigners will fall under joint campaigning rules. In particular, we made clear that, while a common plan is a necessary precondition, any such plan must also include an intention to incur controlled expenditure in order to be considered joint campaigning. How to consider whether activity is joint campaigning Consultation responses to this question were broadly positive, as respondents felt that the draft Code went 'a long way to reassuring non-party campaigners which activities do and do not constitute joint campaigning'. The clarity provided about the campaign activities of umbrella organisations was also particularly welcomed. The existing examples were well received and noted as helpful but further examples were requested, specifically about voluntary organisations working together on non-regulated activity during a regulated period and about what does not constitute joint campaigning. We have included clarification on when a non-party campaigner donates to another non-party campaigner. However, we will seek to incorporate further examples into the supplementary guidance that is published alongside the Code. Several respondents took the opportunity to express their views of the legislation itself: that the laws around joint campaigning ultimately deter greater participation by non-party campaigners. One respondent argued that this deterrence 'curtails legitimate and useful co-operation and engagement between actors in civil society'. While not strictly about the content of the Code, this provided a context highlighting the need for the Code to be as clear as possible for non-party campaigners. Factors that should be taken into account when considering activities In general, respondents felt that the draft Code helped them understand what factors to take into account when considering whether an activity is joint campaigning. However, the charity sector raised concerns that the draft Code did not set out definitively what might constitute proof of a plan or arrangement between non-party campaigners where there was the intention to incur spending. Respondents raised significant fears that, without a standard way of demonstrating joint campaigning, non-party campaigners could be subject to future enforcement

action. Regarding the definition of ‘intent’, one submission drew attention to the risks of non-party campaigners within a joint campaign having different intentions regarding their incurring of controlled expenditure. We understand that it is important for non-party campaigners engaged in a joint campaign to be clear about what spending falls under joint campaigning. We have made clear in the revised Code that any spending which goes beyond or is incurred outside of an agreed plan between parties involved in a joint campaign, is not part of the joint campaign that needs to be reported. Further detail on this topic will be provided in the supplementary guidance that accompanies this Code.

Lead and minor campaigners

We have also included an additional section focused specifically on the roles of lead and minor campaigners in joint campaigning arrangements. This should support non-party campaigners to understand how such an arrangement would impact spending rules and notification requirements. This also may help campaigners to understand how undertaking joint campaigning could reduce regulatory and administrative burdens on smaller campaigners. Given the innumerable formal and informal ways in which collaboration between non-party campaigners could be organised and take place, it is not feasible to include a prescriptive list of evidence within the Code that might illustrate the existence of a plan or arrangement with the intent to incur controlled expenditure. We will explore the possibility of providing templates within our guidance to support campaigners to evidence plans and document arrangements.

Conclusion

The duty on the Commission to prepare a Code of Practice for non-party campaigners is an important part of the Commission’s work to ensure that campaigners understand and are confident in applying the law to their activities. Non-party campaigners play a vital role in our democracy, and we are committed to providing them with as much clarity as possible to ensure they are not discouraged from active campaigning. The rules around regulated non-party campaigner activity are complex. Many respondents welcomed how various sections of the draft Code provided ‘clarity’ and ‘appropriate and helpful guidance’. We have used their expertise and insight to make the Code as clear and as helpful as possible.

Next steps

The final Code has been presented to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for their consideration. The minister may make modifications to the Code. A statement of reasoning is required to detail any changes that have been made. The Code is then subject to the negative procedure in Parliament, which means that once it is laid, it will be approved unless either House rejects it within 40 days of it being laid. Following approval, the Code of Practice for Non-party s will come into force.

Annex A Consultation responses

We received 17 responses to our consultation, including responses submitted via our online questionnaire and those received via email. This included:

- 7 responses from trade unions
- 3 from third sector organisations, or bodies representing third sector organisations
- 2 from academics
- 1 from a political party
- 1 from a public relations firm
- 1 from an interest group
- 2 anonymous responses

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy | Electoral Commission Search
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy You are in the Our plans and priorities section Home Our plans and priorities Currently reading: of 9 - Show page contents On this page What we do, the electorate we serve and who we are Our vision for a diverse Commission serving a diverse democracy Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in the democratic process Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion in our processes and decisions Ensuring equality, recognition of diversity and inclusion for all those who work at the Commission Communicating our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion Making it happen Action Plan Annexes Foreword Democracy and diversity are indissolubly linked. There should be no barriers on grounds of any characteristic protected by equalities legislation, so that our electoral processes are open and accessible for all those entitled to vote, for those who choose to stand for election and for those who campaign on their behalf. We are therefore pleased to present this strategy, which is central to the work of the Commission in protecting and promoting the electoral processes. We have built the strategy around three key objectives: ensuring that everyone who is eligible is able to participate in the electoral processes - whether as a voter, campaigner or standing for office - by identifying barriers, making recommendations and working with others to remove them ensuring that we embed equality, diversity and inclusion in the delivery of all of our work, treating all our stakeholders and partners fairly and with respect, and being transparent in the decisions we make ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion for everyone at the Commission and that all our staff are treated fairly and with respect Like any organisation, we have a range of statutory obligations to ensure we promote equality, diversity and inclusion in line with our responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 and other relevant legislation such as the Human Rights Act 1998. We have set out in the strategy what these are and how we comply with them in our activities. But equality, diversity and inclusion are not just matters of compliance. We know we have to do more to meet this challenge and demonstrate our commitment to moving beyond compliance. This strategy sets out our aspirations to go further and challenge ourselves to reflect fully the diversity of the electorate in our work to support democracy. This strategy covers the whole of the UK. We are accountable to the UK Parliament, the Scottish Parliament and the Senedd, and are sharing this strategy with them. Different legislation applies in Northern Ireland, and this Strategy includes the Single Equalities Scheme required under the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The Action Plan sets out what we will do when. We will monitor progress through our management and reporting system, and hold ourselves to account through the scrutiny of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group and our Race at Work Charter Task Force. Overarching responsibility lies with the Chief Executive and the Executive Team, and they will report regularly to the Commission Board on progress. Everyone is entitled to participate in democracy. That is why equality, diversity and inclusion matter. What we do, the electorate we serve and who we are What the Commission does The Commission was set up in 2000 and reports to the UK, Welsh, and Scottish parliaments. : our aim is to ensure that people trust, value and take part in elections. We are responsible for: Maintaining the registers of political parties and campaigners Promoting compliance with the campaign and political finance laws, and enforcing those laws where appropriate Publishing financial returns from parties and campaigners, including larger donations and campaign spending Setting the standards for electoral registration and running elections, and reporting on how well this is done Informing the public about the democratic process, including making sure they understand it is important to register

to vote, and know how to vote Running any referendums held in accordance with PPERA Advising Governments and Parliaments on improvements to the electoral system Our strategic objectives are Accessible registration and voting Free and fair elections depend on all people who are eligible and want to vote being able to do so. We will work to ensure: Increased levels of voter registration, especially amongst groups that currently have difficulty engaging in the process The removal of barriers, especially those that affect people who currently have difficulty trying to cast their vote Transparent political campaigning and compliant political finance Parties and other campaigners should be able to campaign without facing undue actual or perceived barriers, while we continue to ensure political finance is transparent.

This will support voters to hear a range of campaign voices to help them take decisions when voting. We will work to ensure: Increased levels of confidence shown by candidates, parties and other campaigners in their ability to understand, apply and comply with the law on campaigning and political finance High levels of compliance with registration, reporting and other political finance laws Resilient local electoral services Local electoral services need to be able to respond to increasingly challenging economic, social and environmental pressures; we will support local authorities and electoral administrators to deliver effective, sustainable and resilient electoral services, ensuring that voters receive the service they should be able to expect. We will work to ensure: Sustained and consistent high performance in the delivery of well-run elections Increased levels of confidence shown by electoral administrators in the resilience of the electoral system Fair and effective electoral law It is essential for the electoral system that the laws which underpin it are fair, effective and well understood. Electoral law must also keep pace with other developments in our society, harnessing technology and working on a continual process of modernisation. We will work to: Support governments and parliaments to reform electoral law to make it less complex Reduce the risks and inefficiencies associated with electoral law which impact our electoral system A modern and sustainable electoral system In order to ensure our electoral system is resilient to the challenges that lie beyond the period of this plan, it is essential that we work towards increased value for money, transparency, trust and compliance.

It is crucial that the roles and responsibilities of bodies which are part of the electoral system are clarified. And, it is important that we understand and reduce the environmental impact of the electoral system. We will work to ensure: Data and technology are harnessed to meet the needs of voters, campaigners and electoral administrators The changing risks to the election system from the misuse of data and technology are understood and acted upon Strong relationships and streamlined working practices with all bodies that are part of the electoral system are developed Governments and the wider electoral community are supported to adopt a strategy and implementation plan which reduces the environmental impact of our electoral system Serving a diverse electorate Serving a diverse electorate We are here to ensure that everyone eligible to vote knows how to exercise their vote and have their say, and that those who want to participate in politics as campaigners or seek election can get the information they need from us to be able to understand the rules. So recognising and responding to the needs of a diverse population and electorate is at the heart of our work and is what we are committed to do. Diversity covers a range of characteristics such as age, race and ethnicity, sex sexuality, disability, marital status, pregnancy and beliefs as well as issues around socio-economic disadvantage and access to opportunities. We illustrate below some of the key characteristics. Age The age structure of the population is set out below. As well as supporting those

eligible to vote, an important part of the Commission's work is with young people to prepare them for being able to exercise their vote. Age structure of the population according to ONS: Mid year population estimates 2019 Name 16-17 18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65+ United Kingdom 2.1% 8.5% 13.5% 12.6% 13.6% 12.2% 18.5% Great Britain 2.1% 8.5% 13.5% 12.6% 13.6% 12.2% 18.6% England 2.1% 8.4% 13.5% 12.7% 13.5% 12.0% 18.4% Wales 2.1% 8.7% 12.7% 11.2% 13.3% 13.0% 21.0% Scotland 2.0% 8.5% 13.8% 12.3% 14.0% 13.5% 19.1% Northern Ireland 2.4% 8.5% 12.3% 12.7% 13.6% 12.2% 16.6% We know from a range of research that young people are less likely to vote. We also know that 18-24 year olds are less likely to be correctly registered to vote (76% of 18-24 year olds compared to 86% of the population as a whole), and less likely to be satisfied with the voting process (66% compared to 80% of the population as a whole). Ethnicity The UK is an increasingly ethnically diverse society. The table shows headline statistics across the UK. Data for England and Wales drawn from 2011 census; for Scotland from Audit Scotland Annual Diversity Report 2018-19; for Northern Ireland from 2011 census. Totals may not sum due to rounding. White Minority Ethnic Black Asian Mixed and other England and Wales 86% 14% 3.3% 7.5% 3.2% Wales 95.6% 4.4% 0.6% 2.3% 1.5% Scotland 96.1% 3.9% 0.7% 2.9% 0.4% Northern Ireland 98.2% 1.8% 0.2% 1.1% 0.5% Black and minority ethnic voters are considerably more likely than white voters to have issues with satisfaction and confidence around voting. Overall 31% of the population identified barriers to participation by minority groups as a source of concern. Around a quarter of the black and Asian population are not registered to vote compared to 16% of the white population. Disability An estimated 19% of UK working age adults and 22% of all adults in the electorate (14.1 million people) have a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010 or the Disability Discrimination Act 1995). Family Resources Survey 2019-20. Total does not sum to 100 as more than one disability may be selected. Type of Impairment % Mobility 49 Stamina/breathing/fatigue 36 Dexterity 25 Mental health 29 Memory 16 Hearing 13 Vision 12 Learning 14 Social/behavioural 9 Other 17 Our report on the 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election found that 85% of disabled people felt well informed about the election, 92% were satisfied with the voting process and 96% found it easy to get to polling stations. But there remains room for improvement. In the 2020 Winter Tracker survey 30% of respondents were concerned about barriers to participation for disabled people. These cover a wide range of issues such as physical access, availability of information in different formats and the ease of the voting process. It is important to remember that these may affect carers as well as the people they care for. Sex, gender and sexual orientation As of 2019: An estimated 2.7% of the UK population aged 16+ identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) in 2019. In England, 2.7% of those aged 16+ identified as LGB. In Scotland, 2.7% of those aged 16+ identified as LGB. In Wales, 2.9% of those aged 16+ identified as LGB. In Northern Ireland, 1.3% of those aged 16+ identified as LGB. Across the UK, 0.7% of people aged 16+ selected 'Other' to describe their sexuality. Across the UK, 3.0% of people aged 16+ selected 'Do not know' or refused to answer. ONS Annual Population Survey, 2021. The ONS has not previously produced estimates of the number of transgender people living in the UK, but a voluntary question on gender identity for the 2021 census for England and Wales was asked of respondents aged 16+. Diversity of those standing for election The diversity of candidates for office does not reflect the diversity of the general population. At the 2017 Parliamentary and General Election for example 1 : 29% of candidates were women compared to 51% of the population 56% were over 50 compared to 48% of the population 8% were from an ethnic minority compared to 13% of the population 10% considered themselves to have a

disability compared with 18% of the population 11% were lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender Political and religious diversity in Northern Ireland Section 75 (2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 prescribes additional duties in Northern Ireland to promote good community relationships between those of different political and religious backgrounds. 48.4% of the population are Protestant and 45.1% Catholic; 0.9% have another faith and 5.6% have none 2 . 35% consider themselves to be Unionists and 19% Nationalists; 42% consider themselves to be neither and 4% to be other or not sure 3 . Our workforce in April 2022 The Commission has 173 employees. The majority have contractual workbases in London; we also have offices in Belfast, Cardiff and Edinburgh, and a number of permanent home-workers based across England. We illustrate below some of the key characteristics. As at this date our current split is 70 male and 103 female employees. Based on current self-declared data we currently have 21 black and minority ethnic employees. Our senior managers including our Executive Team are evenly split in terms of gender. Two out of 23 are of black and minority ethnic background, which is unrepresentative of the black and minority ethnic population as a whole. Our Board is appointed by the Speaker's Committee and comprises ten Commissioners including the Chair. The Board is equally representative in terms of gender. However there are currently no Commissioners from a black or minority ethnic background. The Commission has a full time EDI senior lead who is responsible for leading the Commission's work on equality, diversity and inclusion. Equality, diversity and inclusion sit at the centre of our People Strategy, embodying our commitment. This is a thread which runs right through the six segments of the Strategy including culture, resource planning, developing our people, getting the best from our people, valuing people and building a new flexible working culture. A number of groups in the Commission provide a forum for discussion, constructive challenge and the ability to hold the organisation to account: The Race at Work Task Force, chaired by the Chief Executive and supported by the Race at Work Champion The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion group The Staff Engagement Group, which includes representatives from every team in the Commission The Dignity, Respect and Empowerment Group, which brings together dignity advisers and works with the senior Anti-Bullying and Harassment champion The Mental Health First Aiders group, which brings together mental health first aiders and ensures that the organisation supports those with mental health issues The Wellbeing group, which focuses on promoting staff wellbeing Our vision for a diverse Commission serving a diverse democracy Our commitment to diversity: beyond compliance Fairness and equal treatment are fundamental to the democratic system which it is our job to protect, and which must reflect the diversity of the society it represents, not just in terms of protected characteristics but in terms of wider socio-economic inclusion. Equality, diversity and inclusion go to the heart of democracy, and hence are central to what we do. This is reflected in how we want to serve our stakeholders, how we want to work with our partners, and how we treat our staff. That means understanding and reflecting the needs of people across all the nations and regions of the UK. And that in turn means a workforce of people with a wide range of backgrounds, perspectives and experiences who feel that those different approaches are valued and treated with respect. We have already taken a number of actions to help us meet this challenge. But we know that there is further to go. Our objectives for promoting equality, diversity and inclusion The Commission's equality, diversity and inclusion objectives are therefore to: ensure that everyone who is eligible is able to participate in the democratic process - whether as a voter, a campaigner or by standing for office – by identifying barriers, making recommendations and working with others to remove them ensure that

we embed equality, diversity and inclusion in all our work, treat all our stakeholders and partners fairly and with respect, and are transparent in the decisions we make ensure equality, diversity and inclusion for everyone at the Commission and ensure that all our staff are treated fairly and with respect How we will deliver against these objectives We will deliver these three objectives by focusing on three sets of activities. Objective 1 This will be delivered through a range of activities seeking to promote equality, diversity and inclusion in the democratic process. Objective 2 This will be delivered by ensuring that equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded in our processes and decisions. Objective 3 This will be delivered through a range of policies designed to ensure equality, recognition of diversity and inclusion for all those who work and apply to work at the Commission. Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in the democratic process Objective 1 Ensure that everyone who is eligible is able to participate in the democratic process - whether as a voter, a campaigner or by standing for office - by identifying barriers, making recommendations and working with others to remove them In this chapter we set out the initiatives we will take to work with stakeholders In this chapter we set out the initiatives we will take to work with stakeholders and partners to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion in the democratic process. Our aim Our aim is to maximise equality, diversity and inclusion and promote public confidence in the democratic process. We want everyone entitled to a vote to register and to be able to exercise it, campaigners to have the right information and feel able to campaign, and those who wish to stand for office to feel confident to do so. We know that some groups are more likely to engage in the process than others. At the 2019 General Election men were more likely to vote than women (63% compared to 59%); younger people were less likely to vote than older people (47% of 18-24 year olds compared to 74% of over-65s); and white people were more likely to vote than black and Asian minority ethnic people (63% compared to 52%) 4 . Our approach is based on three priorities: Gathering evidence: understanding the issues through research and consultation : ensuring we understand the issues faced by voters, campaigners and those standing for office and ensuring we meet best practice in accessibility Communications: ensuring that all voters are aware of their right to vote and know how to exercise it, and targeting demographics we know are least likely to be registered to vote; ensuring that we communicate across all parts of the regulated community What we have already achieved Some examples Gathering evidence through research and consultation We regularly survey representative samples of the UK electorate, often using boosted samples to allow for greater understanding of the views of specific groups and communities. For example: Our research on the accuracy and completeness of electoral registers gives us important information about groups who may be under-represented and need encouragement and support to register Our post-election reports look specifically at issues around accessibility such as the availability of information in a variety of formats about the elections and the candidates standing in them, and the accessibility of polling stations We carried out a post-election accessibility survey after both the 2017 and 2019 UKPGEs to give us a better understanding of the barriers faced in registering and voting, and added an additional sample of self-identified disabled voters to our post-election Public Opinion survey in 2019; we always include a sample of blind and partially sighted people in user testing; Our 2017 survey informed the recommendations in our 2017 Elections for Everyone report which fed into a UK Government consultation on the accessibility of voting. We published a set of feasibility studies in 2019 exploring how reforms could be made to the registration system to make it easier to register We

regularly gather evidence from a range of charities to inform our work and ensure that we are reflecting a wide range of protected characteristics: for example we worked with charities to help us refresh the design of our website We are members of the Cabinet Office's of Elections Working Group, which brings together government and the third sector to deliver the actions identified in the UK Government's response to their 2017 Call for Evidence on Access to Elections We ensure our guidance and the information we provide about the regulatory system is easy to use and available in a range of formats to increase its accessibility We consult a range of charities on our guidance for polling station staff, which covers a range of areas designed to ensure voters are provided with the support they need in the polling station, such as signage, level access and the availability of tactile voting devices. We have completely redesigned our website to comply with Web Content Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1; all our publications, with minor exceptions detailed in our accessibility policy, meet this standard. We worked with accessibility partners – Zoonou and the RNIB – to ensure this new site launched in July 2019 meets the needs of those with a range of accessibility needs. We have a plan to replace all PDFs with HTML content, to make it easier to find, easier to navigate and accessible for screen readers and other assistive technologies We work hard to ensure that our communications are written in plain /Welsh, and increasingly test content with users to maximise understanding. We have for example in partnership with Mencap published a series of easy read guides for voters All web content that relates to Wales or the UK as a whole is also available in Welsh, and users can 'toggle' between and Welsh. All HTML content can be easily translated into other languages using online translation tools Communications We undertake significant activity to ensure that all voters are aware of their right to vote and how to exercise it. Recent campaigns include the Got 5? campaign encouraging registration, and the Welcome to Your Vote campaign Our regular research into the accuracy and completeness of the electoral registers shows that a number of groups are particularly likely to be under-registered: young people, those with learning disabilities, those in short term rentals and/or who frequently move home, black and minority ethnic communities and Irish travellers. We have built these insights into the way we target communications and into working with organisations who support these groups We are developing a Learning Strategy in partnership with a range of organisations to build political literacy in groups who can often feel distanced from the political process We have been building strategic partnerships with groups and individuals who represent people who are traditionally less likely to be registered to vote. To date we have met with 90 different organisations right across the UK. We have for example: Set up a blog to raise awareness of anonymous registration via Victim Support Scotland Created resources for voters with no fixed address Produced resources for 14-18 year olds on voting and campaigning in NI Taking it further What we propose to do next These activities represent a substantial investment of time and resource for the Commission. We will continue to work with our partners to reach communities of those least likely to be registered. We will: Continue to improve our research data to enhance our evidence base, drawing on existing academic research and on the insights we gain through working with stakeholder groups, and sharing outcomes with respondents where it is feasible to do so Continue to ensure that campaigns to raise public awareness about the electoral system are inclusive and take account of different groups Continue to ensure that our guidance to the regulated community is accessible and meets the needs of different groups Take further steps to ensure our website is as accessible as possible. We will continue to update and improve our offer, and ensure that our work

is directed by analytics and informed by user testing with diverse groups Build on the success of the partnership work we have already done in ensuring we continue to identify the needs of diverse groups and respond to them Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion in our processes and decisions Objective 2 Ensure that we embed equality, diversity and inclusion in all our work, treat all our stakeholders and partners fairly and with respect, and are transparent in the decisions we make Our aim As a public regulator we have a duty to treat all customers and partners fairly and impartially. This is not just about compliance with our statutory duties under the Public Sector Equality duty. It means ensuring that all our processes treat stakeholders equally whether they are people we regulate, partners we work with on the administration of elections or businesses we buy services from. That means putting equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of our processes and ensuring that we follow those processes to a high standard. What we have already achieved We have started work on checking our processes to ensure that they fully reflect equality, diversity and inclusion, building on our existing regulatory Quality Management Scheme We carried out a review of our procurement policies to ensure that we were applying them fairly and equally Our performance standards for Returning Officers set out their responsibilities to ensure that all voters are able to vote easily We have commissioned an independent review of our compliance with the Welsh Language standards to help us identify areas for improvement As a regulator we secure compliance with the laws on registration and on political finance proportionately, consistently and impartially. We do so firstly and primarily through the provision of support, so that parties, campaigners and those standing for office can understand the obligations they are under and have the information they need. We want to see an electoral system where candidates, campaigners and parties are confident to participate within the law and supported to do so no matter who they are We have published our Enforcement Policy explaining how we enforce the law and take enforcement decisions. We also have detailed operational protocols that ensure enforcement work is carried out robustly, consistently and fairly, and that we take due account of any relevant equality, diversity or mental well-being issues Taking it further What we propose to do next We will ensure that the guidance, support and challenge we provide for Electoral Registration Officers encourages registration from typically under-registered groups We will ensure that our guidance, support and challenge to Returning Officers promote the provision of equality of access and experience for all at the polls as set out in the Government's Disability Strategy We will consult on and introduce new processes for carrying out and reviewing Equality Impact Assessments We will ensure that the Commission's procurement strategy includes clear EDI outcomes for contractors, and that effective monitoring of these contractors is done to ensure they comply We will ensure through our Quality Assurance initiative that equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded as appropriate in all our processes We will continue to keep our internal regulatory procedures under review to meet best practice and ensure consistency, fairness and quality underpin all our regulatory activities We will ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are included as appropriate in our policies, including our Enforcement Policy, as they are reviewed in line with our normal cycle We will implement a Welsh Language Action Plan to enhance our service to Welsh speakers Ensuring equality, recognition of diversity and inclusion for all those who work at the Commission Objective 3 Ensure equality, recognition of diversity and inclusion for everyone at the Commission and ensure that all our staff are treated fairly and with respect Our aim Working through our People Strategy, our aims include being an

employer of choice and an example of good practice, reflecting the society we serve. Ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion is the responsibility of all leaders, all managers, and all those in the organisation. We will achieve this for our employees with a focus on the following areas: Ensuring equality in compliance with our legal responsibilities Increasing the diversity of our workforce through recruitment and career progression Working with our EDI Lead to look at how we further promote inclusion Our learning and development offering Employee performance, for example, to ensure fair treatment Improving our collection of data What we have done so far We have taken steps in a wide range of areas to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion across the Commission. We use anonymous recruitment to eliminate any potential bias in shortlisting. Unconscious bias training is available and promoted to all in the Commission. We have worked with a specialist consultant to raise awareness of equality, diversity and inclusion, and put in place a range of groups and initiatives: An EDI group which has provided focus on EDI issues since 2019 Our Race at Work task force, chaired by the Chief Executive Actively celebrating diversity through events such as Black History Month Informal briefing sessions with our interim EDI lead Commissioning an external report on perceived bullying and harassment, and appointing an Anti Bullying and Harassment Champion Our network of Mental Health First Aiders Our offering to be an employer of choice including flexible working in a range of forms A Dignity at Work policy backed up by voluntary Dignity and Respect Advisers Our wellbeing offering to the workforce, including an employee assistance programme We have made equality, diversity and inclusion a focus of our learning and development at the Commission through: Using training need analysis techniques to help us target employee learning and development Inclusion of EDI in our corporate induction session Offering unconscious bias training to all In-depth training provided on EQIAs Inclusion of EDI as a key part of our management and leadership development programme Welsh language training and awareness supported by our Welsh Language advisor We have taken the following steps on data: We are having a renewed push to collect data on all Protected Characteristics from our employees so as to minimise missing data fields whilst respecting potential concerns about providing this information We monitor our recruitment and selection data to ensure that we recruit fairly and that employees have fair opportunities to develop their careers Via the data we collect on who receives learning and development, we ensure that all employees have access to opportunities to develop their skills and abilities We monitor turnover and data from completed exit questionnaires We ensure that our performance management systems are fair to all We engage with our EDI group so that they can act as critical friends in challenging what the data are telling us The need for equality, diversity and inclusion has been a central theme The need for equality, diversity and inclusion has been a central theme of our work to modernise our London office. Our redesign complies with guidance from the Centre for Accessible Environments, legislative requirements and BS 8300. Remodelled kitchens and a reduction in fixed desks provide greater space and accessibility for wheelchair users. We have used colour demarcation and even lighting to help those with visual impairments. For those with hearing difficulties, an induction loop is available. And we have created a multi-faith room for quiet reflection. Taking it further What we propose to do next Our People Strategy is central to meeting our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. We set out here some of the key areas we will focus on to deliver this commitment. Equality, Diversity and inclusion at Board level We recognise that the level of diversity around our Commissioner Board table is not as rich as it should be. Appointments to our Board are governed by a Parliamentary

statutory process which limits our ability to rectify this directly ourselves or quickly. Accordingly we will adopt a twin track strategy: To continue to encourage recognition that diversity must be at the heart of all recruitment processes for the appointment of new Board members Appointing one or more expert independent advisors to the Board to facilitate hearing a more diverse range of voices in Board deliberations Increasing workforce diversity We will continue to encourage a diversity of applicants through using anonymous recruiting, considering the design of our posts and encouraging applications from a diverse range of people, and continue to monitor process and outcomes Over time we will move to a new recruitment system which will give us additional capacity to pull and use data and will improve accessibility We will explore and educate ourselves further on ways of supporting a diverse workforce through approaches such as Access to Work and maintaining our commitment to making reasonable adjustments Promoting inclusion We will aim to create an environment where our workforce can be themselves, proud of their identity and diversity; supported by an updated Dignity at Work policy, and to monitor this through our all staff surveys We will all work to deliver on our commitment to 'Zero Tolerance' of bullying and harassment Our workforce have told us how much they value the flexibility the Commission provides. We will build on the learnings from relevant impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic 2020/21 – including hybrid ways of working, dependence on electronic communication and virtual leadership – to help us build further on our flexible and inclusive workplace culture We will continue the work we have begun with our Race at Work Taskforce to give effect to our Race at Work Charter and have appointed an independent adviser to support this work We will continue to seek views from across our workforce and promote inclusion through our EDI group and other means, recognising that staff may not feel comfortable expressing views through the staff survey and/or in exit interviews We will continue to promote and celebrate equality, diversity and inclusion through a calendar of events for our workforce Learning and development We will ensure that training on equality, diversity and inclusion is included in development plans as a matter of course at all levels of the organisation, drawing on externally available expertise We will roll out a module focusing on equality, diversity and inclusion as part of our management and leadership development training for all managers We will raise awareness of the skills of our Welsh Language Advisor and Welsh language translator to support and enhance Welsh language training and awareness of the Welsh language Our induction will ensure that all new employees receive relevant information on the Commission's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. Similarly we will provide appropriate 'welcome' content for any agency temps that we use We will look at how best to support the career progression of staff in groups who are under-represented drawing on the experience of our Race at Work Charter Task Force and working with these groups to examine approaches such as mentoring and secondments Performance We will provide 'EDI objective' examples for use in the individual performance management of employees performance We will ensure any workforce EDI related issues are handled sensitively but appropriately, calling on Commission policies as appropriate Employee engagement We will continue to discuss the results of our regular all staff survey and seek feedback both through teams and through the Commission's staff groups such as the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion group and the Staff Engagement Group and through our work with PCS as our recognised trade union Improving collection of data We will work to encourage employees to feel comfortable to self-declare their diversity in our HR system to improve our baseline whilst ensuring that we mitigate concerns about the sharing of sensitive personal data. High

level data reports will continue to be shared with our EDI group and with our Executive Team. We plan to tender for a new system which will enhance our ability to gather and track data. We will continue to track the diversity of those who apply for Commission jobs and the reasons stated by employees leaving the Commission. This data at high level will continue to be shared with our Executive Team and with our Remuneration and HR Committee. Communicating our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. Communicating with our customers Working with stakeholders is essential to delivering the aims set out in this strategy. We have therefore consulted with a wide range of partners. Communicating with our people We have consulted staff widely in the production of this strategy. It has been shared and discussed with staff through a range of Commission groups: Our Staff Engagement Group Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group Our Race at Work Taskforce Our Dignity and Respect group Our Mental Health First Aiders We have also consulted Commission PCS representatives. Equality, diversity and inclusion have formed a key part of our management and development leadership programme, ensuring that managers role model the values the Commission supports and embed them in their teams. The Strategy has also been discussed with our Remuneration and Human Resources Committee and our Board. Ensuring that everybody in the Commission knows about the Strategy and the standards it sets is crucial to its success. So an internal communications plan is one of the first priorities identified in the Action Plan. How to give us feedback and how to tell us if you are not content We welcome feedback on this Strategy. Please send your feedback to our EDI Lead Cindy Williams at edi@electoralcommission.org.uk, or by post to: Cindy Williams The Electoral Commission 3 Bunhill Row London EC1Y 8YZ If you are not content with our approach and want to make a complaint, the procedure for doing so is set out on our website. Making it happen In this chapter we set out how we will assess, monitor and report on progress against the EDI strategy. Our Action Plan Our Action Plan is attached at Annex A . It sets out equality related activities taking place across the Commission. These actions will be reflected in our Corporate Plan for 2022-27, in our business and operational plans and in the objectives of all staff as appropriate. Progress will be tracked as part of the Commission's performance tracking through monthly and quarterly reporting. We are committed to increasing and improving the collection of data. The plan will be updated regularly as part of our wider planning. Reporting on and sharing progress internally Objectives for the organisation will be tracked through our internal performance monitoring system, with monthly reports to ET and quarterly reports to the Board. There will be a specific objective on equality, diversity and inclusion: The Commission's Remuneration and HR Committee will track progress on behalf of the Board and offer constructive challenge The Commission's own internal staff groups will act as critical friends, holding the leadership of the Commission accountable for progress Reporting and sharing on progress externally The Commission is accountable to the Speaker's Committee of the UK Parliament, to the Scottish Parliament and to the Senedd. The key mechanism for demonstrating this accountability is through our existing mechanisms. We will set out in our annual Business Plan what actions we propose to take, and will report on progress in our Annual Report. In Wales we will provide an annual report on our compliance with the 168 statutory Welsh Language Standards and what more we can do to enhance the bilingual services provided both internally and externally. Specific requirements apply in Northern Ireland. The Single Equality Scheme setting out how we will meet these requirements forms part of this Strategy. We will provide an annual review of our performance against this strategy and our Disability Action Plan. We will also provide a five yearly summary of our refresh of the strategy. Action Plan

Action Plan This action plan sets out what we will do to deliver against the objectives identified in this Strategy. It reflects the priorities and objectives identified in the Corporate Plan for 2022-27. These will be reviewed annually as part of our Business Planning cycle. We will report on progress as part of our Annual Report.

Objective 1 Equality, diversity and inclusion in the democratic process

Action When we will do it Measure of success Who is responsible Continue to improve our research data to enhance our evidence base, ensuring we carry out screening and if appropriate an EQIA for research proposals Ongoing Evidence base gives us clear data to support our aims for equality, diversity and inclusion Head of Research Continue to ensure that campaigns to raise public awareness about the electoral system are inclusive and take account of different groups Ongoing; to form part of each campaign Our messages feature in targeted media; good response from targeted groups Head of Campaigns Continue to ensure that our guidance is available in a variety of formats Ongoing Our stakeholders are supported in compliance with the PSED Head of Regulatory Support and Head of Guidance Take further steps to ensure our website and our publications are as accessible as possible Ongoing: our website already meets best practice AA standards Best practice maintained and enhanced through regular testing and feedback Head of Digital Communications Build on the success of the partnership work we have already done in ensuring we continue to identify the needs of diverse groups and respond to them to ensure that democracy is accessible to all Continue initiatives to identify groups less likely to vote and work to find ways to respond to their needs and remove barriers to voting Good levels of awareness from specific groups; guidance clear on accessibility Head of Campaigns working with the Commission's offices in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland; Head of Guidance

Objective 2 Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion in our processes and decision making

Action When we will do it Measure of success Who is responsible Ensure that the guidance, support and challenge we provide for Electoral Registration Officers supports them to encourage registration from typically under-registered groups in their areas (based on their demographics) Ongoing: we have laid the new Standards before Parliament We provide the right guidance and support to EROs and quality assure that we have done so Head of Guidance, Head of Support and Improvement, Heads of Electoral Commission in Wales and Scotland Ensure that our guidance, support and challenge to Returning Officers promote the provision of equality of access and experience for all at the polls Ongoing: we constantly update and improve our guidance We provide the right guidance and support to ROs Head of Guidance; Head of Support and Improvement, Heads of Electoral Commission in Wales and Scotland Introduce new processes for carrying out, reviewing and publishing Equality Impact Assessments New EQIA process rolled out on trial basis by the end of 2021 Enhanced ability to assess the impact of proposed changes on equalities Head of Planning and Performance; all staff responsible for areas where screening and if necessary a full EQIA may be required Ensure that the Commission's procurement strategy includes clear EDI outcomes for contractors, and that effective monitoring of these contractors is done to ensure they comply Ongoing Contractors have equalities policies in place Head of Finance and Ensure through our Quality Assurance initiative that equality is embedded as appropriate in all our processes Ongoing All processes pay due regard to equalities Head of Projects and all managers Continue to keep our internal regulatory procedures under review for best practice and to ensure that consistency, fairness and quality underpin all our regulatory activities Ongoing Decisions seen to be made transparently and fairly in a way which treats all stakeholders equally Head of Registration and Reporting; Head of

Monitoring and Enforcement Ensure that equality is included as appropriate in our policies including our Enforcement Policy as they are reviewed in line with our normal cycle Ongoing All policies pay due regard to equalities All Heads responsible for organisational policies Implement a Welsh Language Action Plan to enhance our service to Welsh speakers, building on the appointment of a permanent senior adviser on Welsh language and a permanent translator All parts of the organisation are aware of and meet the Welsh language standards Head of Electoral Commission in Wales; all Heads Objective 3 Ensure equality, recognition of diversity and inclusion for everyone at the Commission Action When we will do it Measure of success Who is responsible Meet the commitments and actions stated in our people strategy Ongoing Progress demonstrated in line with commitment Head of Human Resources and all managers We will continue using anonymous recruiting for employed roles (our e-recruitment system does not share name or other demographic info with recruiting) Ongoing The diversity of whom we recruit Head of Human Resources and all recruiting managers We will consider the design of our roles including through the lens of being open to all Ongoing The diversity of whom we recruit Recruiting managers (with support from Human Resources team) We will tender for an e-recruitment system that meets our data needs By 2022 Diversity data reports on job applicants for employed roles Human Resources Team We will aim to create an environment where all staff can be themselves at work Ongoing Positive findings in all staff surveys and feedback from staff groups; consider ways of encouraging feedback from those not comfortable with these mechanisms Work led by Anti Bullying champion Updated Dignity at Work policy for 2021/2. By 2022 Updated policy reflecting Commission needs and priorities Human Resources team, DARE, EDI Group, Anti Bullying champion, PCS We will work to deliver on our commitment to 'Zero Tolerance' of bullying and harassment. Ongoing with annual review Levels of bullying and harassment experienced and witnessed fall Anti-Bullying Champion working with Dignity and Respect Group; all managers and colleagues We will build on the learnings from relevant impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic 2020/21 – including hybrid ways of working, dependence on electronic communication; virtual leadership – to help us shape a new and inclusive workplace culture Ongoing as the pandemic recedes Continued balance of high staff engagement with delivery of business All managers and staff We will work through our Race at Work Champion and our Race at Work Taskforce to give effect to our Race at Work Charter. Ongoing Actions agreed with Task Force and carried through according to plan. We have set ourselves a target to bring the diversity of our workforce in line with the diversity of the UK. Race at Work Champion working with the Task Force We will work with and support a new permanent EDI Lead for the Commission From Summer 2021 EDI lead delivers against agreed outcomes Head of Strategic Planning and Performance We will continue to seek views and promote EDI through our EDI group Ongoing EDI considered in Commission decisions and processes All Heads Through continuing to provide induction to employees and workers, we will let them know of the EDI agenda and priorities Ongoing All new employees, temporary or permanent, understand the Commission's expectations on EDI Human Resources team, SLG and recruiting managers We will continue to discuss the results of all staff surveys and seek feedback both through teams and through the Commission's groupings such as the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion group, the Staff Engagement Group and with PCS After each full all staff survey Staff feel confident to speak up and share views to enhance the all staff survey process Head of Human Resources working with relevant groups We will encourage employees to self-declare their diversity in our HR system to improve our organisational EDI data Spring 2021 We have set a target of 85% for

2022-23, to be reviewed for the next year Head of Human Resources We will continue to track the diversity of applicants and of leavers Ongoing Levels of diversity rise. We have set ourselves a target to bring the diversity of the workforce in line with the diversity of the UK. Human Resources team and managers Communicating our commitment to diversity Action When we will do it Measure of success Who is responsible We will draw up and implement a strategy for internal communications to make sure all staff are aware of our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion In line with publication of Strategy All staff aware of Strategy and their responsibilities under it EDI lead working with Head of Internal Communications Annexes Annexes Annex A: our legal responsibilities Introduction This chapter sets out the legal requirements which apply to the Commission. There are particular requirements in Northern Ireland, and we have set out where these apply only there. Electoral legislation is a devolved matter and differing provisions apply in Wales and in Scotland, for example extension of the franchise. GB statutory requirements The core EDI framework for public sector organisations is set out in the Equality Act 2010 and the specific Public Sector Duties (also known as the equality duty). The Scottish Parliament and the Senedd have set out some of their own specific commitments. Under the Equality Act 2006, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has a statutory remit to protect, enforce and promote equality across nine protected characteristics that are set out in the Equality Act 2010: Age Disability Gender reassignment Marriage and civil partnership Pregnancy and maternity Race Religion or belief (including the right not to believe) Sex Sexual Orientation This remit includes regulating the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The PSED is a positive duty on public authorities and others carrying out public functions. It requires that public authorities give proper consideration to equality in their day-to-day work in shaping policy, delivering services and in their employment practices. The PSED operates in two linked parts – the General Equality Duty and the Specific Duties. The General Equality Duty is set out in s.149 of the Equality Act 2010 and requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not, and foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not These are sometimes referred to as the three aims or arms of the general equality duty. It is not sufficient to passively comply by trying not to discriminate. Organisations must actively seek to 'eliminate' unlawful discrimination, 'advance' equality and 'foster' good relations. Similarly, the Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves: Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low The Act states that meeting different needs involves taking steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities. It describes fostering good relations as tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups. It states that compliance with the duty may involve treating some people more favourably than others. The Human Rights Act 1998 and the European Convention on Human Rights Under the Human Rights Act it is unlawful for us to act in a way that is incompatible with the rights set out in the European Convention on Human Rights. Article 14 protects against discrimination in enjoying these rights on the basis of any ground including sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or

other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status. Article 3 protocol 1 of the European Convention on Human Rights guarantees the right to free elections. Additional requirements in Wales

The same statutory framework applies in Wales with one exception: legislation defining the equal status of the Welsh language. The Commission is not listed as a public body for the purpose of the socio-economic duty in section 1 of the Equalities Act. Welsh Ministers do have the power to amend by regulations those to whom the socio-economic duty applies, however. The Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011 requires us to treat the Welsh and languages equally when providing services to the public in Wales. The Commission is listed in Schedule 6 of the Welsh Language Standards (No. 2) Regulations 2016. By Regulation 2 of the 2016 Regulations the standards set out therein apply to the Commission ("the Standards"). There are 168 standards. These require the Commission to treat the Welsh and languages equally when providing services to the public in Wales (the service delivery standards).

There are further standards requiring the Welsh language to be given particular consideration (the policy making standards). There are standards which apply to the day to day work of the Commission (the operational standards). There are a number of supplementary standards which apply, too. Finally, there are the record keeping standards which require a record to be kept of both internal and external Welsh language related matters.

The position in Scotland Public authorities must publish equality information by 30 April 2021 under the Scottish specific duties (including a new set of equality outcomes, pay gap information and equal pay statements). They must also publish reports on their progress on achieving their equality outcomes and on mainstreaming equality by this date: a mainstreaming report annualised employee information a report on progress made to achieve the authorities equality outcomes, and a refreshed set of equality outcomes Authorities with 20 (250 plus in the rest of the UK) or more employees also have to publish:

- a statement on equal pay (including information on occupational segregation), and gender pay gap information

The BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 requires public bodies in Scotland to publish plans every six years, showing how they will promote and support BSL. Our equality duties in Northern Ireland

As a public authority the Commission has obligations in accordance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, which requires all government bodies to protect and promote the right to equality, ensuring that equality of opportunity and good relations are principal considerations in the construction of policies, policy implementation and the provision of services. Section 75 (1) stipulates;

- (1) A public authority shall in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity— (a) between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation; (b) between men and women generally; (c) between persons with a disability and persons without; And (d) between persons with dependants and persons without.

In addition Irish Travellers are an identified group under the Race Relations Northern Ireland Order 1997, and political opinion is a unique protected characteristic in Northern Ireland. In discharge of their Section 75(1) duties the Commission must give 'due regard' to the nine identified equality areas when carrying out their functions. Section 75 (2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 states that (2)

- (2) Without prejudice to its obligations under subsection (1), a public authority shall in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group. The Commission should promote equality of opportunity and good relations through the development of policies and through

positive action steps taken to reduce the potential impacts of a policy on a particular group. In order to comply with Section 75 the Commission must monitor sensitive personal data in line with monitoring guidance produced by the ECNI. To demonstrate compliance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 the Commission are required under Schedule 9 of the aforementioned Act to provide an Equality Scheme to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI). The Equality Scheme is subject to approval by the ECNI. The Equality Scheme is the Commission's suggestions on how they will comply with Section 75 and sets out the actions (including time scales) the Commission shall undertake to take to ensure the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations. Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 sets out the requirements of an Equality Scheme and I attach the ECNI's draft Equality Scheme Model for your reference. The ECNI have stated that a public authorities Equality Scheme should: assess its compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties assess and consult on the likely impact of policies on the promotion of equality of opportunity monitor any adverse impact of policies on the promotion of equality of opportunity; publish results of such assessments detail training provided to staff ensure and assess public access to information and services provided by the public authority The Equality Scheme should also set out the complaints procedures in respect of the scheme and procedures to assist individual complainants. To competently monitor the likely impact of policies on the promotion of equality of opportunity a two-step equality assessment approach should be adopted by the Commission as below: Screening, through which the Commission undertakes a review of the Policy at the beginning to identity if the policy may have any major equality impact issues, and An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA), which may be considered prudent if the policy affects a large group of people and is central to the principle of equality of opportunity. The Commission should consider how they could reduce this possible impact, which may include the possibility of an alternative policy. The Commission as part of the EQIA should allow for a twelve week consultation period with individuals who may be effected by the policy. Results of the EQIA should be published. Following the initial Equality Scheme the Commission must undertake a five yearly review and provide a summary to the ECNI. Disability Action Plans As with the obligations set out under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Commission are required under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006 to promote positive attitude towards disabled individuals and encourage participation in public life. This must be detailed in a Disability Action Plan submitted to the ECNI by the Commission. The Commission should allow a two month consultation period for the purposes of preparing their Disability Action Plan. Failure by the Commission to submit a Disability Action Plan will result in a referral to the Northern Ireland Assembly by the ECNI. Annual Reviews The Commission must submit an annual review of their Section 75 obligations and Equality Scheme and their S49A obligations and Disability Action Plan to the ECNI on the 31st August each year. Monitoring the composition of our workforce under the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998 Under the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (FETO NI) specified public bodies are required to monitor the composition of their workforce in terms of community background and sex. Whilst this does not apply to the Commission because of the number of staff based in NI, we are committed to ensuring no discrimination on the grounds of religious belief and/or political opinion. Even though we are not required to report, we actively monitor the composition of our NI workforce. Discrimination in the Provision of Goods, Facilities and Services and in

the disposal and management of premises. In Northern Ireland, protection is afforded from discrimination in accessing goods, facilities, services and in the disposal and management of premises under the heads of the following legislation: Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976 (as amended) – SDO Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) – DDA Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order 2005 (as amended) - SENDO Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 (as amended) - RRO. Irish Travellers are explicitly covered in the Order which recognises them as a specific racial group Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998 (as amended) – FETO Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) 2006 (as amended) – Sexual Orientation Regulations The Commission ensures that it follows good practice in the service it provides to its stakeholders and to communities. Annex B: the structure of the Electoral Commission Learn about our Executive Team and Senior Leadership team . Annex C: list of consultees England Age UK AKT Alzheimer's Trust Board of Deputies of British Jews British Board of Scholars and Imams British Council of Churches British Youth Council Business in the Community Business Disability Forum Centre for Ageing Better Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development Disability Rights UK Employers Network for Equality and Social Inclusion Equality and Human Rights Commission Friends, Families, Travellers Gender Information, Research and Education Society Homeless Link Institute for Learning Disabilities Leonard Cheshire LGBT Foundation Mencap MIND Mumsnet National Council of Voluntary Organisations Operation Black Vote Opportunity Now Patchwork Foundation Race Equality Foundation RNIB RNID Runnymede Trust Scope Stonewall Travellers' Movement United Response Womens' Aid Young Womens' Trust Wales Chwarae Teg Cymorth Cymru Disability Wales Diverse Cymru Equality and Human Rights Commission (Wales) Learning Disability Wales Muslim Council of Wales Race Council Cymru Race Equality First RNIB Cymru RNID Cymru Stonewall Cymru Welsh Government Equality Branch Welsh Language Commissioner Welsh Womens' Aid Scotland Age Scotland Article 12 BEMIS CEMVO Deaf Scotland Engender Equality Network Homeless Network Scotland Inclusion Scotland LGBT Youth Scotland RNIB Scotland Scottish Government Equalities Unit Scottish Human Rights Commission Stonewall Scotland Transgender Alliance Young Scotland Youth Parliament Northern Ireland Organisations Action on Hearing Loss ADAPT Northern Ireland Advice NI Age NI Age Sector Platform An Munia Tober Association of Talking Newspapers Autism NI Aware Belfast Butterfly Club Belfast Islamic Centre Belfast Jewish Community Bishop of Down and Connor/Catholic Church British Deaf Association NI Bryson Charitable Group Bryson Intercultural Carers NI Cedar Foundation Children in Northern Ireland (CiNI) Children's Law Centre Chinese Welfare Association Church of Ireland Coalition on Sexual Orientation Commissioner for Older People NI Committee on the Administration of Justice Community Development and Health Network (NI) Community Relations Council Council for the Homeless (NI) Diabetes UK NI Disability Action Disability Sport NI Down's Syndrome Association East Belfast Community Development Agency Employers for Disability NI Equality Commission for Northern Ireland First Division Association Human Rights Consortium Indian Community Centre Inspire Marie Curie Mencap Methodist Church Mindwise Motor Neurone Disease Association National Autistic Society Northern Ireland NI Association for Mental Health NI Commissioner for Children & Young People NI Committee, Irish Congress of Trade Unions NI Council for Voluntary Action NI Womens Aid Federation NI Women's European Platform Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO) Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke Association Northern Ireland Council for Racial equality Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA) Northern Ireland Dyslexia Centre Northern Ireland ME Association Northern Ireland Union of

Supported Employment NOW Group Office of the Commissioner for Children & Young People Parenting NI Praxis Care Presbyterian Church Rainbow Project Relate NI RNIB RNIB NI Sense NI Start 360 The National Deaf Children's Society Training for Women Network Womens Support Network Local Government Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Ards and North Down Borough Council Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council Belfast City Council Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Derry City and Strabane District Council Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Mid Ulster District Council Newry, Mourne and Down District Council NI Stakeholder Northern Ireland Office EONI NI Departments The Executive Office Department for Economy Department for Infrastructure Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs Department for Communities Department of Education Department of Finance Department of Health Department of Justice NI Parties Alliance - Alliance Party of Northern Ireland Animal Welfare Party Aontú Conservative and Unionist Party Cross-Community Labour Alternative Democratic Unionist Party - D.U.P. Drug Law Reform Party Fianna Fáil - The Republican Party Green Party Humanity People Before Profit Alliance Progressive Unionist Party of Northern Ireland SDLP (Social Democratic & Labour Party) Sinn Féin Socialist Party (Northern Ireland) The Workers Party Traditional Unionist Voice – TUV Ulster Unionist Party Annex D: glossary and definitions AA Web Content Guidelines 1.0 These guidelines set out how to make our website accessible to people with disabilities Adverse Impact Where a group of people protected by equality law has been affected differently by a policy and the effect is less favourable, it is known as adverse impact CEO Chief Electoral Officer Commission The Electoral Commission Consultation Our equality consultation involves asking our stakeholders (i.e., service users, staff, the general public) for their views on how best to design policies that promote equality Due regard To properly consider the need to promote equality, taking into account our purpose and the need to spend public money effectively EAA Equality impact assessment An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is a tool to ensure we don't exclude anybody from accessing our services or those that we play a part in delivering. It's also a chance to explore ways to promote equality ERO Electoral Registration Officer Great Britain England, Scotland and Wales HR Human resources IER Individual electoral registration Policy The term policy covers the definition and process of how an organisation carries out its functions, for example in reaching decisions Protected Groups Refers to the characteristics of people legally protected from discrimination PPE Act Political Parties and Elections Act 2009 PPERA Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 RCO Referendum Counting Officer RO Returning Officer Schedule 9 Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 sets out detailed provisions for the enforcement of the Section 75 statutory duties, including an outline of what should be included in an equality scheme Screening The procedure for identifying which policies will be subject to equality impact assessment, and how these equality impact assessments will be prioritised Definition of the characteristics of people protected from discrimination in the UK Age: Under Chapter 1 of the Equalities Act 2010 this refers to persons defined by age group, whether a particular age or a range of ages. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act guidance proposes that for most purposes, the main categories are: those under 18; people aged between 18 and 65; and people over 65. However, the definition of age groups will relate to the policy under consideration. Disability: Under Chapter 1 of the Equalities Act 2010 a person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Gender reassignment: Under Chapter 1 of the Equalities Act this refers

to people who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process for the purpose of reassigning their sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex. A reference to a transsexual person is a person who has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment. Marriage and Civil Partnership: Under the Equality Act 2010 civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters. ‘Status’ can refer to whether a person is single, divorced or separated, married or in a civil partnership. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act guidance refers to married people; unmarried people; divorced or separate people; and widowed people. Pregnancy and maternity: Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after birth, and includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding. Race: Race is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins. Religion: Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Sex is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as referring to men and women. Sexual Orientation is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as referring to whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes. People with dependants: Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 guidance defines this group as: people with a primary responsibility for: a child; a person with a disability; a dependent elderly person. Political opinion: Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 guidance defines political opinion as: Unionists generally; Nationalists generally; members/supporters of any political party; other. Language: In compliance with the Welsh Language Act 1993 and the Welsh Language Measure 2011, this consideration refers to a group of people defined by the language they speak. In Wales we have a duty to provide services in Welsh and as set out in the Welsh Language Standards. 1. Diversity of candidates and elected officials, EHRC 2019. ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. NISRA 2011 Census ■ Back to content at footnote 2 3. 2020 NI Life and Times survey, Political Attitudes module ■ Back to content at footnote 3 4. How Britain voted in the 2019 General Election: Ipsos Mori, December 2020. ■ Back to content at footnote 4 Page history First published: 22 September 2022 Last updated: 14 November 2022 Related content Report: Voting in 2017 Read our report about voting at the general election in 2017 Testing the EU referendum question Find out about our testing of the EU referendum question Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run Results and turnout at the 2017 UK general election View the results and turnout at the 2017 general election

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Commissioners On this page John Pullinger CBE Rob Vincent CBE Dame Sue Bruce Alex Attwood Sarah Chambers Lord Stephen Gilbert of Panteg Roseanna Cunningham Dr Katy Radford Professor Dame Elan Closs Stephens CBE Chris Ruane Sal Naseem Independent Adviser to the Board on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Paul Redfern Independent Adviser to the Audit and Risk Committee First published: 30 May 2019 Last updated: 24 March 2023 What we publish and why We are independent, and impartially is important in everything we do. Our Commissioners tell us their interests, and record all of the gifts and hospitality they receive, including any they refuse. We then publish this information, to show we are independent and impartial. John Pullinger CBE Interests Trustee: Nuffield Foundation (Principal activity is funding research and innovation in education, justice, and welfare). Chair: Nuffield Foundation Finance Committee. Chair: Nuffield Foundation Steering Group on Inequalities in the 21st Century. Chair: Nuffield Foundation Steering Group on Children's Information Project. Member: Nuffield Foundation Investment Committee. Member: Nuffield Foundation Audit and Risk Committee. Director: Great Culverden Park Limited (principal activity is management of an area of woodland). Director: John Pullinger Limited (principal activity is professional advice). Advisor: World Bank Group (principal activity is reducing poverty and building shared prosperity in developing countries). Advisor: Office for National Statistics (Principal activity is UK National Statistical Institute) ended October 2022. Member of External Honours Panel: Royal Statistical Society (principal activity is as a Professional Body). Board member: Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data (Principal activity is acting as a network supporting the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals), ended June 2022. President: International Association for Official Statistics (principal activity is improving official statistics) ended July 2021. Chair of Oversight Group on Location Data Ethics: Geospatial Commission (principal activity is setting and promoting the UK geospatial strategy) ended June 2022. Member of External Honours Panel: Royal Statistical Society (principal activity is as a Professional body). Governor: National Institute for Economic and Social Research. Visiting Professor: Imperial College, London. Advisor for Parliament of Ukraine: Westminster Foundation for Democracy (Principal activity is strengthening parliamentary democracy around the world). From July 2022 ended September 2022. Chair: High Level Steering Group: Better Lives 2030 Conference Zambia, April 2023 Rob Vincent CBE Interests Chair: Kirklees Cultural Education Trust (Pro bono) Non-Executive Director on both the Whittington Health Trust and the University College London Hospital Trust ended 2021. Non-Executive Director on both Whittington Health Trust and the University College London Hospital Trust ended 2021. Director, New Ing Consulting (mentoring and technical assessment work with Local Government Chief Executives), remunerated. Previous Chief Executive of Kirklees MBC (2004-2010) and Doncaster MBC (2010-2011) Implementation Director for the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (Sept 2013-March 2014), remunerated. Chair of Rotherham Improvement Board (Sept 2014-March 2015), remunerated. Advisor to Tower Hamlets Council on governance and decision making issues (May-Oct 2015), remunerated. NED on the UCL Hospital Trust Board since 2021. Dame Sue Bruce Interests SSE plc – Non-Executive Director (Remunerated) 2017. Electoral Commission RemCo Chair 2018- NomCo member. University of Strathclyde – Convenor of Court, pro bono. RSNO – Chair, pro bono, 2017. National Trust for Scotland: Independent Chair of Nominations Committee, pro bono, retired 2022. Erskine Stewart's Melville Schools – Advisor, pro bono, retired 2021. Royal Company of

Merchants of the City of Edinburgh – Member, pro bono. The Prince's Foundation: Trustee, appointed to Chair in September 2021, unenumerated. Bruce Consultancy Service Ltd Declared in 2017 and declared winding up in 2021. Deputy Lieutenant - The City of Edinburgh. Retired from the National Trust for Scotland as Independent Chair of the Nominations Committee. Appointed by Scottish Ministers as Independent Chair of the Review of Inspection, Regulation and Scrutiny of Social care in Scotland. Elected Treasurer of the Royal Company of Merchants of the City of Edinburgh. Alex Attwood Interests Member Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) Member Advisory Board Safefood (all-Ireland body/food safety promotion including research, scientific co-operation, safety assessment and diet related disease) Member Panel European Mediators (Conciliation Resources/MediatEUR) Membership of an Advisory Group to the Northern Ireland Justice Minister on Tracking Paramilitarism. Practitioner and governance consultant (conflict management and resolution), 2017-present. Consultant to SDLP, January 2020-January 2021. Declaration of financial interest – undertaking research on general policing issues and undertaking research on issues which come before the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) and its committees in connection with the role of a member of the NIPB. Member of the Electoral Commission for Ireland ("An Coimisiún Toghchain") Sarah Chambers Interests Member of Consumer Engagement Group of UK Power Networks, remunerated, ended 31 January 2022 Vice Chair of Greenhouse Sports, a charity, pro bono. Panel Member Competition & Markets Authority until 30 June 2018, remunerated. Panel Member Judicial Appointments Commission (Remunerated) Chair of Legal Services Consumer Panel 2021, remunerated. Chair Renewable Energy Consumer Code Applications Panel, remunerated. Member of the Determinations Panel of the Pensions Regulator, remunerated. Member of Civil Aviation Authority Consumer Panel until 31 October 2018, remunerated. Reappointed pensions regulator second term 2022. Member of the Consumer Advisory Group of the Association of British Insurers, unremunerated Consumer Expert Panel member for the Office of Rail and Road Lord Stephen Gilbert of Panteg Interests Member, House of Lords, remunerated. Member of the Conservative Party Chair, Digital and Communications Select Committee ceased as of 20 January 2022. Principal, Stephen Gilbert Consulting 30 April 2021, remunerated. Member, Executive Committee, BGIPU. Chair, Audit Committee, BGIPU. Joint pre-legislative Scrutiny Committee on the Draft Online Safety Bill ceased on 11 December 2022. Select Committee on the Fraud Act and Digital Fraud, January 2022 to October 2022 ceased. Member of the following All Party Parliamentary Groups: General Aviation, LGBT + Rights, Hospitality and Events in Wales, Singapore, Taiwan, ITV, Channel 4, BBC. Member of the Industry and Regulators Select Committee of the House of Lords. Roseanna Cunningham Interests Membership of the Scottish National Party. Sibling is a sitting Councillor for Scottish National Party. Dr Katy Radford Interests Commissioner Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, ended June 2022, remunerated. Chair Northern Ireland Committee British Council (Not remunerated) ended July 2022 Employed by Commission for Victims and Survivors Northern Ireland. Member of the Executive Council of the Belfast Jewish Community, unremunerated. Social Partner on the Ards and North Down Borough Council Peace IV Partnership ended. Police Service Northern Ireland External Reference Group member British Council: Member of the Board of Trustees Professor Dame Elan Closs Stephens CBE Interests Non-Executive Board member of BFI Big Screen Ltd. Non-Executive Director and Member for Wales of the BBC Unitary Board (July 2017-July 2020) (Reappointed until July 2023) This appointment includes being Chair of the Wales Nations Committee. Chair of the BBC Commercial Holdings. Member of Northern Ireland Nations Committee. Chair of the Welsh Government's Public Leaders Forum Chair of Nominations Committee for High

Sheriff in Counties of Carmarthen, Ceredigion and Pembroke Unremunerated. Deputy Lieutenant for the three counties of Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion. Trustee Strata Florida Trust, charitable organisation to enhance interest in the Cistercian abbey of Strata Florida. Pro-Chancellor Aberystwyth University, Member of the University Court, and Professor Emerita. Fellow of the Learned Society of Wales. Chris Ruane Interests Chair of the Frazzled Café Mental Health Charity. Vice Chair of Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council. Trustee of Oxford Mindfulness Foundation. Chair of Mindfulness Initiatives International Network. Board Member of Mindfulness Wales. Hon President All Party Parliamentary Group on Mindfulness. Member of the Labour Party. Spouse works part time for a Member of Parliament. Sal Naseem Independent Adviser to the Board on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Interests Regional Director for London and National Lead on Discrimination Independent Office for Police Conduct. Advisory Board Member: Tell MAMA, voluntary. National Chair of Ethnic Minorities into Leadership Conference: FDA, voluntary. Member of Spectrum Speakers. Paul Redfern Independent Adviser to the Audit and Risk Committee Interests Together Housing – Risk & Audit Committee Member Member of the Advisory panel for the Independent Review of Inspection, Scrutiny and Regulation into social care for the Scottish Government. Related content Fees, travel and subsistence Look at the record of our Commissioners' fees, travel and subsistence Our Commissioners Selecting our Commissioners Find out about the selection process for our Commissioners Electoral Commission Board Find out about our Electoral Commission board, and read the minutes of past meetings

Performance analysis 2021/22: Goal two | Electoral Commission Search

Performance analysis 2021/22: Goal two You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 On this page Key achievements Performance measures Our activities during the year First published: 1 August 2022 Last updated: 1 August 2022 Goal two To ensure an increasingly trusted and transparent system of regulation in political finance, overseeing compliance, promoting understanding amongst those regulated and proactively pursuing breaches. This goal captures our regulatory role. We focus on two areas that are at the heart of a healthy democracy: ensuring transparency of political finances, and effective regulation. These areas are essential to ensuring voters have confidence in our elections. Our focus, as ever, has therefore been on our stakeholders, in every aspect of our regulatory work. Key achievements To ensure transparency, we: published financial reports from parties and campaigners worked with parties to deliver financial reports, and adapted our pattern of routine publications as a consequence of challenges parties faced with delivering reports as a result of the pandemic registered political parties and other campaigners and published details in online registers continued work on our new Political Finance Online system, including with the successful move to in-house development To support good regulation we: completed our largest ever survey of campaigners to understand their needs from our tools to support compliance with the law. continued to evolve our regulatory approach to deliver a greater package of support for parties and campaigners revised many of the guidance documents on the political finance laws on our website to move them to a new web format, progressing towards our aim of moving all guidance to this format over the coming years found flexible and new ways to continue our focus on supporting parties and campaigners during the pandemic built up our regulatory intelligence work to drive proactive interactions with individual campaigners took action and imposed sanctions when the political finance law was broken updated and enhanced our enforcement processes, drawing on best practice and learning from past cases. This will reinforce effective, timely and impartial investigations. Performance measures Measures Performance 100% of statements of accounts published within 60 working days of statutory deadline 100% of donation and loan reports received by statutory deadline published within 30 working days 100% Achieved 100% of donation and loan reports received by statutory deadline published within 30 working days 100% Achieved 25% of regulated and quarterly party donation and loan returns checked for permissibility 38.34% Achieved Number of effective regulatory guidance products/resources that we deliver to help the regulated community comply with the rules 118 90% of responses to requests for financial reporting regulatory advice issued within targets based on their complexity (Routine advice: 5 working days, medium complexity advice: 10 working days, formal advisory opinions and other advice on novel and complex matters: 20 working days) 92.79% Achieved 90% of applicants are notified of the outcome of their registration application within targets based on their complexity (simple applications: 35 working days, complex applications: 45 working days, non-party campaigners: 5 working days) 93.91% Achieved 90% of investigations are conducted within targets based on their complexity (simple cases: 90 calendar days, complex cases: 180 calendar days, highly complex cases: individual targets set on a case by case basis) 69.05% 1 Not achieved 90% of final notices issued within 21 calendar days of the deadline for representations passing, or 21 days of the date representations received if accepted after the deadline, whichever is later 88.89% 2 Not achieved Our activities during the year Ensuring transparency We maintained the registers of political parties,

assessing applications from new entrants to ensure only parties meeting the legal tests are on the register. We also processed changes to the details of existing ones as quickly as possible. Both activities enabled those parties to stand candidates in elections, and ensured the online registers of parties were up to date. We continued to publish political finance data as quickly as possible after it was delivered to us from parties and campaigners. Publishing this data means that voters have the information they need to understand how those seeking their vote are funded and how they spend their money. In the largest standalone publication of the year, in August we published 721 statements of accounts from parties and accounting units. While the pandemic continued to impact on parties and campaigners, we were largely able to publish donations and loans data, and statements of accounts as usual. We also published data on candidate pending in the 2021 Scottish Parliamentary and Senedd elections. Supporting good regulation We engaged with parties and campaigners to explore new and innovative ways to support compliance with the political finance regime. We sent more than 1,000 communications to parties, campaigners, regulated donors, members associations and unincorporated associations asking them to complete a survey to help us understand their needs. We received 347 responses, giving us detailed insight that is changing the way we support compliance. We continued development of the improved and updated version of Political Finance Online, which will make it easier for parties and campaigners to deliver the information to us that they are required to. We revised many of the guidance pages on our website, with more to follow, from documents to web text, working towards guidance that is more interactive and connected. As a result, we improved the search function so our guidance can be found more easily. We also published a specific suite of guidance for the May 2022 elections ahead of schedule. Our work to support parties and campaigners comply with electoral law, a lower number of regulated elections, and our continued supportive approach to non-compliance arising from COVID-related issues were all factors in a reduction in enforcement casework during the year. But because voters and campaigners need to know that we will take action where the rules are not followed, we have used our enforcement and sanctioning powers to identify and respond to non-compliance and deter future non-compliance where appropriate. We imposed financial penalties totalling £42,370 throughout 2021/22 and accepted the voluntary forfeiture of impermissible funds totalling £15,700 removing these from the political finance system. We adopted a proactive approach to gathering intelligence and making interventions during the campaign the Scottish Parliamentary and Senedd elections to prevent or reduce non-compliance. We also closely monitored compliance, as well as the ways in which parties and campaigners complied with, the new digital imprints regime that was in force for the Scottish Parliamentary election. This will help to inform future guidance and regulatory approaches.

[Navigation](#) [Previous](#) [Next](#)
[Performance analysis 2021/22: Goal one](#) [Performance analysis 2021/22: Goal three 1](#). We seek to conclude investigations as quickly as possible, but our first priority is always to conduct a fair and thorough investigation. There was no consistent issue leading to missed deadlines, in some complex cases there were multiple issues and offences to consider, in others lengthy communications with subjects, and COVID impacted generally on subject's resources, and at times on our resources. ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. One final notice was issued outside of the target timeframes. The final notice was due to be issued at a time where there were competing deadlines with a high priority complex investigation that took priority. ■ Back to content at footnote 2

4. Supporting and securing campaigner compliance with the law | Electoral Commission Search

4. Supporting and securing campaigner compliance with the law You are in the Corporate plan 2022/23 to 2026/27 section Home Our plans and priorities Corporate plan 2022/23 to 2026/27 On this page Ensuring campaigners can access support to understand the law in the way and at the time that works best for them Focus on Wales Ensuring political finance laws are enforced fairly, working with law enforcement and other regulators Publishing complete and accurate political finance data Focus on Northern Ireland Providing insights to campaigners and parliaments on how campaigning methods directly affect voter confidence in elections First published: 25 April 2022 Last updated: 25 April 2022 Summary s being able to get their messages to voters is a fundamental part of the democratic process. s, including parties, must be able to communicate with voters to explain their views and policies, so that voters are informed when they vote. And it's important that voters hear from a wide and diverse variety of campaigners. So campaigners must be able to campaign without facing undue actual or perceived barriers, while we continue to ensure political finance is transparent. We will improve the transparency of political campaigning, and help parties and campaigners to comply with the law, by: ensuring campaigners can access support to understand the law in the way and at the time that works best for them ensuring political finance laws are enforced fairly, working with law enforcement and other regulators publishing complete and accurate political finance data providing insights to campaigners and parliaments on how campaigning methods directly affect voter confidence in elections Ensuring campaigners can access support to understand the law in the way and at the time that works best for them Electoral law is complicated, but understanding and applying it should not be a barrier to those who want to campaign. We will work to ensure that campaigners can get on with campaigning, and examine barriers – both real and perceived – which prevent people who want to campaign from doing so. We will use these insights to ensure our guidance and other support tools work well for all campaigners no matter their financial size or experience. We will also complete and consolidate the strategic shift in the way we approach regulation outlined in our last Interim Corporate Plan, putting greater emphasis on tools to promote compliance. We will launch our new Political Finance Online database, continue to develop our proactive support for campaigners, transition to an intelligence-led approach to monitoring, and embed an effective regulatory insights and horizon-scanning process. We will also work with our partners to provide cybersecurity advice to parties and campaigners. Focus on Wales Focus on Wales: Supporting compliance with the law We will work closely with the Welsh Government to update the statutory Codes of Practice on election spending prior to the 2026 Senedd election, if necessary. We will ensure they reflect any changes to the law that are made. We will also support the Welsh Government with considering other future changes to the law, such as the potential introduction of digital imprints. We will also continue to work with Senedd officials as they draft the new reporting rules and processes to enable the rules to be adopted and dual reporting brought to an end. The Standards and Business Committees in the Fifth Senedd agreed that dual reporting will be brought to an end in Wales and that elected members will only be required to report to the Senedd. Ensuring political finance laws are enforced fairly, working with law enforcement and other regulators Parties, other campaigners and voters want confidence that political finance laws are enforced proportionately, consistently, and impartially. We will continue to conduct investigations, and be transparent about the outcomes of all our work. We will ensure the way we respond to electoral fraud is as effective as it can be, and will provide

support and advice to regulators and law enforcement. Publishing complete and accurate political finance data Compliance with the political finance reporting laws is already high. We will work to make compliance even higher, by introducing compliance tools that work for a range of campaigners, and through proportionate and impartial enforcement of the law. In Section 3, we noted our plans to make political finance data more accessible for voters. Our new Political Finance Online database will also be an important tool for campaigners, making reporting easier and faster. We will work to ensure consistent timely publication of financial data from parties, candidates and campaigners. Focus on Northern Ireland Focus on Northern Ireland: Publishing information on donations and loans Since July 2017, we have been able to publish information on donations and loans reported to us by parties in Northern Ireland. We know there is strong public support for transparent, unbiased information about how parties in Northern Ireland are funded, but we also know there is limited awareness of and knowledge about how the system of funding and regulation currently works. This means that negative perceptions can be based largely on assumptions and can damage confidence in the electoral system. We will work to ensure wider public understanding in Northern Ireland of the transparency of political finances.

Providing insights to campaigners and parliaments on how campaigning methods directly affect voter confidence in elections In Section 3, we noted our plans to help voters understand the rules on campaigning, with the aim of increasing confidence in elections. Another way we aim to increase voter confidence is by providing evidence-based insights to campaigners and parliaments to ensure they better understand the impact that different campaigning methods have on the way voters perceive elections and their results. We will also provide support and advice on new and developing campaigning methods. Navigation 3. Putting voters first Section 3 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan 5. Supporting local electoral services delivery and resilience Section 5 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan

Register of Equality Impact Assessment screenings | Electoral Commission Search Register of Equality Impact Assessment screenings You are in the Our plans and priorities section Home Our plans and priorities On this page Register of Equality Impact Assessment screenings Request a copy of a screening First published: 8 September 2023 Last updated: 8 September 2023 Summary We carry out Equality Impact Assessment screenings to assess the impact of new or revised policies or projects to decide whether a full Equality Impact Assessment is required. This process helps ensure that decisions are taken in a way which promotes equality of opportunity. We will update the register with any new assessment screenings every quarter (in April, July, September and January). Register of Equality Impact Assessment screenings Title of screening Policy Date Assistance with voting for disabled people at the polling station: Guidance for ROs Guidance for ROs as required under the Elections Act 2022 Originally signed off December 2022; updated to reflect monitoring August 2023 Introduction of in polling stations for UK Government elections Requirement for photographic ID to be shown in polling stations as required under the Elections Act 2022 December 2022 Performance management review Refreshing and updating our performance management scheme March 2023 Apprenticeships Policy on offering apprenticeships internally and externally June 2023 Mobile phone rollout Implementation of mobile phone rollout to all staff who want one August 2023 Request a copy of a screening Request a copy of an equality impact assessment Name Email address Email address Confirm email Title of the screening or screenings you would like a copy of Would you like to receive the screening by email or by post? By email By post Postal address Would you like to receive the screening in or Welsh? Welsh Leave this field blank

2023 report: Electoral registers in the UK | Electoral Commission Search
2023 report: Electoral registers in the UK You are in the Accuracy and completeness of electoral registers section Home Our research Accuracy and completeness of electoral registers Currently reading: of 6 - Show page contents On this page Headline findings Trends in the quality of the registers Completeness Accuracy Looking ahead: addressing the challenges of accuracy and completeness Case studies show how registration could be modernised Summary We run accuracy and completeness studies to measure the quality of the electoral registers, and assess how this changes in response to legislative developments and administrative and population changes. The results of this study on the December 2022 registers finds that levels of completeness are broadly stable across the UK with the notable exceptions of Northern Ireland which has seen a significant increase in registration levels since 2018 and, to a lesser extent, Wales where we also see a positive change. The accuracy of the registers is also stable, again with the exception of Northern Ireland where there has been an improvement. The changes in Northern Ireland bring levels of accuracy and completeness broadly into line with England, Scotland and Wales; both are at the highest levels we have recorded through these research studies. These improvements are the direct result of the recent 2021 canvass in Northern Ireland, something we also saw following the previous canvass in 2013. However, in our earlier studies we have seen declines between canvasses when the continuous registration system is operating. In Great Britain, both accuracy and completeness are largely stable. The annual canvass process was reformed in 2019 by the UK, Scottish and Welsh governments with the aim of reducing the burden on Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) while maintaining levels of accuracy and completeness. There is no evidence of any significant negative impact on either measure as a result of canvass reform but there has also been no significant improvement. summary Across the UK, potentially as many as 8 million people are not correctly registered at their current address (the research estimated a range of around 7-8 million people not correctly registered on the local government registers in December 2022). This matters because, while people can register ahead of each set of elections, it increases the chances that people will think they are registered when they are not and therefore be unable to vote come election day. Also, the more updates that are required to the registers in the short period before a poll, the more pressure is placed on the delivery of the service for voters. The Commission plays an important part in addressing under-registration through our continuing public awareness campaigning work, which we update regularly to ensure we are in-line with the latest insights about both voter attitudes and the demographic patterns of under-registered groups. However, there is little evidence to suggest that levels of accuracy and completeness are likely to significantly improve without major changes to the current electoral registration system. change Change is realistic and achievable We have highlighted since 2019 how the UK's governments could support EROs to improve the accuracy and completeness of electoral registers – and improve efficiency to alleviate resource burdens, by introducing modern registration approaches to supplement the current annual canvass and year-round online registration. These would involve utilising data from the many millions of transactions that voters already have with major public sector organisations. Depending on the quality and coverage of the data sets, and the specific data fields that are available, changes could support different levels and forms of modernisation, ranging from automatic registration to forms of integrated or assisted registration where voters would need to provide some information directly themselves.

We have set out a range of options for how specific data sources could be used to improve the accuracy and completeness of electoral registers, and in particular how registration rates of attainers and other young people, private renters and other recent home-movers could be improved. Further exploratory work would be needed to confirm the detailed feasibility and delivery implications of these options. The electoral community needs a clear plan to ensure that electoral registration processes are modernised so that people are registered and able to exercise their right to vote. As part of this plan we recommend that the UK's governments should pass legislation to create clear legal gateways for government departments and public sector bodies to share data on potentially eligible individuals with EROs. They should also require relevant departments and other public bodies to work with EROs to facilitate electoral registration using their data. We also recommend that the UK Government should develop the existing Individual Electoral Registration digital service so that it can support secure and efficient data sharing between data source organisations and EROs, to enable modern registration processes to be delivered.

Headline findings The results of our most recent study across the UK show the following results for the local government registers.

Location	2022 Change from 2018	Completeness Great Britain	Accuracy England
Scotland	81%	+3	-1
Wales	87%	+6	+2
Northern Ireland	83%	+10	0
England	88%	-1	+6 definition

Defining accuracy and completeness Our approach to assessing the quality of the electoral registers is based on two measures: accuracy and completeness. By accuracy we mean that ‘there are no false entries on the electoral registers’. The accuracy of the electoral registers is therefore a measure of the percentage of entries on the registers which relate to verified and eligible voters who are resident at that address. Inaccurate register entries may relate to entries which have become redundant (for example, due to home movement), which are ineligible and have been included unintentionally, or which are fraudulent. By completeness we mean that ‘every person who is entitled to have an entry in an electoral register is registered’. The completeness of the electoral registers therefore refers to the percentage of eligible people who are registered at their current address. The proportion of eligible people who are not included on the register at their current address constitutes the rate of non-registration continue The table above shows the percentage point change in completeness and accuracy compared to our last study in 2018. However, as these are survey results and subject to margins of error, not all of these changes are likely to be statistically significant. Overall across Great Britain, the completeness of the local government registers has increased slightly, while accuracy has stayed the same. The increase in completeness in Wales is likely to be a real improvement since 2018 while the apparent decline in Scotland is within the margin of error and should be treated as no change. In Northern Ireland, there has been a notable improvement in both the accuracy and completeness of the registers. Figures for the parliamentary registers are not shown but closely mirror the findings for the local government registers. Underneath these headline figures, the completeness and accuracy of the registers is expected to vary considerably across local authority areas due to the demographics of the local population as well as registration practices. Detailed results by part of the UK are available in factsheets: England Scotland Wales Northern Ireland The completeness of the registers varies for different socio-demographic groups. These patterns are largely consistent with the findings of our previous studies. Across the UK, age and duration at address were the variables most strongly associated with differences in completeness. Older

people and those who have lived at their address longer are more likely to be correctly registered. Variations in accuracy are more difficult to analyse because characteristics can only be collected for current residents. However, as in previous studies, we see that households where the existing residents have lived there for less time are more likely to have inaccurate register entries linked to them. You can also explore the data by headline demographics using our interactive tool.

Quantifying Completeness and Accuracy Quantifying Completeness and Accuracy Using the percentage figures produced from this research, it is possible to estimate the number of people in the population who are not correctly registered, or who have

inaccuracies in their register entries. Location Not correctly registered Inaccurate

register entries United Kingdom 7,000,000 - 8,000,000 5,300,000 - 6,200,000 Great

Britain 6,700,000 - 7,800,000 5,100,000 - 6,000,000 England 5,600,000 - 6,600,000

4,300,000 - 5,200,000 Scotland 650,000 - 1,000,000 390,000 - 640,000 Wales 275,000 -

400,000 200,000 - 300,000 Northern Ireland 230,000 - 280,000 170,000 - 210,000 These

can only be estimates for the following reasons: Both the completeness and accuracy

estimates are subject to confidence intervals (for example, +/- 1.1% for completeness

in Great Britain and 1.9% in Northern Ireland; +/- 1% for accuracy in Great Britain

and 1.5% for Northern Ireland). These margins will also apply to any quantification

of the estimates. The overall population figures on which these are based, sourced

from the Office for National Statistics, are mid-year estimates derived from the 2021

census. While these provide a reasonably accurate estimate of the UK population, they

do not include nationality figures. As eligibility to vote differs by election and is

determined by age and nationality, this means that it is not possible to definitively

determine the size of the population which is eligible to vote. Trends in the quality

of the registers The Commission has measured the completeness and accuracy of the

registers in England and Wales since 2001, and before that studies were carried out

by other organisations following each census. In Great Britain, the completeness of

the registers was at its highest (around 95%) in the 1950s and 1960s and started

declining in the 1980s. It decreased up to 2011 (82%) but has stabilised since, with

successive studies findings levels between 83-86%. In Northern Ireland, the

completeness is now at its highest level since the Commission began measuring it in

2012. Accuracy has not been consistently measured over as long a period as

completeness. In Great Britain levels have remained relatively stable over the last

decade. In Northern Ireland the picture is more volatile, reflecting similar changes

in completeness. Completeness summary The completeness of the registers varies for

different socio-demographic groups. These patterns are largely consistent with the

findings of our previous studies. Where reliable data is available for each part of

the UK it is shown. In some cases the size of samples means it is not possible to

show a demographic breakdown for each of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern

Ireland. In that case the most detailed breakdown available is included. Location

2011 2012 2014 2015 2018 2022 Change from 2022 Great Britain 82% - 85% 84% 83% 86% +3

England - - - 84% 83% 86% +3 Scotland - - - 85% 83% 81% -2 Wales - - - 84% 81% 87% +6

Northern Ireland - 71% - 79% 73% 83% +10 Additional analysis was carried out, for

Great Britain as a whole and separately for Northern Ireland, to identify the

demographic characteristics which are associated with higher or lower levels of

completeness and accuracy (once other factors are controlled for), as well as the

strength and statistical significance of these relationships. In Great Britain, age

and duration at address were the variables most strongly associated with differences

in completeness. Tenure, ethnic group, social grade and the number of adults in the

household were also significant factors, and there were also significant differences

between urban and rural areas and between the regions of England which remain even after controlling for demographic factors. In Northern Ireland, age and duration at address were also the main drivers of completeness. Although levels of completeness have similar socio-demographic patterns compared to Great Britain, when other factors are controlled for, no other demographics, beyond age and length of residence, were found to have a significant relationship with completeness. Population mobility

Previous research into the registers, which are property-based databases, has found a connection between home movement and completeness: greater mobility is associated with lower levels of completeness, while the longer an individual has been resident at their property, the more likely they are to appear on the electoral registers.

This pattern continues in this latest research, with completeness lowest among those who have lived at their address for less than a year and increasing by length of residence. Since 2018 in Northern Ireland, completeness has increased most significantly for those who have lived at their address for less than five years.

This is likely to be a direct result of the 2021 canvass. Length of residence

Completeness of the local government register by length of residence Location Great Britain England Scotland Wales Northern Ireland Year 2018 2022 2018 2022 2018 2022

Length of residence	Great Britain	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland	Year 2018	2022	2018	2022	2018	2022
Up to 1 year	36%	39%	36%	40%	32%	33%	45%	53%	11%	20%	More than 1, up to 2 years
71%	72%	70%	73%	65%	63%	29%	44%	More than 2, up to 5 years	84%	82%	83%
82%	84%	81%	83%	61%	76%	More than 5, up to 10 years	90%	91%	90%	92%	91%
86%	78%	82%	83%	61%	76%	More than 10, up to 16 years	88%	92%	88%	92%	95%
Over 16 years	92%	95%	92%	95%	94%	92%	91%	95%	90%	90%	92%

Demographic characteristics

Completeness also varies by demographic factors. Age Levels of completeness continue to increase with age. As in 2018, completeness is highest for those aged 65+. It also remains lowest for attainers aged 16-17. In Great Britain completeness for this group has dropped further from 45% in 2015, to 25% in 2018, to 16% in 2022. In Northern Ireland the level for attainer registration has increased, albeit from virtually zero in 2018 and to a lower level than in Great Britain. Otherwise the pattern of completeness by age group has not changed dramatically since 2018. Location Great

Britain England Scotland Wales Northern Ireland Year 2018 2022 2018 2022 2018 2022

Age Group	Great Britain	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland	Year 2018	2022	2018	2022	2018	2022
16 - 17	25%	16%	- - - - -	0%	12%	18 - 19	66%	60%	72%	70%	68%
18 - 24	68%	66%	79%	31%	45%	20 - 24	68%	67%	61%	76%	25 - 34
25 - 34	74%	72%	84%	31%	45%	35 - 44	74%	74%	50%	69%	35 - 44
35 - 44	83%	84%	78%	76%	78%	45 - 54	83%	82%	70%	83%	45 - 54
55 - 64	87%	85%	90%	94%	90%	55 - 64	90%	90%	91%	91%	91%
65+	94%	90%	94%	95%	93%	93%	91%	85%	90%	65+	94%
Bases (unweighted):	Great Britain 2018 8,152	Great Britain 2022 9,434	Northern	Ireland 2018 1,445	Northern Ireland 2022 1,946	Gender	In 2018, for Great Britain and	Northern Ireland there was little or no difference in the likelihood that men and	women would be correctly registered. In 2022, however, women were marginally more	likely to be correctly registered than men. The differences in Scotland and Wales are	not statistically significant. Location Great Britain England Scotland Wales Northern

Ireland Year 2018 2022 2018 2022 2018 2022 2018 2022 Male 83% 85% 82% 85%

Gender	Great Britain	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland	Year 2018	2022	2018	2022	2018	2022
Male	83%	85%	82%	85%	82%	85%	82%	80%	86%	72%	81%
Female	83%	87%	83%	87%	82%	81%	82%	87%	87%	73%	84%

Base (unweighted): Great Britain 2022 9,490, Northern Ireland 2022 1,947, Great Britain

2018 8,215, Northern Ireland 2018 1,447 Nationality Findings corroborate previous

research which show that registration rates are lower among eligible non-UK nationals

than among UK or Irish nationals. UK and Irish citizens continue to be the most

likely to have complete electoral register entries. However, in Great Britain, EU

citizens have seen an increase in their registration levels and are slightly more

likely to be registered than Commonwealth citizens. Small base sizes do not allow for

separate analyses of EU and Commonwealth citizens in Scotland, Wales or Northern

Ireland. Location Great Britain England Scotland Wales Northern Ireland Year 2018
2022 2018 2022 2018 2022 2018 2022 2018 2022 UK/Irish 86% 87% 85% 88% 85% 84% 82% 88%
74% 84% Non-UK/Irish 55% 68% 55% 68% 58% 44% 58% 70% 45% 41% European Union 54% 70%
54% 71% - - - 42% - Commonwealth 62% 66% 62% 67% - - - 80% - Bases (unweighted):
Great Britain 2018 8,186, Great Britain 2022 10,045, Northern Ireland 2018 1,437,
Northern Ireland 2022 2,018 Ethnicity As in previous studies, completeness in Great
Britain is highest among those from a white ethnic background. Small base sizes mean
we cannot analyse variation in levels of completeness for different ethnic groups in
Northern Ireland. Since 2018, completeness rates have increased for every group
except those from Black ethnic backgrounds where it has fallen from 75% to 72%.
Location Great Britain Year 2018 2022 White 84% 87% Asian 76% 80% Black 75% 72% Mixed
69% 72% Other 62% 71% Base (unweighted): 2022 9,404, 2018 8,157 Disability As in
previous years, completeness is higher among those with a disability than among those
without. Of those with a disability, completeness was highest among those with a
physical condition and lowest among those with a mental disability. Location Great
Britain Northern Ireland Year 2018 2022 2018 2022 Mental disability 83% 84% 71% 79%
Physical disability 92% 92% 83% 88% Other type of disability 93% 89% - 84% No
disability 82% 85% 72% 82% Bases (unweighted): Great Britain 2018 8,091, Great
Britain 2022 9,447, Northern Ireland 2018 1,444, Northern Ireland 2022 1,935 Socio-
economic conditions Beyond demographics, there are also differences in completeness
across key social and economic factors. Socio-economic group Levels of completeness
are affected by socio-economic status. With the exception of Scotland, completeness
is highest among those in AB households, followed by those in C1 and C2 households.
Completeness is lowest among those in DE households. The unusually high level of
completeness in Scotland for C2 households is an outlier and may be a distortion
caused by a relatively small base size. Location Great Britain England Scotland Wales
Northern Ireland Year 2018 2022 2018 2022 2018 2022 2018 2022 2018 2022 AB 86% 89%
86% 89% 88% 86% 87% 87% 80% 88% C1 85% 86% 84% 87% 85% 76% 82% 86% 72% 82% C2 80% 8
80% 85% 80% 88% 82% 89% 76% 83% DE 80% 81% 79% 81% 78% 78% 76% 85% 63% 78% Base
(unweighted): Great Britain 2022 9,472, Great Britain 2018 8,782, Northern Ireland
2022 1,942, Northern Ireland 2018 1,718 Tenure In previous years, tenure has been
strongly associated with levels of completeness and this relationship continues in
2022. Outright homeowners are more likely to be registered than people in other types
of tenure. Private renters again had the lowest level of completeness. Location Great
Britain England Scotland Wales Northern Ireland Year 2018 2022 2018 2022 2018 2022
2018 2022 2018 2022 Owner Occupier 91% 95% 91% 95% 95% 91% 91% 94% 88% 91% Buying on
mortgage/shared ownership 86% 88% 86% 88% 87% 84% 78% 84% 72% 82% Private renter 58%
65% 59% 66% 49% 45% 60% 73% 38% 46% Local authority renter 83% 79% 83% 79% 87% 84%
86% 73% 64% 78% Housing Association renter 82% 79% 84% 80% 73% 72% 76% 82% Bases
(unweighted): Great Britain 2018 8,790, Great Britain 2022 9,259, Northern Ireland
2018 1,718, Northern Ireland 2022 1,930 Number of adults in the household Levels of
completeness are lower for larger households. In Great Britain overall levels of
completeness for one or two person households are notably higher than three to five
person households. The pattern is flatter in Northern Ireland with limited
differences although the base size for households with six or more residents is very
small. Location Great Britain England Scotland Wales Northern Ireland Year 2018 2022
2018 2022 2018 2022 2018 2022 One 86% 88% 86% 86% 79% 79% 82% 90% 72% 80%
Two 84% 88% 84% 89% 84% 83% 83% 87% 73% 83% Three to five 81% 82% 81% 82% 85% 80% 77%
85% 72% 83% Six or more 78% 79% 79% 80% 96% 81% Base (unweighted): Great Britain 2022
9,495, Great Britain 2018 8,791, Northern Ireland 2022 1,948, Northern Ireland 2018

1,718 Geography Key differences by geographic categories are shown below. regions There continues to be some variation in levels of completeness among the regions in England. However, the confidence intervals on the results mean that most differences are not statistically significant. The East Midlands does record significantly higher completeness levels compared to London. Location Great Britain Year 2018 2022 Eastern 79% 86% East Midlands 83% 91% London 81% 82% North East 83% 88% North West 85% 84% South East 84% 88% South West 84% 86% West Midlands 86% 87% Yorkshire and Humber 87% 86% Urban/rural In both Great Britain as a whole and in Northern Ireland, completeness remains slightly higher in rural areas as compared with urban areas.

There is little or no difference between the categories in Scotland and Wales.

Location Great Britain England Scotland Wales Northern Ireland Year 2018 2022 2018 2022 2018 2022 2018 2022 Urban 83% 85% 83% 86% 84% 88% 81% 87% 70% 81% Rural 85% 89% 84% 90% 91% 88% 81% 86% 76% 85% Bases (unweighted): Great Britain

9,474, Northern Ireland 1,943 Local authority type In England, among different types of local authority area, the most notable change in completeness has been among London boroughs with an increase from 76% in 2018 to 82% in 2022. Location Great Britain Great Britain Year 2018 2022 District 84% 89% London Borough 76% 82%

Metropolitan Borough 86% 85% Unitary authority 83% 84% Scottish unitary 83% 81% Welsh unitary 81% 87% Northern Ireland 73% 83% Bases (unweighted): Great Britain, 9,495,

Northern Ireland 1,943 Attitudinal and behavioural characteristics Registering to vote requires action by voters and people's attitudes to both registering and voting therefore also have a bearing on levels of completeness. Attitudes towards registration Completeness is lowest among people who believe that 'it is not really worth registering' and is highest among those who think it is 'everyone's duty to register to vote'. Location Great Britain Northern Ireland Year 2018 2022 2018 2022

It is not really worth registering 72% 74% 54% 69% It is only worth registering to get a better credit reference 68% 80% 52% 82% People should only register to vote if they care who wins an election 79% 83% 68% 72% It is everyone's duty to register to vote 85% 91% 77% 87% Base (unweighted): Great Britain 2022, 4,692, 2018 4,679; Northern Ireland 2022 935, 2018 945 Attitudes towards voting Location Great Britain Northern Ireland Year 2018 2022 2018 2022 It is not really worth voting 78% 77% 62%

74% People should only vote if they care who wins an election 79% 84% 64% 77% It is everyone's duty to vote 84% 91% 77% 86% Base (unweighted): Great Britain 2022 4,664, 2018 4,679; Northern Ireland 2022 919, 2018 945 Political affiliation (Northern

Ireland) Additional questions were asked in Northern Ireland to explore how completeness here might vary according to citizens' political affiliation.

Completeness is higher among than those who identify as Nationalist or Unionist than it is among those who do not hold any of the listed political identities (Unionist, Loyalist, Republican, Nationalist). Location Northern Ireland Year 2018 2022

Nationalist 76% 89% Unionist 80% 92% Neither 65% 76% Base (unweighted): 2022 899,

2018 945 Accuracy summary Accuracy has remained stable since 2018 in England, Scotland and Wales but has seen a notable increase in Northern Ireland, bringing it into line with the figures for Great Britain. Households were the current residents have lived at the address for less time, and those renting from a private landlord, continue to be more likely to have inaccurate register entries linked to them. Year

2011 2012 2014 2015 2018 2022 Change from 2022 Great Britain 82% - 85% 84% 83% 86% +3

England - - - 84% 83% 86% +3 Scotland - - - 85% 83% 81% -2 Wales - - - 84% 81% 87% +6

Northern Ireland - 71% - 79% 73% 83% +10 Types of inaccurate entries In analysing the accuracy of the electoral registers, a number of different types of error can be identified. These errors are then categorised as either a 'major' or 'minor' error: A

minor error would not prevent someone from casting their vote (e.g. a misspelt name). A major error is any of the following: A. Entries which refer to individuals who no longer live at the given address B. Entries which may prevent an individual casting their vote at a polling station (e.g. an incorrect name) C. Errors that would enable an ineligible person to vote (e.g. an incorrect date of birth for someone under the age of 18) A breakdown of the types of errors used to calculate the accuracy of the registers can be found in the table below.

	Location	Great Britain	England	Scotland																																																																																																	
Wales	2018	2022	2018	2022	2018	2022	2018	2022	Major errors total	11.2%	11.7%	8.7%	11.7%	10.9%	12.1%	8.8%	10.8%	20.1%	14.1%																																																																																		
(A) - No corresponding name taken at address									Major errors (A)	10.4%	9.8%	7.7%	9.8%	10.0%	9.7%	8.2%	9.3%	18.7%	13.0%	Major errors (B)	0.7%	1.1%	0.6%	1.2%	0.5%	0.8%	0.2%	0.6%	0.7%	0.7%																																																																							
First name and/or surname wrong on register									First name and/or surname wrong on register	0.4%	0.7%	0.3%	0.7%	0.2%	0.5%	0.2%	0.3%	0.5%	0.5%	First name and/or surname missing on register	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%																																																																							
0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	UK/Irish/ Commonwealth marker present	0.3%	0.5%	0.3%	0.5%	0.3%	0.4%	0.0%	0.3%	0.4%	0.0%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%																																																																							
Major errors (C)									Major errors (C)	0.5%	0.7%	0.4%	0.7%	0.4%	1.6%	0.4%	0.9%	0.6%	0.2%	Name on register corresponds to ineligible name on survey	0.2%	0.3%	0.1%	0.3%	0.1%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.5%	0.2%	Attainers - DOB missing or wrong	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	1.6%	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%	EU/Qualifying foreign citizens marker missing	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	Accurate with minor errors	9.1%	8.8%	7.9%	8.9%	9.6%	14.3%	7.9%	9.0%	5.6%	7.6%	Bases (unweighted): Great Britain	2018	9,155,	Great Britain	2022	9,478,	Northern Ireland	2018	1,783,	Northern Ireland	2022																											
1,975 Demographic characteristics									Examining demographic variation of inaccuracies on the electoral registers is challenging. This is because we cannot record demographic details for an individual who is registered but no longer lives at the address. The analysis below takes into account household data where a resident was interviewed. However, this data still only presents a limited picture and so must be treated with caution. Tenure Accuracy by tenure follows a similar pattern to completeness. In Great Britain owner-occupier households are the most likely to have accurate register entries (96%). In Northern Ireland, 89% of those who own their home outright have accurate register entries, as do 90% of those who have a mortgage or shared ownership.	Location	Great Britain	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland	Year	2018	2022	2018	2022	2018	2022	2018	2022	Owner Occupier	95%	96%	96%	96%	90%	94%	94%	95%	86%	89%	Buying on mortgage/shared ownership	95%	91%	95%	91%	94%	89%	93%	92%	86%	90%	Private renter	81%	77%	81%	78%	79%	58%	82%	78%	61%	75%	Local authority renter	92%	88%	92%	87%	91%	94%	91%	88%	82%	83%	Housing Association renter	91%	90%	91%	90%	86%	91%	91%	85%	Bases (unweighted): 2022 Great Britain	8,816,	Northern Ireland	1,881																				
Socio-economic group									Social grade is also calculated at the household level, based on the occupation of the chief income earner. Whereas in 2018, there was a slight negative correlation between social grade and accuracy, in 2022 accuracy was almost entirely flat across the social grades in both Great Britain and Northern Ireland.	Location	Great Britain	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland	Year	2018	2022	2018	2022	2018	2022	2018	2022	AB	94%	97%	95%	91%	89%	91%	93%	92%	86%	99%	C1	93%	98%	93%	91%	93%	87%	96%	93%	85%	98%	C2	93%	98%	94%	93%	90%	90%	95%	93%	82%	98%	D1	98%	89%	89%	88%	92%	86%	88%	78%	98%	Bases (unweighted): 2022 Great Britain	8,449,	Northern Ireland	1,708	Length of residence	Accuracy in both Great Britain and Northern Ireland follows the same pattern as completeness when looking at how long households have occupied their accommodation, with higher levels of inaccuracy at households with a more recent change in residency.	Location	Great Britain	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland	Year	2018	2022	2018	2022	2018	2022	2018	2022	Up to 1 year	56%	54%	57%	54%	71%	67%	73%	69%	22%	38%	More than 1, up to 2 years	2022

93% 84% 93% 84% 58% 85% More than 2, up to 5 years 94% 91% 94% 91% 97% 88% 92% 93% 84% 87% More than 5, up to 10 years 96% 94% 96% 94% 98% 91% 93% 91% 90% 91% More than 10, up to 16 years 95% 94% 95% 94% 92% 94% 96% 92% 90% 93% Over 16 years 95% 95% 96% 95% 91% 93% 95% 96% 87% 89% Bases (unweighted): 2022 Great Britain 8,342, Northern Ireland 1,685 Looking ahead: addressing the challenges of accuracy and completeness

The evidence from this research shows that although there have been improvements in some areas since our previous analysis of the 2018 electoral registers, as many as 8 million people across the UK are still not correctly registered to vote. This means they may not be able to vote when elections take place, and they are not counted at all when constituency boundaries are set. It also means that at the most critical time ahead of major elections, Electoral Registration Officers are required to use their limited resources and capacity to respond to applications that are needed so that registers can catch up with population movement and eligible voters are able to participate. This evidence continues to highlight the need to develop new approaches to electoral registration that will bring sustained long-term improvements. This will require governments to bring forward legislation. We set out below the case for change, and explain our own proposals for how EROs can benefit from access to information from other public service organisations.

recs The current system of electoral registration is not working well for voters or Electoral Registration Officers

We and many others – including Parliamentary committees , professional associations and academics – have repeatedly highlighted evidence that illustrates the impact of the current failing systems of electoral registration in the UK: Evidence from our programme of electoral registration research over more than a decade continues to show that up to 8 million people across the UK are either missing from the registers or incorrectly registered, meaning they are unable to have their say.

We have consistently found that some specific groups of people are significantly less likely to be correctly registered, particularly young people, people who live in private rented accommodation, and those who have recently changed address. The number of people it is estimated are not correctly registered is more than the combined adult population of Scotland and Wales, and would be equivalent to more than 100 UK Parliament constituencies. Although changes to the annual canvass in Great Britain have helped to reduce the resource and capacity taken up through unnecessarily chasing households with no change, there is evidence from the most recent annual canvass in 2022 to suggest that it is a significantly less effective mechanism for identifying 16- and 17-year-olds who are newly eligible to register, compared with older people. There is no evidence from our most recent research on the 2022 registers that canvass reform has led to any significant improvement in the accuracy or completeness of the registers for Great Britain. Our analysis of the most recent canvass in Northern Ireland in 2021 highlighted that, in its current format, the canvass is not an efficient tool for helping to maintain an accurate and complete electoral register, both for the Chief Electoral Officer and for voters. Although the improvements in the accuracy and completeness of the 2022 registers highlighted in this research are the result of the 2021 canvass, we have previously seen subsequent declines between canvasses when the continuous registration system is operating. The registration system continues to struggle to capture population movement in the period between each canvass, and the canvass process itself requires the Electoral Office to contact and receive a response from all eligible electors, even if they were registered before the canvass and their details had not changed. Our recent research on attitudes to registration has highlighted that people continue to face both practical and knowledge barriers to registering to vote under the current

system. These include misunderstanding about the registration process and incorrect assumptions about whether people are already registered, and low levels of urgency or priority to register to vote. Some people don't realise that they need to actively apply to register to vote, don't know how to apply, and don't view registration as a priority when they change address. An accessible online registration process means it is easy for people to apply to register, update or confirm their registration throughout the year, and to do so close to the deadline for an election. But, as we highlighted in our report on the 2019 UK Parliamentary general election , this means that large volumes of electoral registration activity are focused in the weeks leading up to major electoral events, which significantly increases risks to well-run elections. Levels of accuracy and completeness are unlikely to improve without significant changes to the registration system Evidence from our programme of electoral registration research over more than a decade shows that a large number of people remain incorrectly registered. There is little evidence to suggest that levels of accuracy and completeness are likely to significantly improve without major changes to the current electoral registration system. The introduction of online registration since 2014 (and since 2018 in Northern Ireland) has improved access and made it easier for people to register to vote ahead of specific electoral events, but there is no evidence that it has had a lasting significant positive impact on overall levels of accuracy or completeness. The most recent data from the 2022 registers shows no significant improvement in Great Britain in the proportion of people who are correctly registered, even if the decline in rates of accuracy and completeness identified in previous studies appears to have at least paused. We have highlighted since 2019 feasibility studies which showed how the UK's governments could support EROs to improve accuracy and completeness of electoral registers – and improve efficiency to alleviate resource burdens – by giving them access to high-quality data from other public service organisations. This would allow EROs to take advantage of the many millions of transactions that voters already have with major public sector organisations, and could sit alongside and enhance existing annual canvass and year-round online registration activities. The Welsh Government has already highlighted its intention to work with local authorities to design and pilot automatic voter registration for devolved elections, and we will continue to work with EROs and the Welsh Government to support further development of this important area of work. The electoral community needs a clear plan to modernise electoral registration processes Changes to the way elections and electoral registers are run should be considered in consultation with the whole electoral community. The experiences of voters, electoral administrators, and political parties and campaigners are important considerations in building a registration system that works well for everyone, and to ensure all eligible voters can have their say at elections. Developing specific detailed proposals to move towards more automatic or automated systems of electoral registration would need to involve a broad range of partners: Data source organisations (for example, the DVLA/DVA, HMRC or HMPO) would bring their detailed understanding of the data and transactions that they currently manage, and would need reassurance that data sharing is operationally straightforward, secure and legally compliant. Technical partners, including electoral management software suppliers and the IER digital service which is managed by officials at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) supported by the Government Digital Service, would need to work together with the data source organisations to ensure the secure and efficient management of data and transfer to individual EROs. EROs themselves would need to consider any changes to their teams and processes, so that they are

able to integrate automatic or automated registration alongside the existing annual canvass and year-round online registration. Governments would need to legislate to create the necessary legal gateways for data sharing by data source organisations, and to specify the powers and duties of EROs to determine registration applications created using automatic or automated processes. The Information Commissioner's Office would need to provide advice and guidance on how to manage information risks relating to data sharing. Making electoral registration more joined-up with other public services and citizen transactions raises particularly important questions relating to data protection and cyber security. In its February 2023 written evidence to the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (LUHC) Committee inquiry on electoral registration, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities highlighted measures already put in place to improve the robustness and security of the IER digital service alongside further recommendations for improvements – for example, in relation to cyber incident reporting in the local government sector . Similar or equivalent protections would also be needed for any systems established to manage the provision and use of data for automatic or automated electoral registration processes. Recommendations: Delivering modern registration processes

Recommendations:

Delivering modern registration processes The electoral community needs a clear plan to ensure that electoral registration processes are modernised so that people are registered and able to exercise their right to vote. As part of this plan the UK, Scottish and Welsh governments should pass legislation that creates clear legal gateways for government departments and public sector bodies to share data on potentially eligible individuals with Electoral Registration Officers. This is needed to enable EROs to register them to vote directly, or to send them targeted invitations to register. All three governments should require relevant departments and other public bodies to work with EROs to facilitate electoral registration using their data. A consistent approach between governments would ensure that changes are developed and delivered in a way which makes it as straightforward as possible for EROs and data source organisations, and ensures that voters are accurately included in the registers for all types of elections they are eligible to vote in. The UK Government should develop the existing Individual Electoral Registration (IER) digital service so that it can support secure and efficient data sharing between data source organisations and EROs and their electoral management software systems, to enable modern registration processes to be delivered. Case studies show how registration could be modernised We have spoken to several UK Government departments, public bodies, universities and tenancy deposit schemes about the data they hold. We discussed whether and how data could be used to improve the accuracy and completeness of electoral registers. We particularly focused on how new approaches could improve registration rates for those groups of people who our research has consistently shown are less likely to be registered correctly: attainers and other young people; people who live in private rented accommodation; and recent home-movers. Depending on the quality and coverage of the data sets, and the specific data fields that are available, we have identified changes that could support different levels and forms of modernisation, ranging from automatic registration to forms of integrated or assisted registration where voters would still need to provide some information directly themselves. The information that is currently required to register to vote includes the individual's name, address, date of birth, nationality and National Insurance number. An application must also state whether the voter wants to be included in the open register which is available to anyone who wants to buy a copy. Nationality information is required given the different franchises for different

types of election, and in some cases – for example for Commonwealth citizens – applicants must also confirm that they have leave to enter or remain in the UK or that they don't require that leave. The National Insurance number is currently used as a way of verifying an individual's identity using Department for Work and Pensions records. We have outlined below a range of options for new registration processes, which have been informed by our discussions with the above-mentioned departments and organisations. These case studies were not proposed by or formally agreed with the organisations involved. One of the case studies – integrating electoral registration into the university student enrolment process – describes the current model operated by Cardiff University and Cardiff City Council to boost student registration levels. A further case study – the use of tenancy deposit scheme data to improve registration among private renters through signposting – is based on our discussions with representatives of the schemes, who have indicated their willingness to explore ways of taking this idea forward together with us. The other case studies, namely HM Passport Office, the Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency/Driver & Vehicle Agency and HM Revenue & Customs, are more speculative and reflect our views as to what might work in practice. Further exploratory work would be needed to confirm the feasibility and delivery implications of these options. Automatic registration Automatic registration means that a data source organisation would provide EROs with the names and addresses of people who meet the eligibility criteria for registration. Because of the specific information required to register to vote, it is likely that very few data sources would be able to support fully automatic registration. The case study below highlights how the information required to be provided by British citizens as part of the passport application process could meet these requirements. The ERO would contact these people at their home address to inform them that they will be added to the register, giving them the opportunity to request to be registered as an anonymous elector if their safety would be at risk from being registered as an ordinary elector. There would also be an opportunity for anyone else living at the address to provide evidence that the person is not in fact eligible to be registered there. Subject to any further evidence that the person was not eligible to register, the ERO would add them directly to the register. The data source organisation could limit the information it provided to EROs to include only new or recently updated records. This would give EROs reassurance that the data was current and should reduce the risk of duplicating registration activity with people who have already applied to register. A centralised data processing service, similar to the current IER digital service, could be used to simplify the process of transferring data between data source organisations and EROs. This could also be used to screen potential new electors against current electoral registers, to minimise duplicate registrations. Automatic registration of voters is common around the world Automatic registration of voters is common around the world The Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust published a report in 2020 called Is it time for Automatic Voter Registration in the UK?. According to the report, 40 countries considered to be liberal democracies have automatic registration. More recent international comparative research has shown that automatic registration not only increases the completeness of electoral registers, but also has a positive impact on accuracy. According to the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), in Argentina, Austria, Chile, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Japan, Italy, Spain, and South Korea (among others), the national electoral register is extracted from the population/civil registry. The Australian Electoral Commission operates the Federal Direct Enrolment and Update program. It uses trusted data from other government agencies to add some individuals to the electoral roll or

to update their electoral registration. It writes to individuals to inform them of the addition or update. In five American states, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures, when an individual applies for a driving licence and/or engages with another state agency, the data from the transaction is used to register them to vote. The voter receives a notification informing them that they will be registered unless they respond to it and decline the registration. In Canada the National Register of Electors is updated using data from provincial and territorial drivers' licence, statistics and electoral agencies. Elections Nova Scotia updates the voters' list data from a variety of sources including the Registry of Motor Vehicles, the Nova Scotia Civic Address File and Elections Canada. case study Automatic registration case study: using HM Passport Office data to improve registration among young people and recent home-movers HM Passport Office (HMPO) is an agency of the Home Office which issues passports to British citizens. HMPO carries out identity checks to verify an applicant's identity, including with the Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency. Passport data is already shared with around 80 government departments and public sector bodies to carry out around 25 million identity checks each year. HMPO forecasts that it will receive around 7.4 million passport applications in the next year. These applications will cover the full range of age groups, including applications from young people aged 16 and over applying for adult passports, and people who have recently moved home. When someone applies for a passport, they must provide their name, date of birth, evidence of British citizenship, and home address for delivery of the passport. Although HMPO does not collect National Insurance numbers from applicants, it does undertake rigorous checks to verify applicants' identities, which could provide a sufficient level of assurance for an electoral registration application (equivalent to the assurance currently provided by checking National Insurance numbers). Once HMPO has verified the identity of an applicant, this data could be transferred to EROs to automatically register them to vote. To do this, the ERO would write to the individual, informing them that they are going to be placed on the register, giving them the opportunity to correct any mistakes and to request to be registered anonymously if their safety would be at risk from being registered as an ordinary elector. There would also be an opportunity for anyone else living at the address to provide evidence that the person is not eligible to be registered there. Sharing HMPO data for electoral registration would require identifying an appropriate legal gateway. Legislative changes are likely to be required to create a gateway. Integrated registration An integrated registration model means that registering to vote would be integrated within another public service transaction. At the end of those transactions, people would be asked whether they also want to register to vote. If the individual confirms that they do, relevant data would be transferred to an electoral registration application. The individual would be provided with information about eligibility to vote and asked to confirm their eligibility in the same way they are currently required to when applying using the online electoral registration service. They would also provide any missing data, such as National Insurance number and nationality. Once complete, this data would be transferred to the relevant ERO via the IER digital service. The ERO would process the application, add them to the register and write to confirm their addition. As the individual would have recently updated their details as part of that public service transaction and provided the remaining data required for registration, EROs could be sure that their data, in particular their address, was up to date. A number of countries and territories integrate electoral registration into other public service transactions A number of countries and territories integrate electoral registration

into other public service transactions In Canada citizens can agree to share their data with Elections Canada on their federal income tax return. New citizens can agree to share their data with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada on their citizenship applications. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures , in 17 American states and Washington DC, people are asked if they want to register when applying for a driving licence from the state's Department of Motor Vehicles and/or when interacting with another government agency. If they agree, their details are added to the state voter registration database. Integrated registration case study: using university student enrolment to improve registration among young people Integrated registration case study: using university student enrolment to improve registration among young people Cardiff University has integrated an electoral registration module into its online process for enrolling students. Enrolment tasks open in September and students have until the third week of October to complete them, including the electoral registration task. The university holds name, address, date of birth and nationality data about students. It has developed a coding system for rooms in its halls of residence to assist the Electoral Services Team at Cardiff City Council to match the addresses with the council's systems. Students are asked if they want to register to vote. If they do, the university asks them to provide the additional data needed to complete the registration application. This includes their National Insurance number and whether they want to be on the open/full register. Once the university has the data needed for registration applications, it sends it to the Electoral Services Team at Cardiff City Council, which registers the students. Over 8,000 students' details are sent to Cardiff City Council annually and around 90% of these students are registered each year. Once the information is sent to the Council, Cardiff University deletes from its student record system any data relating to this process that it does not use internally. case study Integrated registration case study: using the driving licence application or renewal process to improve registration among recent movers and young people The Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) is the executive agency responsible for issuing driving licences in Great Britain. The Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA) is the Northern Ireland Executive agency responsible for issuing driving licences in Northern Ireland. Individuals interact with the agencies when they apply for a provisional driving licence, renew or reapply for their photocard driving licence at the end of the 10-year validity period, and when they move address. Both agencies hold name, address and date of birth data but not nationality data or National Insurance numbers. DVLA receives around 1 million applications for provisional driving licences and around 4 million address change notifications each year. DVA processed just over 29,000 applications for provisional driving licences and around 26,000 name and address change notifications from April 2022 to March 2023. An electoral registration prompt asking drivers if they want to register to vote could be integrated into these transactions. The data that DVLA or DVA already hold could be used to prepopulate an electoral registration application, with the driver filling in any missing data. The completed applications would then be sent to the relevant Electoral Registration Officer via the IER digital service, who would determine the application and register them. DVLA is currently developing an online account for new licences. A prompt could be integrated into users' accounts asking if they want to register to vote. Assisted registration Assisted registration means that a data source organisation would provide EROs with the names and addresses of people who may be eligible to vote, taking into account relevant information about the qualification criteria. The ERO would then write to those individuals inviting them to register. The invitation would

ask them to provide any missing information needed to complete their registration (such as their nationality or their national insurance number), and give them the opportunity to request to be registered as an anonymous elector. As with automatic registration, transferring only recent transactional data to the specific EROs would ensure that the data is current. A centralised data processing service, similar to the current IER digital service, could be used to simplify the process of transferring data and to reduce the potential for large numbers of records being shared with EROs. It is common around the world for public bodies to share data to assist with voter registration. It is common around the world for public bodies to share data to assist with voter registration. Elections New Brunswick (ENB) in Canada receives information on a regular basis about name and address changes from drivers' licence information. ENB carries out automated and manual checks to attempt to match that data with information on the Register of Electors. If a match is not found, ENB sends the individual a certification form and return envelope. The individual must complete the certification to confirm they meet the eligibility requirements to register and return it to ENB. They are then added to the register.

Assisted registration case study: Assisted registration case study: using National Insurance data to improve registration of attainers. HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) holds data about children whose parents or carers have claimed child benefit and/or tax-free childcare/thirty free hours of childcare. This includes the child's name and date of birth. When a child reaches the age of 15 years and 9 months, HMRC issues a National Insurance number (NINO) to them which is sent in the post to their parent or carer's address. It issues around 700,000 each year. HMRC does not keep a record of children's nationalities, and NINOs are issued regardless of nationality. HMRC does not have a record for every child in the UK as not every parent or carer makes a claim for child benefit or tax-free childcare/thirty free hours. HMRC is also dependent on claimants to keep their address details up-to-date. Nonetheless, the name, address and date of birth of those young people issued with NINOs could be shared with EROs, who could then send an Invitation to Register to those young people, prepopulated with this data. They would be invited to provide their nationality information, sign the declaration and post the completed application to the ERO. A further option would be to develop an online process for providing the missing information, with the individual scanning a QR code included in the Invitation to Register letter. This could provide immediate online access to a pre-populated application on the register to vote digital service, which could then be completed by the individual and processed electronically through the existing IER infrastructure. Sharing a child's name, date of birth and NINO for electoral registration purposes would require the identification of an appropriate legal gateway and need to adhere to data protection legislation. It would require consideration and agreement by HMRC and the Department for Work and Pensions. It may also require legislative change to create a legal gateway for data sharing for this specific purpose.

Signposting registration: Signposting registration means that an individual would be provided with information about registering to vote during a transaction with, or in a communication from, an organisation or public body. This could include a prompt at the end of a transaction or in a communication directing the individual to the UK Government's Register to Vote website. The individual would then complete the usual steps in that process to apply to register and their data would be sent to the Electoral Registration Officer for their area via the IER Digital Service. This process of signposting could work in a number of scenarios – for example, at the end of a transaction when applying for a driving licence or a new

passport, or when an individual is updating their details or in communication with a government department or agency. Such an approach does not require legal change. It should therefore be explored now, even if the other innovations discussed above follow in the future.

Signposting registration case study

Signposting registration case study: using tenancy deposit scheme data to improve registration among private renters

Landlords in the private rented sector are required to protect tenants' deposits with a government approved tenancy deposit scheme. There are three authorised tenancy deposit schemes which operate in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, protecting around 4.5 million deposits and representing around 6 million tenants. Around half of all deposits are protected through custodial schemes which hold the deposit for the duration of the tenancy. The balance of protected deposits are held and managed by the landlord or letting agent via insured-backed schemes and where schemes have far less interaction with the tenant. The schemes communicate with tenants via email at the start of the tenancy to confirm that their deposit is protected, and then at various points throughout the tenancy, but mainly when the tenant is seeking to gain return of their deposit from the scheme (custodial scheme), or the scheme has unprotected the deposit (insured scheme). Prompts with information about registering and a link to the Register to Vote website could be embedded into these communications, and on scheme websites or mobile apps. All schemes have indicated that they are open to exploring ways in which they could work with the Commission to improve registration rates among private renters.

End notes

1. The franchise for local elections in Scotland and Wales includes those aged 16 and 17 and, in those nations, residents aged 14 or 15 at the time of fieldwork (who turn 16 during the lifetime of the registers) are counted as attainers on the local government registers. However, legally, registration data on 14 and 15 year olds cannot be shared by Electoral Registration Officers so this group was excluded from the research and any measure of completeness and accuracy. All findings should be read with this in mind.

Page history First published: 18 September 2023 Last updated: 2 October 2023

Results and turnout at the 2011 National Assembly for Wales election | Electoral Commission Search Results and turnout at the 2011 National Assembly for Wales election You are in the Senedd elections section Home Senedd elections First published: 9 August 2019 Last updated: 9 August 2019 Download You can download the full dataset as an XLS results as an XLS You can also download our full report , written by Scott Orford. Summary The elections were fought on the basis of the same constituency and region boundaries as the previous NAW elections in 2007. The number of constituency candidates fell to 176 compared to 197 in 2007. Thirteen parties or groups were represented in the regional lists together with 1 individual. Labour won 28 out of the 40 constituency seats with a 42.3% share of the vote. The Conservatives were second with 6 seats (25.0% share of the vote) followed by Plaid Cymru (5 seats and 19.3% share of the vote) and the Liberal Democrats (1 seat and 10.6% share of the vote). When the list seats were added, Labour had 30 out of 60 seats. The Conservatives had 14, Plaid Cymru had 11 and the Liberal Democrats had 5. No other party or Independent candidate won a seat. Almost 2.29 million electors were eligible to vote at these elections: an increase of over 40,000 compared with 2007. Over 5,500 electors (0.2% of the total) registered in the weeks leading up to the election under the so-called '11 day rule'. More than 950,000 votes were counted in both the constituency and regional level polls, making the overall turnout 41.8% -slightly down on the 2007 figure. The proportion of ballot papers rejected at the count was very small – 0.82% of constituency ballots and 0.75% of list ballots. Across Wales, 389,150 postal ballots were issued, representing 17.0% of the electorate. This is the largest proportion to date. More than seven in 10 of postal ballots issued were returned. Of these, 4.7% (constituency) and 4.8% (regional list) were rejected because of failures relating to personal identifiers or non-inclusion of either a ballot or statement in the envelope. Related content Report: How the 2011 National Assembly for Wales elections were run Read our report about how the 2011 National Assembly for Wales elections were run Results and turnout at the 2016 National Assembly for Wales election View the results and turnout at the 2016 National Assembly for Wales election Report: How the 2016 National Assembly for Wales elections were run Read our report about how the 2016 National Assembly for Wales elections were run Report on the May 2021 elections in England Read our report on the May 2021 elections in England

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Statutory consultation on guidance for Returning Officers: Assistance with voting for disabled people | Electoral Commission Search Statutory

consultation on guidance for Returning Officers: Assistance with voting for disabled people You are in the Our consultations section Home Our consultations Draft guidance for Returning Officers: Assistance with voting for disabled voters (statutory consultation) On this page How to respond How we developed the guidance What the guidance covers Themes raised through consultation Background First published: 5 December 2022 Last updated: 17 January 2023 Consultation has now closed The consultation has now closed. Once we have considered the responses to this statutory consultation, we will publish the guidance to assist ROs in preparing and delivering the May 2023 elections as soon as we can. Summary Summary There should be no barriers to voting for disabled people. Everyone should have the right to vote on their own and in secret. The Elections Act 2022 includes provisions requiring Returning Officers (ROs) to provide such equipment as is reasonable to enable, or make it easier for, disabled people to vote independently and secretly. Now that the legislation that enacts these provisions is in place, the Electoral Commission is conducting a statutory consultation on our guidance for ROs on the new provisions for assistance with voting for disabled people. We ran an initial six-week public consultation on the draft guidance, which received 67 responses from members of the public, electoral administrators, and a wide range of charity, civil society and third sector organisations. We have now updated the guidance building on the feedback we received as part of the initial consultation. We want to hear your views on our updated guidance to support ROs in making accessibility arrangements that can have a real and positive impact for disabled voters for the May 2023 elections and beyond.

Once we have considered the responses to this statutory consultation, we will publish the guidance to assist ROs in preparing and delivering the May 2023 elections as soon as we can. Alongside this guidance for ROs, we will also be providing additional support as part of our wider guidance and resources for electoral administrators and for voters to help make voting accessible for all. This consultation is also available in easy read and BSL formats . How to respond This consultation is open from 5 December 2022 until 16 January 2023. You can respond by: filling in our online form emailing your views to EAConsultation@electoralcommission.org.uk or writing to us at: Electoral Administration Guidance Team The Electoral Commission 3 Bunhill Row London EC1Y 8YZ If you have any questions or require any help to be able to respond, please get in touch on 0333 103 1928. How we developed the guidance To help inform the initial guidance, we engaged with a range of civil society, charity and third-sector organisations across the whole of the UK. These represented people with physical and learning disabilities, mental health conditions, and invisible disabilities. We also discussed the changes with a range of representatives from the electoral administration sector. The pre-consultation work allowed us to understand and identify the barriers faced by disabled people at the polling station; possible solutions to make voting more accessible; and how the changes made by the Elections Act could be used to improve the accessibility of elections. We then ran an initial six-week public consultation from 5 September until 17 October 2022 asking for feedback on the draft guidance. Overall, we received 67 responses to our initial public consultation from members of the public, Electoral Registration Officers (EROs), ROs, and a range of civil society and third sector organisations. We also engaged with electoral administrators from across the UK at a national seminar. We have considered the feedback received in these initial stages to inform the further development of the guidance. What the guidance covers Our guidance covers:

Understanding and identifying the barriers that make it difficult or impossible for disabled people to vote The legal framework of rights and protections for disabled people within which the guidance sits Providing accessible information about what to expect in a polling station, how to vote in a polling station and what support is available The equipment that should be made available as a minimum at the polling station, and what other equipment or support might also be helpful Providing specific accessibility training for polling station staff, and what that training should cover Working with civil society, third sector and charity organisations to raise awareness of and communicate the support and equipment that is available to disabled voters The guidance also identifies the polling station equipment that could have a significant impact in enabling or making it easier for disabled people to vote independently and in secret. ROs should provide this equipment as a minimum. It also identifies additional equipment and support that ROs should consider making available. This guidance will support ROs to perform their statutory duties under the Elections Act.

Opens in new window View our guidance You can also Opens in new window read a guide to our guidance in easy read . ROs will be required to have regard to the guidance when deciding what polling station equipment to provide locally but they are not required to follow our recommendations. The law does not give us the power to prescribe a list of items or equipment that ROs must make available in each polling station. It is for each RO to decide the appropriate arrangements and equipment that might enable disabled voters in their area to cast their vote independently and secretly. The equipment identified in our guidance aims to assist ROs in meeting this duty. Factors that are unique to a local area – including the size and scale of polling stations or specific requirements of the local electorate – may shape the approach ROs decide to take. ROs should regularly review and assess the needs of people in their local areas and on this basis determine what may be reasonable to provide in individual polling stations. We will continue to monitor how useful this guidance has been in helping ROs and EROs to support disabled voters. We will be able to update the guidance for future elections, including if new information or equipment becomes available. Themes raised through consultation Below we set out a summary of the main themes and issues raised in the consultation responses we received, and how we have considered them in updating the guidance and in our wider work to support making elections accessible to all. Barriers to voting We have made the following changes to our guidance as a result of comments received on barriers to voting: We expanded the guidance to include awareness of neurodivergence and hidden disabilities We expanded on areas to be covered in training for polling station staff to reference: that disabled voters may have an assistance animal with them that they can bring into the polling station awareness that voters with sight loss may use apps on their mobile phones or carry other assistive equipment, such as video magnifiers, to help them read documents in the polling booth or in conjunction with a tactile voting device awareness that the use of text to speech apps is acceptable in polling stations Support and resources for ROs to help make voting accessible A number of responses asked for additional resources to be provided to ROs to support them in delivering accessible elections. Some also raised points on how to help ROs in making decisions about what additional equipment and support it would be reasonable to provide. Related to this, we received requests for more guidance on ROs' statutory duties under the Elections Act and the wider framework of equalities legislation. We made the following changes to our guidance as a result: We referenced and linked to our existing polling district review guidance, which supports ROs to consider a range of factors, including accessibility needs, when reviewing polling districts, places

and stations, more clearly. We provided additional information on how the guidance could be used and adapted to local circumstances. We clarified how the requirements in the Elections Act interact with the wider legal framework of rights and protections for disabled people to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to remove any substantial disadvantage that disabled voters might otherwise experience. We clarified and expanded guidance for ROs on equipment to be provided in polling stations, such as suggested wording for badges for polling station staff and practical advice for the use of temporary alerters or doorbells. We added Makaton as an alternative format in which information could be provided about what to expect when voting at the polling station. In addition to the changes to the guidance itself, we will also produce a range of additional supporting resources for ROs including: Updated template training materials for polling station staff; A checklist for equipment to be provided in polling stations. We also received feedback asking for clarity on how the new requirement to provide equipment in polling stations will be funded. Officials from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities have confirmed that funding to support the delivery of accessible elections will be provided to ROs. The UK Government will announce further details and guidance on how the funding will be made available, including for national polls, in due course. Equipment to be provided in polling stations Some points were raised with regards to the suggested minimum requirements for equipment at the polling station and around the additional types of equipment that could support voters to participate. Some respondents raised points that related to specific or local needs, such as the lack of dropped kerbs near polling stations and the provision of cycle parking for non-standard cycles. The guidance is intended to cover all polling stations across the UK and it would not be suitable for it to include such specific individual and local factors. These should be considered by local ROs so that they can be addressed locally, and we have clarified this in the updated guidance. Several respondents called on us to mandate, rather than suggest, provisions and equipment in the guidance, updating our terminology accordingly. Based on the legislation, we cannot prescribe a list of items or equipment that ROs must make available in each polling station. This is something for the RO to decide based on ongoing review of local needs. We received some suggestions that audio devices should be included on our list of equipment that all ROs should provide as a minimum. We have recommended that ROs consider providing audio devices at polling stations where they identify or are made aware that an audio device would be required to support a voter in a specific polling station. We have not yet seen evidence to suggest that audio devices would be needed by voters in every polling station, or that it would be feasible for ROs to procure the number of devices needed to be able to provide one in every polling station. We have recommended that ROs should ensure that magnifiers and appropriate lighting are provided in all polling stations as a minimum to support blind and partially sighted voters, as well as the tactile voting device. Some respondents asked us to provide a list of criteria that ROs should use when considering reasonable adjustments and requests for additional equipment or support. Under the Equality Act 2010, ROs have an anticipatory duty to make reasonable adjustments. This means they have to anticipate, think about and try to predict what adjustments could be needed by voters with different types of disability, support and access requirements. Such adjustments will necessarily reflect local circumstances and approaches, which means that a standardised list would not be appropriate. We will review and update our guidance year-on-year, including in relation to the equipment that should be provided as a minimum and any additional equipment and support. We will ask for feedback from

voters and electoral administrators on the equipment provided to support disabled voters as part of our reporting on elections and to support the identification and sharing of good practice. Supporting ROs with public awareness and partnerships work Overall, respondents thought that the draft guidance provided sufficient information for ROs to engage with voters and raise awareness. However, a number of points were raised on how we could further support ROs and electors through public awareness, partnership working with charity and civil society groups, and voter information. Many also called for additional resources or links to partners to support them with accessibility locally. To further support the delivery of accessible elections we will work to provide the following resources and support ahead of the May 2023 elections: Social media assets and web copy to assist ROs to engage and raise awareness with voters A resource for ROs to use to communicate with local disability groups and to provide information to voters in their local authority, which we will develop in consultation with relevant national representative bodies Signpost to good practice guidance on how to make communications accessible Work with local authorities to point electors to the range of resources and information we host on our website Work with relevant national representative bodies to provide training resources for ROs Supporting the design of prescribed polling station notices in an accessible format Work in partnership with disability organisations nationally to communicate directly with their members We will also explore with partners the possibility of providing a list of organisations that ROs may contact for advice, including on the provision and sourcing of equipment. We will build on our offering year-on-year and will consider providing additional resources highlighted through consultation responses, such as videos to support voters to understand the voting process, for future elections. Reviewing our use of language We received feedback on our use of language in the draft guidance. Some recommended that we use 'disabled persons', rather than 'persons with disabilities', as people are disabled by their environment not by their condition, and their disability should not define them. Respondents also recommended that we use the definition of disability used in the Equality Act 2010 as a way of ensuring consistency with ROs' obligations under this and other legislation. We have taken advice on our use of language and we have updated this throughout the guidance to align with the Social Model of Disability. We have also updated the definition of disability used to be in line with that set out in the Equality Act 2010. Evaluation and sharing of good practice Several responses suggested that we should provide additional information and resources to assist ROs with evaluating the poll and learning lessons for future polls. Some also called on us to gather good practice in relation to accessibility of elections and produce good practice guidance to accompany our guidance for ROs. To help with ROs' evaluation activities, we will provide a template survey for use with polling station voters that require additional assistance when voting. The survey can be used to gather their feedback on their experience of voting and the support that was made available. The Elections Act requires the Commission to report on the implementation of the new accessibility provisions. In order to meet that requirement, we will be asking ROs for data and information on the provision of equipment and support in polling stations. We will provide full information on what data and information we expect to collect alongside the publication of the final version of the guidance. We will also use our engagement and reporting to highlight examples of good practice that emerge, which we can then share with other local authorities to help inform their local arrangements. We will also share these directly with those who we have identified as needing support and that may benefit from the experience of other teams who have

faced similar challenges. We will explore further how we can use existing networks to share experiences and examples more widely. Our new performance standards for ROs, which are due to be finalised and published by the end of the year, will also be used to support engagement with ROs around the accessibility of elections, and to monitor and report on the support and equipment provided. Comments received which were out of scope Some responses raised issues outside the scope of the consultation and the draft guidance, some of which would require legislative change in order to be actioned. These include issues such as: Barriers to voting due to religion Barriers due to not speaking Making postal voting more accessible The availability of phone or online voting Providing the annual canvass form, the invitation to register letter, or poll cards in alternative formats Upskilling voters' political literacy in the run-up to and during an election While we have not addressed these in our consultation response, we will continue to consider how we can take these into account in our wider guidance, research and public awareness work. Background Who we are . We provide comprehensive guidance for ROs, which covers information about what they should be doing to help support disabled voters to participate. It includes specific resources to help and support disabled voters at polling stations. For example, we produce a polling station accessibility checklist to highlight practical accessibility considerations, and a handbook for polling station staff with information on how to ensure voting at the polling station is accessible. We have also worked with RNIB and Mencap to create videos for use during polling station staff training, to help staff better understand the challenges disabled voters may face when going to a polling station. You can find out more about our role and responsibilities on our website . Elections Act 2022 The Elections Act 2022 includes amendments to the Representation of the People Act 1983 which introduce a new requirement for ROs to provide such equipment as is reasonable for the purposes of enabling, or making it easier for, relevant persons to vote independently and in secret. Relevant persons are defined in the legislation as those who find it difficult or impossible to vote due to blindness, partial sight or another disability. Independently refers to voting without assistance from another person, not without any form of assistive device. These provisions will apply to: UK parliamentary general elections Police and Crime Commissioner elections in England and Wales Northern Ireland Assembly and local elections Local elections in England ROs are personally responsible for the conduct of elections. In Northern Ireland, the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) is the RO, so references to 'ROs' throughout this document and the guidance should be read to include the CEO. Our initial consultation We ran an initial consultation on our draft guidance from 5 September until 17 October 2022. We received 67 responses from members of the public, electoral administrators and a range of organisations. View our initial consultation Overview of consultation responses by question Question Yes (total and %) No Don't know Total responses Question 1: Are there any other barriers that voters may experience when voting at the polling station that the draft guidance does not cover? 27 (45%) 23 (38%) 10 (17%) 60 Question 2: Do you think the suggested minimum requirements for equipment to be provided at the polling station are sufficient and reasonable? 33 (56%) 18 (31%) 8 (14%) 59 Question 3: The guidance highlights other types of equipment that could support voters to participate and provides support to help Returning Officers make decisions about what additional equipment and support to provide. Are there any changes you would want made to this guidance? 27 (47%) 25 (44%) 5 (9%) 57 Question 4: Does the draft guidance give enough information to support Returning Officers with providing training to support making voting

accessible for all? 32 (55%) 23 (40%) 3 (5%) 58 Question 5: Does the draft guidance give enough information for Returning Officers on how they can engage with voters and publicise information about elections and the support available to them? 31 (54%) 20 (35%) 6 (11%) 57 Question 6: Does the draft guidance effectively support Returning Officers to evaluate, learn lessons and build on their approach to supporting the needs of disabled voters for future polls? 34 (62%) 16 (29%) 5 (9%) 55 Related content Draft guidance for Returning Officers: Assistance with voting for disabled voters (statutory consultation) Consultation on draft guidance for Returning Officers: Assistance with voting for persons with disabilities Tell us your views on the draft guidance for Returning Officers about assisting disabled people to vote Draft guidance for Returning Officers: Assistance with voting for persons with disabilities Read our draft guidance for Returning Officers

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loans View donations and loans On this page Data in this section Accepting a donation
Chart: Donations accepted by political parties by quarter Table: Donations accepted
by political parties by type of donor First published: 16 July 2019 Last updated: 16
May 2023 Summary box Registered political parties have to report donations they've
accepted on a quarterly basis. We publish these donations on Political Finance Online
. The rules for publishing this information are different in Northern Ireland.
Legislation doesn't allow us to publish any information about donations and loans
from before 1 July 2017. Data in this section Donations accepted by political parties
by quarter Donations accepted by political parties by type of donor Accepting a
donation When political parties, individuals or other organisations accept a
donation, they have to: record information about the donation, such as the amount and
who it was from check the source of the donation, and decide if it comes from a
permissible source decide whether to keep or return the donation, depending on its
source report it to us, if it's over the reportable amount or if they returned it
Chart: Donations accepted by political parties by quarter This chart shows donations
accepted by political parties from 2001 onwards. You can view data from Great Britain
or Northern Ireland or combine the information. It also shows late donations by
party. Chart: Donations accepted by political parties by quarter Table: Donations
accepted by political parties by type of donor Related content Register to vote All
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Commissioners Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political
party, individual or other organisation Our Executive Team Meet our Executive Team,
and find out more about them

You are in the section Home On this page Salaries over £60,000 Salary bands below £60,000 First published: 30 May 2019 Last updated: 30 June 2021 What we publish We publish the names and roles of people who earn more than £60,000 a year. We update this information every four months. The below salaries are as of 1 April 2023.

Salaries over £60,000 Name Role Annual salary (£) Location
Shaun McNally Chief Executive Officer 166,400 London
Craig Westwood Director of Communications, Policy and Research 108,683 London
Ailsa Irvine Director of Electoral Administration and Guidance 108,273 London
Louise Edwards Director of Regulation 108,273 London
Binnie Goh General Counsel 90,000 to 94,999 London
Andrew Simpson Head of Digital Data, Technology and Facilities 75,000 to 79,999 London
Denise Morgan Head of Human Resources 70,000 to 74,499 London
Bola Raji Interim Head of Planning and Performance 70,000 to 74,499 London
John Pullinger Chair 70,000 to 74,499 London
Tom Hawthorn Head of Policy 70,000 to 74,499 London
Sheilja Shah Senior Regulatory Lawyer 70,000 to 74,499 London
Charlene Hannon Head of Guidance 70,000 to 74,999 London
Niki Nixon Head of External Communications 70,000 to 74,999 London
Tim Crowley Head of Digital Communications and Voter Engagement 70,000 to 74,999 London
Su Crown Head of Campaigns and Corporate Communications 70,000 to 74,999 London
Katy Knock Head of Legislation, Strategy and Coordination 65,000 to 69,999 London
Laura Douglas Head of Regulatory Support 65,000 to 69,999 London
David Bailey Head of Strategic Planning and Performance 65,000 to 69,999 London
Gilly Bloom Senior Lawyer 65,000 to 69,999 London
Mel Davidson Head of Support and Improvement 65,000 to 69,999 London
Phil Thompson Head of Research 65,000 to 69,999 London
Tracey Blackman Head of Finance and 65,000 to 69,999 London
Andy O'Neill Head of Electoral Commission, Scotland 65,000 to 69,999 Edinburgh
Carol Sweetenham Head of Projects 65,000 to 69,999 London
Dan Adamson Head of Monitoring and Enforcement 65,000 to 69,999 London
Majella La Praik Head of Registration and Reporting 65,000 to 69,999 London
Adrian Fryer Senior Lawyer 65,000 to 69,999 London
Rhydian Thomas Head of Electoral Commission, Wales 65,000 to 69,999 Cardiff
Cahir Hughes Head of Electoral Commission, Northern Ireland 65,000 to 69,999 Belfast
Annual salary includes taxable benefits and allowances. The table above includes those currently on maternity, parental or adoption leave. Actual salaries for the Chair and Executive team are published in our annual resource accounts, therefore actuals are shown above for these staff. We do not use Senior Civil Service grades. All figures are full-time equivalent. Salary bands below £60,000 Job level Number of staff Salary banding (£)
Manager or Senior Adviser 87
41,000 to 59,999 Senior Adviser or Senior Officer 30
36,000 to 40,999 Adviser or Officer 46
28,000 to 35,999 Related content Our Executive Team Meet our Executive Team, and find out more about them Our Senior Leadership Team Meet our Senior Leadership Group, and find out what they're responsible for Remuneration and HR Committee Find out about our Remuneration and HR Committee Interim corporate plan 2020/21 - 2024/25 Our interim corporate plan was published following the 2019 UK Parliament general election. It has now been replaced by our 2022/23 to 2026/27 plan.

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Headlines/issues since last board meeting Summer arrangements First published: 18 July 2019 Last updated: 23 July 2019 Overview Date: 18 July 2018 Time: 10am to 11:15am Location: Boothroyd Room, 3 Bunhill Row, London Date of next scheduled meeting: 19 September 2018 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Holmes (JEH), Chair Sue Bruce (SB) Anna Carragher (AC) Sarah Chambers (SC) Elan Closs Stephens (ECS) John Horam (JRH) David Howarth (DH) Alasdair Morgan (AM) Bridget Prentice (BP) Rob Vincent (RV) Claire Bassett (CB) Kieran Rix (KR) Ailsa Irvine (AI) Robert Posner (RP) Craig Westwood (CW) Nancy Bruseker (NB) Apologies None.

Headlines/issues since last board meeting Commissioners and the Executive Team discussed the release of the Vote Leave investigation report. The group agreed that the Commission would be more proactive in clarifying inaccurate press reports, and publicising recommendations made by the Commission on improving electoral processes.

RP updated the Board on ongoing investigations and any potential legal challenges. A discussion followed on the importance of encouraging all parties to improve governance for electoral spending reporting. CW noted the upcoming publication of the interim report by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) select committee of their investigation into 'fake news' and disinformation. CW also advised

Commissioners about the planned publication of our statutory evaluation on the voter ID pilots on 19 July. AI provided an update on canvass reform work, and contingency planning for unplanned electoral events. She noted that Northern Ireland online electoral registration, introduced in June, was working well; 81% of new registrations were through the online system and applications had gone up by 50% on the previous month. KR reported that the Annual Report and Accounts were due to be laid in Parliament on 19 July as planned. He advised that, subject to background checks, a new Head of HR would be in place shortly. An appointment had also been made to the independent advisor to the Audit Committee post, and their first Committee meeting should be in October 2018. JEH reported that the recruitment of the new Commissioners was proceeding, and was hopeful that Royal Assent could be received by October. Summer arrangements Commissioners were asked to provide contact information over summer holidays.

Letter: To Google about digital campaigning at the EU referendum | Electoral Commission Search Letter: To Google about digital campaigning at the EU referendum You are in the Key correspondence section Home Key correspondence On this page Letter summary Read our letter in full First published: 16 November 2017 Last updated: 20 December 2019 Summary of the letter Date: 16 November 2017 To: Mr Dave Skelton, UK Public Policy, Google From: Louise Edwards, Head of Regulation Format: Sent by email Full letter Dear Mr Skelton Political campaign finance transparency I write further to our email exchange proposing a meeting with Google to discuss the important issues arising from digital political campaigning. The Electoral Commission is responsible for regulating and enforcing the rules - set out in the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) - that govern political campaign finance in the UK. These rules cover the funding of and spending on campaign activity, and include provisions and offences about acting as an agent for donations, and arrangements to evade the rules on donations. You will be aware of concerns that individuals or organisations from outside the UK, and notably from or on behalf of Russia, may have been campaigning via social media platforms in the June 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the EU. Further, concerns have been raised that the individuals and funds behind such campaigning, if it occurred, were hidden from those viewing the campaign material. EU referendum campaign activity Campaign activity in the context of the EU Referendum included activities that were intended to, or were otherwise in connection with, promoting or bringing about a particular outcome in the referendum. This included campaign broadcasts, advertising of any kind, unsolicited material sent to voters and market research or other methods of finding out how people intended to vote. Further clarification on what constituted campaign activity was given in our guidance on referendum spending . The referendum was preceded by a regulated period, which ran from 15 April to 23 June 2016. During this period the rules stated campaign activities carried out by referendum campaigners – any individual or entity engaged in campaign activity, whether registered with the Commission or not – could only be financed from permissible donations. This excluded individuals not on the UK or Gibraltar electoral roll and companies not carrying out a business in the UK or Gibraltar. Request for information The Commission's legal duties include taking all reasonable steps to secure compliance with the campaign finance rules (see section 145 of PPERA). In furtherance of this duty, please provide us with the following information: Any evidence you hold of campaign activity conducted via Google during the regulated period for the June 2016 EU Referendum (15 April to 23 June 2016) that was funded from Russia. Please provide any such evidence to us by 8 December 2017. In anticipation of this, thank you for your prompt assistance on this important matter. June 2017 UK parliamentary general election Our work in respect of the June general election is ongoing. We may, as part of our assurance work in respect of the election spending returns, wish to contact you at a later date regarding campaign activity on your platform during the general election campaign. Please contact me if you have any questions regarding this request. Related content Letter: Coronavirus and its impact on the May polls Read our letter to Chloe Smith MP (Minister for the Constitution and Devolution) from March 2020 Letter: BBC NI Spotlight programme "Brexit, Dark Money and the DUP" Read our letter to Mr Jim Fitzpatrick from February 2018 Letter: Complaint regarding EU Referendum campaigners Read our letter to the Rt Hon Priti Patel MP from August 2018 Letter: To the Chair of the Police and Crime Committee at the Greater London Assembly Read our letter to Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman, Police and Crime Committee) from February 2018

Scottish Parliament Political Parties Panel minutes: 19 May 2021 | Electoral Commission Search Scottish Parliament Political Parties

Panel minutes: 19 May 2021 You are in the Party panels section Home How we make decisions Party panels On this page Welcome Minutes of the last meeting Feedback on the Scottish Parliament election RO/EMB - roles, recommendations, guidance Electoral administration, nominations, candidate briefings Postal voting Polling day issues Verification and count Integrity issues Royal Mail Campaigning issues and campaign material Campaign expenditure Commission guidance Public awareness Scottish Government update Scotland Office/Cabinet Office update Boundaries Scotland update Boundary Commission for Scotland update Royal Mail update EMB update Electoral Commission update Dates of future meetings First published: 1 October 2021 Last updated: 11 October 2021 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Scott Martin, Scottish National Party (Chair) Matt Edmonds, Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party Paul Moat, Scottish Liberal Democrats Fiona O'Donnell, Scottish Labour Party Isabel Drummond-Murray, Boundaries Scotland Maria McCann, Scottish Government Iain Hockenhull, Scottish Government Malcolm Burr, Electoral Management Board for Scotland Chris Highcock, Electoral Management Board for Scotland Kate Crawford, Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board Hannah Standring, Office of the Secretary State for Scotland Rachel Winham, Royal Mail The Electoral Commission: Dame Susan Bruce, Electoral Commissioner, Scotland Alasdair Morgan, Electoral Commissioner Andy O'Neill, Head of Electoral Commission, Scotland Sarah Mackie, Manager, Electoral Commission, Scotland Martin McKeown, Senior Adviser, Elections & s, Scotland Catherine Heggie, Partnerships & Information Officer, Scotland Lindsey Hamilton, Business Support Officer (Minutes) Apologies Scottish Government, Scott Forsyth, Royal Mail, Pete Wildman, Scottish Assessors Association (Chair of Electoral Registration Committee) Welcome Scott Martin (SM) welcomed those present. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising The minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 March 2021 were approved. Feedback on the Scottish Parliament election Malcolm Burr (MB) said that all directions from the EMB had been useful and well-received but they would pursue the issues Returning Officers had with contractors in advance of the next electoral event. Chris Highcock (CH) added there had been a consistency of approach across the country and, despite fears the count process might not be as open, there was still high degree of scrutiny and agents had been happy. Sue Bruce (SB) echoed MB and CH's sentiments that the election was well-run, both in terms of planning and administration, and gave credit to colleagues across the board who worked collaboratively to ensure it worked well. Andy O'Neill (AON) said the Commission's statutory duty to report on elections meant it was important to get parties and other stakeholders' views and the report would be published sometime in September when Parliament was back in session. RO/EMB - roles, recommendations, guidance SM said this was the first Scottish Parliament election where the EMB had formal powers of direction and it seemed they had been used appropriately. Pre-poll and electoral registration Kate Crawford (KC) said that the early scenario planning had proved to be very successful. Scottish Government funding and getting the Household Notification Letter (HNL) out in February had helped to move the spike for postal vote applications earlier, as did the TV ad which EROs ran across Scotland. Uptake from foreign nationals and prisoners had been good though still some confusion about eligibility. Fiona O'Donnell (FOD) asked if the 6 April early cut-off date in Scotland had been needed. KC said it had made the process manageable and the number of applications received after the deadline had been at the lower end of what they expected. On the subject of accessibility, FOD asked if there was evidence it had

been more effective than in previous elections. KC ran through the approach they had taken with those in care homes. FOD said one area in Glasgow had a disappointing level of postal votes. KC said most of the permanent postal vote applications had been fresh registrations. Electoral administration, nominations, candidate briefings CH said electronic copies of nominations submitted ahead of time had worked well for the main parties but independent candidates and smaller parties were less familiar with the process. SM questioned whether wet signatures were necessary, likewise the authorisation of each and every candidate and suggested providing just one list; there had been a lack of consistency with different versions of deposits and return forms; one council had helpfully posted pictures of what the polling station and count would look like. FOD said COVID restrictions had placed a strain on Royal Mail first class so they had opted for next day delivery guaranteed. She asked whether anyone ever checked full candidate name, and felt the name on the register should be enough. Some candidates had forgotten they had middle names and had to re-submit and had also experienced a lack of consistency in payment of deposits. Matt Edmonds (ME) had found nominations straightforward and had carried out checks beforehand.

Descriptions for the Scottish Parliament had been handled a little differently and were a little bit of a headache with some councils. Paul Moat (PM) said pre-checking was a good idea but felt the process required modernisation and simplification. ROs had different interpretations of the rules which he would drop in an email afterwards. The candidate acceptance form had the witness narrative 'in my presence' so if witness signature date was after date of candidate it was queried, but there was no requirement for this. EC website forms were designed for printing and handwritten completion but not electronic so took time at the party end to get these things working. Virtual candidate briefings had meant being able to attend a few more than usual and perhaps a hybrid of physical and virtual in the future would be ideal.

Postal voting Issues with suppliers in Dumfries and Galloway had been reported. FOD said issues in Renfrewshire had resulted in some postal ballots being hand delivered and sought reassurance lessons would be learned. If a postal ballot had not been received, could an email reminder be sent that they could produce it on the day? Airdrie and Shotts turnout for postal votes had been lower in the by-election as a significant number thought it was a re-issue for SP election and put in the bin. A by-election a week after a major election was too soon and caused a lot of confusion for voters. KC said the RRO Renfrewshire issue was being fully investigated. The reminder idea would be for ROs but said voters received a poll card if they changed from 'in person' to postal telling them to expect their ballot by a certain date and included a number to phone. SM noted that Scottish Borders and Dumfries and Galloway Councils had also experienced printing issues. Polling day issues Parties reported that they had been keen to get postal vote files this time round but some EROs delayed issuing final PV files until they got cancellations in. Parties were keen to get them as soon as possible, even if not complete. KC said the first file run was done fairly quickly but in this election many had changed to postal so some EROs tried to provide data as accurate as possible and perhaps this caused delays. It would be discussed at the ERO wash-up meeting. Consistency of issue/timing across Scotland was desirable but tied to suppliers. Agreed dates for AV file issue would be useful for parties. Action point: EROs to agree dates and notify parties. SM said if AV files were issued monthly, parties would have no reason to write to potential voters who had changed their postal vote six months earlier. An emergency proxy should be issued if the postal ballot hadn't reached the elector; if they were unable to return in time or to students living hundreds of miles from their home address,

but had to be based on ERO being able to cancel the postal vote. A legislative change in closely defined circumstance would mean someone could get an emergency proxy. Ian Hockenhull (IH) said the Scottish Government was currently compiling a list of changes to the law so this could be considered. Parties reported that the issuing of COVID emergency proxies had been a little inconsistent. The 2014 Referendum on independence for Scotland's wider interpretation would have meant it was not required. Polling day issues – CH said they had circulated a note of turnout three times at each Edinburgh polling place to support polling agents but it had taken a lot of work from staff. There was to be a review amongst the ROs to go through issues so would be highlighted. There had been queuing in some polling stations with some joining after 10pm. Voting had taken a bit longer and weather had been poor, so people arrived in the last 2.5 hours. Verification and count CH said Candidates and agents were generally happy and able to sample boxes in the areas they wanted to. PM said expectation was low, so managed to see more than they thought they would; there was wide acceptance restrictions had to be in place but should go back to full scrutiny. ME agreed and said scrutiny was more than just sampling but understood it was done to the best of ability and, bar a few minor things, was well delivered. SM had a lot of comments about list candidates not allowed automatic entry but appreciated it was a one off and as long as there was a consistency in approach. He said not enough ROs re-distribute unused places which should be standard practice. Integrity issues MMcK said the Electoral Commission had participated in Police Scotland phone calls throughout polling day. Some allegations of personation would be investigated. Rachel de Palma Randle (RdPR) – reminded the panel of an Electoral Commission initiative which asked postmen to report any sightings of large numbers of postal votes to one address or someone putting a large number in a post box. SM had hoped for a consistent format of election results but was disappointed the Twitter hashtag had not been used by all Returning Officers. There was discussion about reporting the regional declarations by constituency and the Electoral Management Board becoming something of a result service. Action: MB welcomed the debate and said he would take the suggestion back to the next EMB meeting. Royal Mail Rachel Winham (RW) said the 'sweep' had gone very well and returned a large number of votes. RW advised parties they could contact the Royal Mail for daily reports on leaflet issue. She was aware that a lot of parties' postal voting plans got amended so when their printer brought something in later than marked, it wouldn't ring alarm bells. If dealing with printer, she said the best thing would be to drop a line to party, centrally. RW understood the importance of the first wave of candidate mail going out at the same time as the first postal vote and in general had been a much smoother process than in the past. PM said direct feedback to parties during the campaign was really useful as a lot of faith was placed in the printers. Campaigning issues and campaign material FOD noted that there had been an inconsistent application of Scottish Government's guidance in relation to what was acceptable campaigning in the run up to the polls. Communication could have been better. PM noted the new rules on digital imprints that were in place for the election. Parties and campaigners had sought to follow the rules in different ways. It was important to review the application and adherence to the rules. MMcK noted that the Commission would consider this as part of its post poll reporting. Action point: EC to discuss with parties out with this meeting. Campaign expenditure Paul Moat (PM) reported a lot of people getting in touch to download different forms. MMcK noted an inconsistency around recording notional spending in the long and short campaign forms which had been addressed. Commission guidance MMcK requested suggestions for improvements to

the Commission's guidance. MB welcomed similar feedback for the EMB. SM said there had been inconsistency over commonly used names which was correct in the previous version but the nature of election rules in UK England/Wales was complicated and sometimes cropped up in the Scottish version. Parties used to be given draft guidance but that had been perceived as an advantage. New guidance for LG elections would be in new format. SM said he would like to receive notification when any guidance was changed. Public awareness There were no comments. Scottish Government update MMcC said the Immediate focus was on Local Government elections; working on the conduct order and a proposal to bring forward changes mirroring those in the Scottish Parliament Conduct Order. The Scotland Office update had mentioned legislation the UK Government was taking through; Scottish and Welsh ministers had written indicating their concern that the Prime Minister had complete discretion to call an election which would require a Scottish or Welsh election to be moved. A dialogue on what might be done was under way. MMcC will share what the LG reports would look like and extended an invitation to the parties to attend a local government count demonstration. Action: MMcC send Draft Local Government Conduct Order, set of sample reports and invitation to parties. Scotland Office/Cabinet Office update Hannah Standring (HS) said the recently called Dissolution and Calling of Parliament Bill currently had no date for its second reading but there were some concerns regarding timings and potential clashes between UK and devolved parliaments. It was early days for the Electoral Integrity Bill but she hoped to have a more substantive proposal at a future meeting. Cabinet Office officials would shortly share information with members of this group; an update on proposals for notional expenditure and an overview of new proposals intended to update the political finance framework, within the next few weeks. Action: Cabinet Office to share proposals for notional expenditure and overview of new proposals for political finance framework. Boundaries Scotland update IDM noted the new name for Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland and that the 6 islands review were nearing completion. In response to a question IDM confirmed that she expected the next review of Scottish Parliament constituencies to begin in late 2022/early 2023 in order to meet the legislative deadline of May 2025. Boundary Commission for Scotland update IDM said she would set up an online meeting with parties around 28/29 June. This would go over the approach to the review, the new legislation, timing and so on. The Boundary Commission for England would be commencing their consultation on 8 June but the other 3 commissions, including BCS, would follow in the autumn. Action: IDM to set up meeting with parties around 28/29 June. Royal Mail update All covered previously. EMB update Nothing else to add. Electoral Commission update Sue Bruce (SB) said John Pullinger, the new Chair would be in post shortly and that the feedback from this meeting had been helpful and would inform our post event reporting. Dates of future meetings 2021 15 September 10 November 2022 20 January *8 March 6 May. Pre-meeting 10:30 and meeting proper at 11:00 am except for *8 March which will be 2:30 pre-meeting and 3:00pm meeting Related content Party registration decisions View our decisions on political party names, descriptions and emblems View current applications View the political party names, descriptions and emblems which we are currently considering as part of our assessment process Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Registers of unincorporated associations Download and view the registers of unincorporated associations

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about travel and subsistence costs from our executive team and the heads of our
offices in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. This is part of our commitment to
being open about what we do. We pay for travel, accommodation, meals and certain
other expenses that they incur while carrying out our work. The limits for these
expenses are set out in our policy. You can also find out more about our salaries .
2019 travel and subsistence Bob Poser, Chief Executive Date Occasion Item Cost (£) 28
March Meeting with Brandon Lewis MP, Chair of the Conservative Party Public transport
2.40 26 March Media training Breakfast 4.59 20 March Centre for Data Ethics and
Innovation Reception, 11 Downing Street Public transport 4.80 18 March Speaker's
Committee Meeting, House of Commons Public transport 2.40 14 March Electoral Law
Forum seminar Public transport 2.40 6 March Meetings in Westminster Public transport
4.80 20 February Meeting with Northern Ireland Office officials, Westminster Public
transport 4.80 8 February National Seminar for Electoral Fraud Reduction and
Prevention, Birmingham Public transport 2.40 Return rail London to Birmingham 51.85 7
February Association of Chief Executives (ACE) Roundtable Public transport 2.40 6
February Meeting with Bridget Phillipson MP Public transport 4.80 Louise Edwards,
Director of Regulation Date Occasion Item Cost (£) 18 March Oxford Media Convention
2019 - Worcester College, Oxford Return rail London to Oxford 66.60 1 February
Panellist at the CPDP (Computers, Privacy and Data Protection) Conference, Brussels
No expenses incurred 0.00 Ailsa Irvine, Director of Electoral Administration and
Guidance Date Occasion Item Cost (£) 13 March Visit to our Scotland office Flight
London to Edinburgh 165.57 Dinner 10.38 Overnight hotel, Edinburgh 97.50 15 March
Airport bus 4.50 Flight Edinburgh to London 38.23 Taxi airport to home 21.50 3
February Association of s (AEA) Conference, Brighton Public transport 2.80 3 to 6
February Return rail London to Brighton 37.35 3 February Train station to hotel 7.00
3 February Dinner (self and two colleagues) 69.99 5 February Dinner (self and two
colleagues) 45.10 6 February Taxi hotel to station 6.00 6 February Public transport
2.80 29 to 31 January Visit to our Northern Ireland office and department training
day Return flight Stansted to Belfast 46.32 29 January Taxi airport to hotel 34.00 29
January Refreshments 5.65 29 to 30 January Overnight hotel in Belfast (two nights)
132.00 31 January Taxi airport to home 21.50 9 January Visit to our Scotland office
Taxi home to airport 20.00 9 January Flight London to Edinburgh 23.24 9 January Taxi
airport to overnight accommodation 21.00 13 January Tram Edinburgh to airport 6.00 13
January Flight Edinburgh to London 34.35 Craig Westwood, Director of Communications
Policy, and Research No expenses. Kieran Rix Director of Finance and Corporate
Services Date Occasion Item Cost (£) 26 to 27 March Meeting with Finance Committee at
Senedd, Cardiff Bay Return rail from London to Cardiff 168.30 Taxi from station to
hotel 8.00 Overnight hotel, Cardiff 95.92 Dinner 12.00 27 March Breakfast 12.00 2018
travel and subsistence 2018 travel and subsistence Claire Bassett, Chief Executive
Date Occasion Item Cost (£) 17 to 18 December Visit to our Northern Ireland office
Flight from Edinburgh to Belfast 47.32 Taxi from airport to hotel 39.00 Dinner 15.00
Overnight hotel, Belfast 101.00 Overnight subsistence 5.00 Taxi from office to
airport 13.52 Flight from Belfast to London 89.65 Mileage from airport to home 20.25
17 December Visit to our Scotland office Mileage from home to airport 20.25 Heathrow
parking 109.40 Flight from London to Edinburgh 49.99 Return tram from airport to city
centre 8.50 4 December Formal board dinner Dinner (share) 42.75 3 December Visit to

our Wales office Return mileage from home to office 81.00 Bridge toll 5.60 29
November Constitution Unit seminar 'Regulating Digital Campaigning' Public transport 2.40 27 to 29 November International IDEA roundtable on Inter-agency collaboration on cyber security in elections Return flight from London to Amsterdam. Flight cancelled but unable 37.90 20 November Induction meeting with new Commissioners Lunch (share) 22.38 14 November Whitehall Industry Group (WIG) Breakfast briefing Breakfast 4.35 Public transport 5.30 13 November Speaking at ICO/Demos event 'The future of political Public transport 4.40 Overnight hotel 139.50 13 November Meeting with Chloe Smith MP, Minister for the Constitution Public transport 2.40 6 November Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee evidence session Public transport 2.40 1 November Catch up with Rowena Ironside, Non-Executive Director for the Cabinet Office Elections and Registrations Division Public transport 2.00 1 November Ministerial Roundtable, Westminster Public transport 4.80 11 October Visit to our Wales office and Wales Electoral Coordination Board Mileage from home to Cardiff office 42.75 Toll bridge 5.60 Parking 5.50 Lunch 6.50 Mileage from Cardiff Bay to home 44.55 18 September Formal board dinner Dinner (share) 33.75 14 August Meeting with Peter Lee, Director of the Cabinet Office's Constitution Group Public transport 2.40 26 to 27 July Cambridge Conference on Electoral Democracy in the Commonwealth Return rail from London to Cambridge 37.50 Taxi from station to conference centre 8.00 Overnight subsistence 5.00 Taxi from conference centre to station 10.00 16 July Media interviews for the Vote Leave investigation report Overnight hotel, London 178.80 Overnight subsistence 5.00 Taxi from Westminster to office 20.80 9 July Meetings in Westminster Public transport 2.40 Refreshments for two 17.71 Bob Posner, Director of Political Finance and Regulation, and Legal Counsel Date Occasion Item Cost (£) 18 September Formal board dinner Share of dinner 33.75 Ailsa Irvine, Director of Electoral Administration and Guidance Date Occasion Item Cost (£) 18 December Visit to our Wales office Return rail from London to Cardiff 82.80 Taxi from station to office 9.20 Overnight hotel, Cardiff 7.00 19 December Taxi from hotel to office 7.00 4 December Formal board dinner Dinner (share) 42.75 28 November Visit to our Scotland office Taxi from home to airport 20.00 Flight from London to Edinburgh 37.23 Taxi from airport to overnight accommodation 20.00 1 December Flight from Edinburgh to London 36.22 20 November Induction meeting with new commissioners Lunch (share of) 22.38 19 November Meetings in Westminster Lunch 5.15 5 to 6 November Visit to our Northern Ireland office Return flight from London to Belfast 48.34 Taxi from airport to office 37.00 Dinner 16.98 Overnight hotel, Belfast 48.50 6 November Taxi from airport to home 21.50 19 September Visit to our Scotland office Public transport 3.30 Dinner 23.90 Flight from London to Edinburgh 75.99 Taxi from airport to overnight accommodation 23.00 18 September Formal board dinner Dinner (share) 33.75 14 August Meeting with Nick Eveleigh, Chief Executive, Chelmsford Bus from Stansted to Chelmsford 10.00 Rail from Chelmsford to London 15.90 6 August Visit to our Wales office Public transport 2.40 Return rail from London to Cardiff 78.00 Taxi from station to Cardiff Bay 6.00 Lunch 6.75 Overnight hotel, Cardiff 72.75 Dinner 17.94 7 August Rail from Cardiff Queen Street to Cardiff Bay 2.10 Lunch (self and colleague) 14.50 Taxi from Cardiff Bay to station 4.90 Public transport 2.40 23 to 24 July Visit to our Northern Ireland office Return flight from London to Belfast 63.50 Taxi from airport to office 34.80 Dinner 6.79 Overnight hotel, Belfast 55.50 15 to 17 July Visit to our Scotland office Return flight from London to Edinburgh 135.36 Taxi from airport to overnight accommodation 21.15 17 July Public transport to airport 4.50 Taxi to home 18.00 Craig Westwood, Director of Communications Policy, and Research Date Occasion Item Cost (£) 4 December Formal board dinner Dinner (share) 42.75 21

November Meetings in Westminster Public transport 4.80 20 November Induction meeting with new commissioners Lunch (share of) 22.38 Kieran Rix Director of Finance and Corporate Services Date Occasion Item Cost (£) 4 December Formal board dinner Dinner (share) 42.75 20 November Induction meeting with new commissioners Lunch (share of) 22.38 8 August Meeting with Welsh Assembly Commission at Ty Hywel Return rail from London to Cardiff 104.50 16 July Meeting with Scottish Parliament and Devolved Office Staff, Edinburgh Return flight from London to Edinburgh 166.71 Related content Interests, gifts and hospitality Look at the record of our Executive Team's interests, gifts and hospitality Our Executive Team Meet our Executive Team, and find out more about them Our Senior Leadership Team Meet our Senior Leadership Group, and find out what they're responsible for Chief Executive's external meetings Find out about our Chief Executive's external meetings

Overview Ahead of the Second Reading of the Bill on Tuesday 6 July, this briefing highlights the importance of the current minimum election timetable of 25-working days, which the Bill seeks to retain. This allows the electoral community to plan for the effective delivery and administration of general elections, and to support and encourage voter participation. Key considerations Our latest research shows public confidence in the running of elections is at its highest level since data collection began ten years ago, with four out of five respondents saying they are confident that elections in the UK are well run. The Commission does not take a view on the constitutional questions about how UK Parliament terms are specified and how elections can be called. Its focus is that, whatever processes are in place, all those participating must have sufficient time to plan and deliver their responsibilities. The polls must be able to be delivered in a way which inspires confidence and gives voters choice on the ballot paper. In order to meet this need, all those participating must have sufficient time to plan and deliver their role. It is important that sufficient time is allowed for: the delivery of essential electoral administration services, such as the printing of ballot papers, identification of count and polling venues, and processing of postal ballot packs candidates (including independent candidates) to take decisions on whether to stand, and for parties and campaigners to put their arguments to the electorate voter registration campaigns to be carried out, and for voters to register and to consider their voting options Based on our experience of the three UK Parliamentary general elections since 2015, the current minimum election timetable of 25 working days, which the Dissolution and Calling of Parliament Bill seeks to retain, supports the proper preparation and delivery of these activities. We set out further detail on this in our evidence to the Joint Committee on the Fixed-term Parliaments Act. If you require any further information, please contact Alex White in our public affairs team at awhite@electoralcommission.org.uk

Background

The introduction of the requirements for imprints on digital material is

important for transparency in campaigning, and it is essential that campaigners

understand the new duties placed on them. The statutory guidance is a central part of

the Commission's work to help ensure that campaigners are confident in applying the

law to their activities. The digital imprints regime is complex. Many respondents to

the consultation that we ran (31 October - 20 December 2022) welcomed how various

sections of the guidance provided clarity and helpful examples on how the law will

work in practice. How we developed the guidance The guidance has been produced

following consultation with political parties, academics, and a range of other

groups, including trade unions and organisations representing charities, and reflects

our experiences of regulating elections. Prior to consultation we met with key

stakeholders from across the UK to ensure we could draw on their experiences of

campaigning. The feedback and evidence we received from them as well as other

stakeholders has been important to improve the clarity and effectiveness of the

guidance. We recognise how important it is that the people who will use the guidance

support it. We were committed to ensuring the guidance was as useful and practical as

possible, and included examples, a range of images and helpful flowcharts to support

campaigners to understand in what situations the rules apply. Overall, feedback was

positive and stakeholders felt that the draft guidance was 'generally straightforward

and well-written.' There were areas where additional clarity or examples were sought

to make it even clearer for parties and campaigners. Within our consultation report

we have highlighted where we agree with recommendations to improve the guidance's

intelligibility. We have also set out why, in some circumstances, we had to retain

the wording from our original draft, often to remain consistent with the law. Next

steps If approved by Parliament, we will begin our planned programme of support to

help familiarise campaigners with the new digital imprints requirements. This will

include practical support for you as campaigners and candidates, including on how the

requirement for digital imprints will apply to your campaign material. Additional

information . A key part of our role is to provide advice to government and

parliament on legislation relating to elections. If you would like any further information, please contact Alex White in our public affairs team:
awhite@electoralcommission.org.uk

Scottish Parliament Political Parties Panel Minutes: 22 January 2020 | Electoral Commission Search Scottish Parliament Political Parties

Panel Minutes: 22 January 2020 You are in the Party panels section Home How we make decisions Party panels On this page Minutes of previous meeting Feedback on the UK Parliamentary General Election Scottish Government update Scotland Office update Scotland Boundary Commission update EMB update All Scotland polling scheme Electoral Commission update Date of next meeting Action items First published: 19 June 2020 Last updated: 6 July 2020 Meeting overview: Date: 22 January 2020 Time: 2pm Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Scottish Green Party: John Hardy (Chair) Scottish Liberal Democrats: Paul Moat Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party: Matt Edmonds Scottish National Party: Scott Martin Scottish Labour Party: Michael Sharpe Scottish Boundary Commission: Isabel Drummond-Murray Scottish Government: James Newman Electoral Management Board for Scotland: Chris Highcock Scottish Assessors Association: Pete Wildman, Chair of the Electoral Registration Committee Scotland Office: Craig Chalcraft The Electoral Commission: Dame Susan Bruce, Electoral Commissioner, Scotland Andy O'Neill, Head of the Electoral Commission, Scotland Martin McKeown, Senior Adviser, Elections & Mette Christensen, Senior Policy Advisor Lindsey Hamilton, Business Support Officer (Minutes) Apologies for absence: Kate Crawford, Scottish Assessors Association Alasdair Morgan, Electoral Commissioner Maria McCann, Scottish Government Introduction: The Chairperson John Hardy (JH) welcomed those present to the meeting and introductions were made. Andy O'Neill (AON) intimated apologies from those unable to attend. Minutes of previous meeting The minutes from the previous meeting held on 7 June 2019 were approved. There were no action points outstanding. Feedback on the UK Parliamentary General Election The PPP discussed the conduct of the UK Parliamentary election held in December 2019. The aim was to identify areas where improvements might be made. The following areas were highlighted: Chris Highcock (CH) confirmed the recommendations the EMB made to Returning Officers with a view to achieving consistency in delivery and certainty for voters around e.g. dates for the publication of the notice of poll, issue of poll cards and postal votes; Scott Martin (SM) noted that the Early Parliamentary General Election Act 2019 had been amended to avoid any specific issues related to the St Andrew's Day Bank holiday in Scotland; (SM) commented that if the UK Parliamentary election had been held a week earlier, no delay to the publication of the electoral register would have been required. Pete Wildman (PW) replied that software very much drove what could be produced ahead of elections and this was a body of work to look at. Action 4.1 (SM) confirmed he would provide (PW) with information on this. CH noted that candidate meetings hosted by ROs had fewer attendees but felt this was due to experienced election agents. PW noted not as many calls had been received following the distribution of postal vote rejection notices after the election. CH advised that he had fed back from Police Scotland that their offer to hold security briefings for candidates had low uptake and this might have been because the offer was not made early enough. Permission from candidates had to be sought through ROs and it was suggested a form could be included in the nomination pack. The parties agreed this was a good idea. Action 4.2 AON advised that the Commission would look at including such a form in Nomination Packs for future elections if there was a demand for it; Matt Edmonds (ME) reported issues with delivery of election communication but said they would raise directly with Royal Mail. This was probably due to the level of mail already being handled at that time of year; SM advised that the Electoral Commission candidate spending form did not clarify a donation is over £50 (i.e. £50.01) and said some councils had been issuing old-style returns. SM agreed to email

the Electoral Commission on issues with the form. It was agreed that any actions for improvement be fed back and considered by relevant bodies. Scottish Government update James Newman (JN) provided updates on:- the passage of the Scottish Elections (Franchise and Representation) Bill including amendments accepted at Stage 2; the passage of the Scottish Elections (Reform) Bill which will have its Stage 1 debate on 6 February 2020; the imminent Royal Assent of the Referendums (Scotland) Act 2020; The laying of the Regulations in relation to canvass reform in Scotland, including regulations to facilitate data testing by EROs; Progress of the procurement exercise in relation to the e-counting solution for the 2022 Scottish Council elections. Scott Martin (SM) indicated that it looked as if the election return provisions of the Scottish Elections (Reform) Bill had been drafted on the basis that the election expenses section in the Local Electoral Administration and Registration Services Act 2006 had been commenced, when it hadn't. SM asked JN what the intentions were in relation to that. Noted. Action 5.1 (SM) confirmed he would email (JN) with further details on this. Scotland Office update Craig Chalcraft (CC) reported on the UK Government's legislative programme which includes various elements related to electoral law, including plans to repeal the Fixed Term Parliaments Act was being progressed and introduce an ID requirement for elections under the remit of the UK Parliament. Noted. Scottish Boundary Commission update Isabel Drummond-Murray (ID-M) updated on the boundary provisions in the Scottish Elections (Reform) Bill. These included number of councillors per ward which she and (SM) discussed. She commented that the proposal for 5 year electoral terms has implications for review scheduling. Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland were currently conducting a review of the Scottish Parliament constituency boundary between Glasgow Provan and Coatbridge and Chryston constituencies and the Scottish Parliament region boundary between Glasgow and Central Scotland regions at Cardowan by Stepps. (ID-M) reported it would go to the minister in the next couple of months. The proposed changes will allow the SP constituency and regional boundaries to be aligned with the council area boundary in time for the next Scottish Parliament elections in May 2021. Noted. EMB Update (PW) said the increase in the electorate was welcome but brought challenges and lessons learned included taking steps to ensure software could handle the increase. He reported the 5 year postal vote signature refresh had commenced on 20 January. Under the new canvass rules there would be only one communication to households where there were no changes and work was ongoing to allow foreign nationals to be able to register. CH reported the focus had been on the results rather than process. Referendum Bill – draft guidance for electoral administration was to begin shortly. Polling place and polling district reviews in the last 18 months. There were a few by-elections upcoming including Clackmannanshire and Dumfries and Galloway. The tender for e-counting had taken effort and mental space, particularly local government. Ensure in good position – potential change 2021 SP elections – complexity and constituency and regional element. Starting to work on comments. Matt Edmonds (ME) asked if the ready reckoner spreadsheet could be updated as the existing one was running out. Action 8.1 (CH) confirmed he would supply a new one. All Scotland polling scheme SM spoke to his papers which related to the potential development of an all Scotland Polling Scheme. (CH) and (PW) said they would discuss a bit more with relevant agencies to consider how to put in place and said there would be a bit of work involved in setting up, hosting and maintaining it. The other political parties felt it would be useful as discrepancies between Scottish Parliament, UK Parliament and local government boundaries exist. Action 9.1 (SM) would provide drafts of what it could look like. Electoral Commission update Andy

O'Neill (AON) said the Electoral Commission had been planning for 2021 Scottish Parliament elections. He referenced links to 4 reports which had been circulated prior to the meeting, in particular that of ballot paper ordering at Scottish council elections. He said concerns had been received from disability organisations and there was a desire for consistency of approach. Scottish Government had been looking at the merits of piloting ballot paper ordering and the Electoral Commission was ready to be asked to do something if required. Martin McKeown (MMcK) provided an update on progress made by the Commission to develop Codes of Practice on spending for candidates and political parties. Codes for elections under the remit of UK Parliament were submitted to the Cabinet Office and the Commission was considering feedback received. A consultation exercise on Codes for devolved Welsh elections was due to close shortly. Draft Codes for devolved Scottish elections will be drafted and a consultation commenced in due course. The intention is to have Codes in place for the 2021 Scottish Parliamentary elections and the Electoral Commission will work with Scottish Government to achieve this aim. SM suggested it might be possible to combine the candidate and party Codes. Mette Christensen (MC) advised that the Electoral Commission is looking at ways to improve the way that spending is reported at elections and referendums. This is following the recommendations for changes to the reporting rules that the Commission made in their Digital Campaigning report. The parties agreed that Commission staff could speak to them later this year in order to get their input on the recommendations. MMcK further provided an update on progress to redevelop the Commission's online portal to improve the user experience. The intention is to roll out the new system by January 2021. Training will be provided to users after summer 2020. MMcK provided an update on the publication of revised performance standards for electoral registration officers in Great Britain. The consultation closes on 31 March 2020. PPP members had been issued with a copy of the consultation documentation. Dates for meetings in 2020/21 Action 11 AON advised a list of dates would be circulated. Action items Action Items Owner(s) Deadline 4.1 Scott Martin ASAP 4.2 Andy O'Neill ASAP 5.1 Scott Martin ASAP 8.1 Chris Highcock ASAP 9.1 Scott Martin ASAP 11 Andy O'Neill ASAP

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Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Who was at the meeting Apologies and introductions Declarations of interest Minutes of the previous Board Meeting Update on elections Corporate Plan 2022/23 – 2026/27: plan structure Corporate Plan 2022/23 – 2026/27: financial strategy Key messages for the Annual Report Chief Executive's update Commission Board action tracker Forward plan of Board business Meet the new Chair designate First published: 14 October 2021 Last updated: 14 October 2021 Meeting summary Date: Wednesday 21 April 2021 Time: 9.30am to 1pm Location: By video conference Date of next scheduled meeting: Wednesday 19 May 2021 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Board Members: Rob Vincent - Meeting Chair Alex Attwood Sarah Chambers Elan Closs Stephens Stephen Gilbert Alasdair Morgan Joan Walley John Pullinger, as a participating observer pending receipt of Royal Warrant In attendance: Bob Posner, Chief Executive Craig Westwood, Director, Communications, Policy and Research Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services Binnie Goh, General Counsel Chantelle Shokar, Legal Officer (all items) Hannah Kavanagh, Legal Officer (all items) David Bailey, Head of Performance and Planning (item 5) Bola Raji, Interim Performance and Planning Manager (item 5) Tracey Blackman, Head of Finance and (item 7) Carol Sweetenham, Head of Projects (item 7) Zena Khan, Senior Advisor, Governance Apologies and introductions Apologies were received from Sue Bruce, Commissioner. The Meeting Chair welcomed all to the meeting in particular John Pullinger, Chair designate who was attending as a participating observer whilst we await receipt of his Royal Warrant. The Board were advised that due to there being two vacant Commissioner posts and apologies received from Commissioner Sue Bruce it deemed the meeting in quorate. 'Quorum Board meetings are quorate if there are at least six Commissioners present and able to take part in the discussion, of whom four shall be Commissioners appointed other than under Section 3A of the Act.' The Board noted that board business scheduled for this meeting required Commissioners giving direction of travel to the Executive Team rather than decision making, which meant that no business items were deferred due to quoracy. Declarations of interest There were no new declarations of interest. Minutes of the previous Board Meeting (EC 29/21) Resolved: That the minutes of the Commission Board meeting on 31 March 2021 be approved. Update on elections (Oral) The Board received an oral update from the Chief Executive, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance, Director, Communications, Policy and Research and Director, Regulation. The Board noted that the electoral registration deadline had passed at midnight on Monday along with the postal voting deadline in England and Wales yesterday, with the deadline in Scotland having already passed on 6 April. The Board noted that over 1 million electors had applied to receive postal votes in Scotland which was an increase from 18% of the electorate at the last comparable elections in 2016 to almost a quarter of the electorate now. There appears to be a broadly similar picture emerging across England and Wales, with increases being variable in scale but all manageable. It was noted that one area that we continue to monitor is elections staffing, with the main concerns being around the potential for temporary staff to drop out close to polling day due to illness or self-isolation or general concerns about the safety of working at the polls on the day. Local authorities are working hard to ensure they are able to provide enough staff and have contingency to be able to respond should this happen. Another area receiving a lot of focus specifically to these polls was the management of the verification and counting of votes, in

particular how access can be managed safely and how candidates and agents will be able to oversee proceedings, including how to manage their expectations as to the fact that counts will look different and will take longer. The Board noted that our main focus from the electoral administration perspective now is on responding to queries from local authorities, and in the last week alone we dealt with over 200 enquiries from electoral administrators; there are no particular patterns or concerns emerging from these at this stage, but we will monitor what comes in and our teams across England, Scotland and Wales will remain focussed on supporting local authorities over these final weeks of the election timetables. The Board noted an update on the voter registration campaign, with 1.05 million applications to register being recorded across Great Britain during the campaign period. This exceeded the Commission's targets in all areas, and its stretch targets for Wales, England and Great Britain as a whole. It was further noted in the lead up to polling day we aim to support voters both directly and through media and other third parties, in order to provide an understanding on how to vote with confidence, particularly in light of Covid-19 related safety measures. This includes ongoing work with the media and through the Commission's public information services. The Board discussed ongoing engagement with Royal Mail, including understanding their progress on contingency planning. The Board noted that our Chief Executive and Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance met with the recently appointed Chief Executive of Royal Mail. We were ensured that priority would be given to the delivery of campaign materials, our information booklets, poll cards, postal vote applications and postal ballot packs. The Board requested to be kept abreast of any issues that may arise during the remainder of the election period. Resolved: That the oral updates be noted.

Corporate Plan 2022/23 – 2026/27: plan structure (EC 30/21) The Board received the report providing an opportunity to review the proposed structure for the Corporate Plan 2022/23 – 2026/27 as it will be submitted to the UK, Scottish and Welsh parliaments. The Board discussed the tone and language and pitching it at the right level with emphasis on delivering the Commission's objectives and ensuring appropriate emphasis on work in all parts of the UK. The importance of avoiding management speak was noted, to make it a clearer statement of the context of our role. Commissioners Sarah Chambers, Stephen Gilbert and Joan Walley volunteered to liaise with report authors to provide support and input where necessary before bringing back to the June board meeting for approval. Resolved: That the Board endorsed the structure for the Corporate Plan 2022/23– 2026/27.

Corporate Plan 2022/23 – 2026/27: financial strategy (EC 31/21) The Board received a report providing an opportunity to determine the overall financial strategy for the Commission over the corporate plan period. The Board discussed looking at options and opportunities in terms of the core budget as well as reflecting financial accountability for devolved work in Scotland and Wales. It was noted that further iterations would come back to the Board. Resolved: That the Board endorsed the proposed approach, but would want to consider further before adopting the strategy.

Key messages for the Annual Report (EC 32/21) The Board received a report on our Annual Report and Accounts including a review of our performance from 2020/21. The Board discussed the key messages for the Annual Report drawing attention to a range of topics to be noted. Resolved: That the feedback from the Board will be incorporated into the drafting of the Report and shown in full as part of the draft Annual Report at the May Board meeting.

Chief Executive's update The Board received an oral update from the Chief Executive, Director, Communications, Policy and Research and Director, Regulation. It was noted that the usual full written Chief

Executive's update report was not appropriate at this time due to staff elections work priorities and a significant proportion of work being on the elections as reflected in the update agenda item to the Board. The Board noted the following updates: Recruitment of New Commissioner for Northern Ireland Interviews of shortlisted candidates have been held with John Pullinger, Chair designate as part of the panel. Next steps would be for the Speaker's Committee to consider panel recommendation(s) followed by the Leader of main parties' consultation, then back to the Speaker's Committee then the House, followed by the issue of the Royal Warrant, so there's still a few more months before finalisation. Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) The latest information from CSPL is that they are looking to publish their report on aspects of the Political Finance regulatory framework, in July. PACAC Their review into the work of the Commission is at the stage of doing some oral evidence sessions. They have had one with UK academics that was positive. At the session on 27 April, they will get international academic inputs They will then plan to have a session with us, but no date has been scheduled as yet. The Commission We continue to operate effectively as a remote working organisation (elections work demonstrates that), recognising that there are impacts, including on staff well-being. We have limited re-opening of our offices with social distancing in place and for priority business need only. This is based on a booking system that has limited numbers with no visitors. Our HR policies have been aligned to work more flexibly in the office and remote working including surveying staff. We will trial this for a year to learn, adapt and settle in. Electoral Integrity Bill Preparations are underway for the Electoral Integrity Bill expected from the UK Government, with the establishment of a Commission project board to coordinate activity. The work is currently focused on ensuring our preparations for the Bill's passage, and the need to support parliamentarians by providing accurate and timely briefing on the Bill's provisions; and on mapping out the necessary work to implement the provisions should they be passed into law. Political Finance Online The project has moved on from red to amber for the first time since difficulties with the developer. The budget has now been secured via the Estimate with two in-house developers also in place.

Registration modules have been tested internally and preparations for reporting modules virtually now completed. We have kept users updated throughout and now, with them planning how training and implementation will look. Training is planned for August and will be ongoing as and when needed. Regulatory support strategy We are on track for consultation on the regulatory support strategy after the May polls. This will involve survey work and targeted discussions. The targets will include those beyond the main parties; parties with elected representatives at local and regional levels and regulated donees. We have already identified and finalised two new guidance products as a result of early engagement on regulatory support. One is on focussed guidance for accounting unit treasurers, many of who are volunteers and we want to support, and the other on how parties can do valuations of their services or commercial transactions. Resolved: That the Board noted the updates on operations and matters arising. Commission Board action tracker (EC 33/21) The Board received the Commission Board action tracker noting further updates. Resolved: That the Commission Board action tracker be noted. Forward plan of Board business (EC 34/21) Commissioners discussed items of business for future meetings. These would be reflected in the Forward plan of Board business at the May meeting. Resolved: That the Forward plan of Board business be noted. Meet the new Chair designate (Oral) The Chair designate introduced himself to the Board. He was looking forward to working with the Board and staff of the Electoral Commission at such an important time for

the electoral system. He hoped that his appointment process would be concluded in time for him to take up post as planned on 1 May. The Board thanked Rob Vincent for his time and care as Meeting Chair and, as a body looking forward to the next phase.

Donations and loans to regulated organisations and individuals | Electoral Commission Search Donations and loans to regulated organisations and individuals You are in the View donations and loans section Home Donations and loans View donations and loans On this page Data in this section Regulated donees Donations to regulated donees First published: 25 July 2019 Last updated: 16 May 2023 Summary box Some people and organisations engaged in politics are called regulated donees. These are: holders of some elective offices members of political parties groups of party members (also known as members associations) Data in this section Donations to regulated donees Regulated donees Regulated donees are subject to controls on the donations and loans that they can accept in connection with their political activities in their capacity as a regulated donee. Regulated donees must report to us on donations and loans they accept. Reports must be made within 30 days of accepting the donation or entering into the loan. We publish these reports every month. Donations to regulated donees This table shows the donations and loans reported by regulated individuals and organisations by month. Donations to regulated donees Related content Registers of unincorporated associations Download and view the registers of unincorporated associations Donations accepted View data about donations accepted by parties and campaigners Public funds View data about public funds received by parties Register to vote All you need to register to vote is 5 minutes and your National Insurance number.

Performance analysis 2020/21: Goal two | Electoral Commission Search

Performance analysis 2020/21: Goal two You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21 First published: 15 September 2021 Last updated: 21 October 2021 Goal 2 To ensure an increasingly trusted and transparent system of regulation in political finance, overseeing compliance, promoting understanding amongst those regulated and proactively pursuing breaches. This goal captures our regulatory role. We focus on two areas which are at the heart of a healthy democracy: ensuring transparency, and good regulation. Key achievements To ensure transparency, we: published financial reports from parties and campaigners worked with parties to deliver financial reports, and adapted our pattern of routine publications as a consequence of challenges parties faced with delivering reports as a result of the pandemic registered political parties and other campaigners and published details in online registers produced new guidance to help campaigners understand and comply with new legal requirements for transparency of digital campaign material introduced by the Scottish Parliament To support good regulation we: found flexible and new ways to continue our focus on supporting parties and campaigners during the pandemic built up our regulatory intelligence work to drive proactive interactions with individual campaigners took action and imposed sanctions when the political finance law were broken continued to evolve our regulatory approach to deliver a greater package of support for parties and campaigners Performance measures Measures We publish routine financial returns from parties and campaigners, including statements of accounts, within 30 working days of receiving them (target 100%) 37.99% Not achieved 4 We check a minimum of 25% of all financial returns for accuracy and compliance each year 38.95% Achieved We publish 100% of guidance products on time with no substantive errors 100% Achieved We provide accurate advice within five to 20 days of receipt of the request, depending on the complexity of the advice (Target 90%) 94.44% Achieved We notify applicants of the outcome of their registration applications within 30 days of a complete application 75% of the time (Target – 75%) 58.21% Not achieved 5 We conduct timely and proportionate investigations of which 90% are completed within 180 days 94.44% Achieved We issue 90% of final notices setting out our sanctions within 21 days of the deadline for representations. 94.29% Achieved We make timely regulatory recommendations that reflect the principles guiding our approach to effective regulatory framework 100% Achieved Our activities during the year Ensuring transparency Throughout the year, we focussed on delivering the responsibilities we are accountable for to the UK's parliaments. We maintained the registers of political parties, ensuring only parties meeting the legal tests are on the register, and we continued reviewing descriptions to help voters identify the party for which candidates are standing. We worked with parties and campaigners as soon as the likely impact of the pandemic became clear to recognise the challenges of delivering financial reports during the pandemic, and adapted our pattern of routine publications appropriately. We published donations and loans data, statements of accounts, and spending data for the 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election as quickly as possible given understandable delays in delivery, and in some cases without any delay at all. We continued developing a new online portal for party registration and finance, which we will launch in 2021 and will improve how parties and campaigners register and deliver financial returns We also developed a new online tool that enabled people to view candidate spending data following the 2019 UKPGE in an interactive and accessible way. Publishing the data in this format provides greater transparency about the money received and spent by candidates at elections. Good

regulation We further developed our approach to regulatory intelligence to be more proactive and quickly identify and intervene where this could prevent or minimise non-compliance. This reduced the number of cases requiring enforcement action, and helped to prevent campaigners from breaking the rules. We will continue to focus on this. We are also developing a more systematic approach to gathering evidence of areas where targeted guidance and support can most benefit parties and campaigners. We set up a new regulatory support team dedicated to developing and implementing new and innovative ways to provide proactive support for parties and campaigners to help them comply with the law. Our outreach work included training sessions, seminars or other engagement with the Greater London Authority, the Local Government Association, the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, and others. We also conducted a survey of campaigners on how they expected the pandemic to impact on their activities at the May 2021 polls to help us understand their challenges and concerns better.

Increased stakeholder engagement and outreach work meant we were able to provide clarity to parties, candidates and campaigners on our work and preparations for the May 2021 polls. We produced new guidance for the digital imprint regime introduced by the Scottish Parliament, and produced our usual bespoke guidance for parties candidates and agents and campaigners in good time for the May 2021 polls despite the unusually high number of different elections taking place and the need to take account of the pandemic restrictions. The pandemic led to other new guidance, such as Frequently Asked Questions on the voiding of candidacy rules for the postponed 2020 elections, and guidance on sponsorship and valuing digital conference stands for party conferences. Finally, we continued to update our guidance where appropriate, including changes arising from the UK's departure from the European Union. We continued to use our investigation and sanctioning powers to identify and respond to non-compliance and deter future non-compliance where appropriate. We imposed financial penalties totalling £34k throughout 2020/21 and accepted the voluntary forfeiture of impermissible funds totalling £9k, removing these from the political finance system. We did not however take enforcement action where reports were delivered late due to the impact of the pandemic. report navigation links Previous Next Performance analysis: Goal one Performance analysis: Goal three 4. As a consequence of the Covid pandemic many parties were unable to complete and deliver their statements of account by the legal deadlines, which meant that we were unable to publish them within 30 days of that deadline. ■ Back to content at footnote 4 5. As a result of the postponement of the 2020 polls, an unprecedented number of applications to register political parties or amend registered details were received in the months running up to the 2021 polls. In addition a small number of applications raised complex issues that required additional time to resolve. ■ Back to content at footnote 5

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Parties Panel Meeting Minutes 10 November 2021 You are in the Party panels
section Home How we make decisions Party panels First published: 12 January 2022
Last updated: 26 January 2022 Attendees Attendees James Kelly, Scottish Labour Party
(Chair) Matt Edmonds, Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party Scott Martin, Scottish
National Party Paul Moat, Scottish Liberal Democrats Isabel Drummond-Murray,
Boundaries Scotland Iain Hockenhull, Scottish Government James Newman, Scottish
Government Chris Highcock, Electoral Management Board for Scotland Pete Wildman,
Scottish Assessors Association (Chair of Electoral Registration Committee and EMB
member) Hannah Standring, Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland Nathan
Lappin, Office of the Secretary State for Scotland Rachel Winham, Royal Mail Scott
Forsyth, Royal Mail The Electoral Commission: Dame Susan Bruce, Electoral
Commissioner Alasdair Morgan, Electoral Commissioner Andy O'Neill, Head of Electoral
Commission, Scotland Sarah Mackie, Manager, Electoral Commission, Scotland Martin
McKeown, Senior Adviser, Elections & s, Scotland Catherine Heggie, Partnerships &
Information Officer, Scotland Lindsey Hamilton, Business Support Officer (Minutes)
Apologies John Hardy, Scottish Green Party; Malcolm Burr, Electoral Management Board
for Scotland and Maria McCann, Scottish Government. Apologies Minutes of the last
meeting and matters arising The minutes of the last meeting held on 15 September 2021
were approved. Matters arising: Martin McKeown (MMcK) confirmed candidate consent
forms for 2022 could be completed electronically. Chris Highcock (CH) said they were
now liaising with Fujitsu, who are to deliver the counting project next year, to
develop a mechanism to allow consolidation of results which will be hosted through or
on the Electoral Management Board website. Andy O'Neill (AON) confirmed Alex
Attwood's details had been shared and he had met with the Scottish Green Party and
Alba Party. With regard to how the panel meetings are held in future, AON would seek
views of attendees. ACTION: Andy O'Neill Preparations for Scottish Council elections
2022 Legislation Iain Hockenhull (IH) advised that all the pending legislation for
the May polls had now been considered by the Scottish Parliament and would be
commenced as per the SSIs. Guidance MMcK advised that the majority of core guidance
had been published. Some resources on the RO side would be updated over the coming
weeks. On the candidates and agents side it was intended that Part 3 on spending
rules would be published before Christmas and parties would be informed when they
were published. He asked for the panel's assistance in disseminating the guidance to
candidates and agents and offered to provide briefings on the guidance to parties in
due course. He confirmed that ROs and EROs would come together for a joint EC/EMB
event on 27 January 2022. Scott Martin (SM) requested that election timetables aimed
at candidates and agents include the dates for receiving and paying invoices. MMcK
agreed to look at this. ACTION: Martin McKeown EMB Update Chris Highcock (CH)
indicated that the EMB Convener had issued a number of directions to Returning
Officers and Electoral Registration Officers relating to the May 2022 Council
elections seeking to achieve consistency in voter facing matters as well as
appropriate resilience and robustness in the system. He noted that the direction
relating to consistency in count timings (Friday 6 May) was in line with 2012 and
2017. A consistent script used by Returning officers declaring the results gave
clarity to what information was provided to candidates and agents to ensure the law
was met. Although it was not known what the public health context would be in May
2022, it was currently planned that the COVID-19 mitigations used at the May 2021
polls would remain in place. Scott Martin (SM) referred to the statutory obligation

to supply verification sheets at the counts. (CH) noted these were not direct outputs from the e-count system but agreed to consider how these are made available in a consistent manner. ACTION: Chris Highcock Matt Edmonds (ME) asked about the impact of the Easter Monday holiday on delivery of mail. Scott Forsyth (SF) advised that this had been factored in to their planning. E- Counting Project James Newman (JN) advised that the project had reached the end of the testing phase with high volume levels of testing during the rest of this month. Following this, there would be detailed engagement with councils regarding training and plans around count venues. He extended an invitation to members of the panel to view the system in the New Year and asked that anyone interested get in touch if they wished to attend. The Returning Officers of all four of the up-coming by-elections would use the 2022 counting system so there was an opportunity to see the new system in live operation. (JN) agreed to add members to the e-counting bulletins as previously agreed. ACTION: James Newman Registration and Absent Voting Pete Wildman (PW) noted that most, but not all EROs planned to issue a Household Notification Letter (HNL) in late January/early February. This had proved effective in the run up to the Scottish parliament election. While this was not a statutory requirement, all those EROs who had funding available intended to repeat the exercise. Public Awareness and Partnership Activity Catherine Heggie (CHe) briefed the Panel on the 'Welcome to your vote' awareness week planned for 24-30 January designed to encourage schools to hold political literacy sessions. The Commission would provide new education resources, including full lesson plans and 15 minute activities which could be used in classes, during registration or at assemblies. The initiative is supported by ADES, Education Scotland and other education partners and a communication would be sent to schools next week. The aim of the awareness week was to encourage registration among young people and support their understanding of how to vote using Single Transferrable Vote (STV). The Commission would be running online events for teachers to support them with using the resources. (CHe) said the Commission would provide an update on wider public awareness plans at the next meeting of the SP PPP. Matt Edmonds (ME) asked that the education resources be shared with parties when available. (CHe) agreed to share them with members.

ACTION: Catherine Heggie UK Elections Bill Hannah Standring (HS) advised that the Scottish Government had written to the UK Government requesting that all matters related to devolved elections in Scotland be removed from the Bill. The respective policy teams were working closely to ensure any unnecessary divergence was managed. (IH) said the Legislative Consent Memorandum (LCM) was with the Minister and would be considered by the Standards Committee on 18 November. The Scottish Government was likely to consider legislation where necessary would be taken forward in a Scottish Government Bill in 2023 following consultation. Updates (not related to Scottish Council elections 2022 at item 4 Scotland Office/Cabinet Office (HS) advised the second reading of the Dissolution of Parliament Bill was scheduled for 24 November 2021. Boundaries Scotland Isabel Drummond-Murray (ID-M) advised that of the six SIs going through Parliament, four had been approved and two withdrawn. (ID-M) encouraged all to return their responses to the 2023 consultation on UK Parliamentary constituencies which began earlier this year. Royal Mail (SF) confirmed their planning was on track. The Election Team would begin contact with local authorities in January regarding election plans. During the election period they would hold weekly calls with Chris Highcock and Pete Wildman. Electoral Management Board for Scotland Pete Wildman (PW) reminded all of the joint RO/ERO seminar scheduled for January 2022 where any issues could be addressed. He noted that with the exception of those holding by-elections, the new electoral registers would be published on 1

December. The Electoral Commission (MMcK) advised that the deadline for registration of party names, emblems and registered descriptions in advance of the May polls was 21 January 2022, to give time to process changes for when they will be needed. He asked members to share the deadline with party colleagues. The stakeholder survey (flagged in the October Regulatory Bulletin) aimed at collecting feedback on perceptions of the Electoral Commission's role, the way they communicate with stakeholders and how they could provide better support. He encouraged parties to respond. PF Online - work had been ongoing for a couple of years to redesign the portal and it was expected to be available to party administrators in due course. At the end of October, the under £250,000 party spending returns from the 2021 Scottish Parliament election were published. The over £250,000 will be published in due course as well as information on candidate spending. MMcK will inform the panel in due course. ACTION: Martin McKeown Dates of Future Meetings 2022 20 January; *8 March; 16 May Party Pre-meeting 10:30 and meeting proper at 11:00 am except for *8 March which will be 2:30 pre-meeting and 3:00 pm meeting AOCB MMcK added that the Electoral Commission would invite the lead SPOC from Police Scotland to a future meeting in the run up to elections to focus on candidate safety and other matters.

Background to this study You are in the Accuracy and completeness of electoral registers section Home Our research Accuracy and completeness of electoral registers First published: 3 September 2019 Last updated: 26 September 2019 Background to this study - detail Historical context Figure 2.1 below shows the estimates of accuracy and completeness that have been produced between 1966 and 2018. National estimates of completeness have been produced irregularly but have been produced with a degree of uniformity that allows for making valid comparisons over time. However, comparable accuracy estimates have been produced less frequently. Although different methods have been used to calculate accuracy, the estimates produced in 1981 and subsequently from 2011 to 2018 demonstrate that the accuracy of the electoral registers has remained relatively consistent over time. 1 2 3 There have been greater fluctuations in levels of completeness. The highest levels recorded were in 1950 and 1966 (96% by the end of the canvass in both 1950 and 1966) but had declined slightly by 1981 (94%) and again in 1991 (91-93%) and 2001 (91-92%). 4 This gradual decline from 1966- 2000 was influenced by an increase in population mobility and the decline in the 1980s and early 1990s has been linked to the Community Charge (commonly referred to as the 'poll tax') where an estimated 350,000 people removed themselves from the electoral registers during this time in an attempt to avoid paying the new tax . 5 Levels of completeness declined more dramatically after 2001, falling to 85% in 2011. This decline has been associated with population change, population mobility due to changing housing circumstances, a decrease in public engagement with electoral democracy and changing registration practices combined with declining form response rate in the early 2000s. In the analysis of the 2018 results we consider these factors to place our findings into context of the evolving challenges associated with maintaining accurate and complete registers. The registers in 2018 In December 2018, there were 45,775,758 entries on the parliamentary electoral registers and 47,785,498 entries on the local government registers in the UK. The December 2018 registers represented a decline in the number of register entries from December 2017 where the number of entries on the electoral registers in the UK was at its highest following the 2016 EU referendum and June 2017 UK general election. Overall, there was a 0.8% decrease in the number of entries on the parliamentary registers and a decrease of 0.3% on the local government registers between December 2017 and December 2018. This follows two years where the registers have increased in size - albeit only a small increase between December 2016 and 2017 when the parliamentary registers increased by 0.8% and the local government registers by 1.2%. 1 This study looks at the quality of these December 2018 registers for Great Britain. A separate assessment is published for Northern Ireland. It is important to note that while the registers may contain more entries than our last assessment in December 2015 that this does not necessarily lead to them being more complete. This is because no judgement on the accuracy of the entries is made in administrative statistics so all entries are counted equal regardless of their veracity. This assessment allows us to make a judgement on the quality of the registers and, therefore, determine how complete the registers are. Additions to and deletions from the registers, 2015 to 2018 The electoral registers are a property-based database and, in order to maintain accurate and complete registers, EROs have to add and delete records for home-movers as well as to remove entries for those who have died and add entries for newly eligible electors and those not previously registered. The figure below presents additions and deletions as a percentage of December local government register entries from 2015 to 2018. This figure shows that there was greater activity in 2015 following the transition to IER

and this suggests that the December 2015 registers, the registers on which our last assessment of accuracy and completeness was based, were of a high quality (as our 2015 assessment proved). Notably, in each of 2016 and 2017, activity around additions was greater in the rolling registration period than during the autumn canvass whereas deletions were still primarily recorded in the autumn canvass period. However, in 2018 more additions were recorded during the autumn canvass than during the rolling registration period. This difference between these years is likely to be the absence of a major national poll in 2018. In each of 2016 and 2017 there were high profile electoral events in the shape of the referendum of the UK's membership of the EU and a UK Parliamentary general election. There was a high volume of registration activity in the lead up to these events. In 2018 there were local government elections in 150 local authority areas in England and no elections in Scotland or Wales. This data demonstrates the value of the autumn canvass, particularly in years where there is less election activity, in maintaining good quality electoral registers. An alternative way to present this information, which emphasises the effect of elections on when additions and deletions occur throughout the year, is to look at the proportion of additions and deletions during the canvass and rolling registration.

This chart shows this for 2017 and 2018. It further demonstrates the above point that in a high profile election year we tend to see additions weighted towards the rolling registration period (61% of additions in 2017), whereas in years with less elections the canvass continues to act as the primary vehicle for additions to and deletions from the register (68% for both). The electoral registers and franchise The electoral registers are a record of the names and addresses of people eligible to vote in elections and referendums. The registers are the foundation of the voting process: they provide the list of those who are eligible to vote, and those not included on the registers cannot take part in elections and referendums. The registers are also used for other public purposes such as conducting boundary reviews, selecting people to undertake jury service in England and Wales and assisting law enforcement, as well as for credit ratings, and an edited version of the registers, containing only details of those who have not opted out of appearing on it, is available to anyone who wants to buy a copy. There is no single electoral register in Great Britain but one for each local authority area in England, Scotland and Wales. Each local authority's Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) is responsible for compiling and maintaining the local list of electors. Not every resident in the United Kingdom can register to vote and eligibility to register is directly related to the eligibility to vote which differs depending on the type of election. This means that EROs are required to keep: a parliamentary register: this is the list of electors used for UK Parliamentary elections a local government register: used for elections to the Scottish Parliament and National Assembly for Wales as well as local government elections, mayoral elections and Police and Crime Commissioner elections EU citizens have been eligible to vote in local, devolved and European Parliamentary elections since 1999. Therefore, EU citizens are entitled to be on the local government register. In order to vote in European Parliamentary elections in the UK, EU citizens must also complete an extra registration form (commonly referred to as a 'UC1') to declare that they intend to vote in the UK rather than in their country of origin.

The table below sets out entitlement to vote by citizenship. Those not listed on this table are not eligible to be on either of the two registers. 1 Franchise for citizenship and elections Citizenship Parliamentary Register Local Government register British Yes Yes Irish Yes Yes Commonwealth Yes Yes European Union No Yes Notes: Commonwealth Citizens resident in the UK who either have leave to remain or do

not require such leave British citizens living abroad who have appeared on a UK electoral register in the last 15 years (or were resident in the UK and too young to be registered at the time of residence) are also entitled to be on the electoral register as an overseas elector and can vote at European Parliamentary and UK Parliamentary elections. They are registered in the same parliamentary constituency as before they went abroad or, if they were too young to register, in the constituency where their parent or guardian was registered. In England and Wales, the age at which citizens become entitled to vote is currently 18, but the electoral registers also include records of 'attainers' - 16 and 17 year olds who will turn 18 within the twelve month period starting on the 1 December after they make their application. In Scotland, the voting age for Scottish Parliamentary and local council elections is 16. This means that all 16 and 17 year olds in Scotland are entitled to be on the local government register and that attainers are 14 and 15 year olds who will turn 16 during the twelve month period starting on the 1 December after they make their application. However, entitlement for the parliamentary register in Scotland has not been affected by the change to the franchise so 16/17 year olds are attainers on the parliamentary register. Proposed franchise changes in Wales will mean that those aged 16 and 17 in Wales will have an equivalent entitlement as in Scotland. The system for compiling the register The electoral register is a property based database, with register entries linked to a property. This means that the quality of its information is affected by ongoing population change and EROs must add and delete records for home-movers, remove entries for electors who have died and add entries for newly eligible electors. In Great Britain a new register is prepared annually and reviewed most months. A key element of preparing the annual register is through house-to-house canvassing. The majority of canvass activity takes place between July and November. Each ERO is required by law to conduct an annual canvass of all properties in their area to confirm their electoral register entries and to identify electors who have moved or were not previously registered. During the annual canvass, EROs are required to send a Household Enquiry Form (HEF) to all households (and follow-up with non-responders). This form requires the respondent to reply to the ERO with the names of any individuals no longer resident and of those who are now resident and eligible. Since the introduction of IER it is no longer possible for a person to be added to the register as a result of their name being added to a returned HEF. Where returned HEFs include new (non-registered) individuals, a second communication – an Invitation to Register (ITR) – is sent out with a registration application for such individuals to complete. It is this application that asks for the person's National Insurance Number (NiNo) and date of birth which allows them to become registered. Individuals can apply to register online. An ERO also cannot delete an entry based solely on a name being crossed off on a returned HEF (as they could under household registration) – so they will need either a second source of information or to carry out a review of the individual's entitlement to remain registered. The proposed canvass process The 2020 annual canvass commencing from July 2020 is expected to be the first under a reformed canvass model. The new canvass model aims to allow EROs in Great Britain to better focus their resources in the areas of greatest need, and better meet the objective of the canvass than under the current system. The idea is that the canvass process will be streamlined for those properties which are likely to have not changed household composition, allowing the ERO to target their resources to where responses and updates to the electoral register are required. There is also an exemptions process for certain types of properties less suited to traditional canvassing methods – for example, care homes,

Houses in Multiple Occupation and student halls of residence – which allows the ERO to seek information on residents in a different way. We see these reforms as an important first step in modernising electoral registration. Read our full response to the UK Government's proposals for reform of the annual canvass process Our research programme Since 2004, the Electoral Commission has been the principal body in the UK undertaking research into the electoral registers with the long-term aim to: provide an overview of the accuracy and completeness of the registers in Great Britain and Northern Ireland inform the Commission's guidance and support for Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) provide up-to-date information on those groups which are more likely to be under-registered and thereby inform our approach to public awareness activity around elections and voter registration provide ongoing tracking of how electoral registers change in response to legislative developments and administrative or population changes and use this tracking to inform our role in scrutinising proposals and policies to revise the registration system This study of the 1 December 2018 registers establishes a baseline as we seek to measure the impact of upcoming changes to the annual canvass. In order to measure the impact of reforms to the annual canvass we anticipate conducting two studies on the accuracy and completeness of the registers: 'Before measure': Presented in this report measuring the 2018 registers ahead of reform to the annual canvass. 'After measure': in order to assess the impact on the reforms to the annual canvass which we expect to be introduced in 2020. We will also be collecting a variety of other data and working alongside EROs to understand the impact of the reformed canvass processes and how they are working in practice Appendices Accuracy and Completeness- 2018 appendices 1. Todd and Butcher, Electoral registration in 1981 (1981). This study set out estimates for the accuracy of the registers for April 1981 and used these estimates to calculate what the accuracy of the registers may have been at the time of the qualifying date for the canvass (October 1980). The study found that between 10.4% and 13.5% of the names on the April 1981 registers belong to people who by that time were not living at the address listed in the registers. The Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (OPCS) also estimated the proportion of names on the registers that were inaccurate in October 1981 was between 6.1% and 9.4%. ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. The 1991 OPCS study also considered redundant entries on the registers in Great Britain at the time of the 1991 census. This found that between 6.0% and 7.9% of the names listed at addresses which were occupied at the time of the census did not correspond with people living there at the time, However unlike the 1981 study, an estimate for the percentage of names on the registers that were listed at addresses which were unoccupied at the time of the census was not added to this percentage. Consequently, the figures do not represent a complete picture of the possible scale of inaccuracies on the registers. ■ Back to content at footnote 2 3. The method used to calculate the accuracy of the 2014 registers was different from the one used by the Office for National Statistics in 2011. ■ Back to content at footnote 3 4. P.G Gray and A. Gee, Electoral registration for parliamentary elections: an enquiry made for the Home Office (HMSO: London 1967) ■ Back to content at footnote 4 5. McLean, I. and Smith, J. The UK poll tax and the electoral register: unintended consequences? (1991), Warwick University, Economic Research Papers, N. 398. McLean and Smith subsequently upgraded this estimate to 600,000 individuals. The Electoral Commission, The completeness and accuracy of electoral registers in Great Britain (March 2010). ■ Back to content at footnote 5 1. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/elections/electoralregistration/bulletins/electoralstatisticsforuk/2018> ■ Back to content at footnote 1 1. There are some specific exceptions to

these rules. For example, convicted prisoners lose their right to vote while they are imprisoned regardless of citizenship. ■ Back to content at footnote 1

Northern Ireland political transparency research | Electoral Commission Search Northern Ireland political transparency research You are in the Our research section Home Our research On this page Key findings Research methodology Download the full report First published: 25 February 2021 Last updated: 25 February 2021 Summary We ran research on public attitudes towards the transparency of political party and campaigner finance in Northern Ireland. This included views on the publication of information about donations and loans made between 2014 and 2017. The research, carried out by Ipsos Mori, is based on responses from a series of online focus groups conducted across Northern Ireland. Respondents were asked questions about their awareness of, and attitudes towards, the financing of political parties, as well as the arrangements for reporting and publishing such information, and how confident they were in the transparency of that regime. Key findings Support for transparent, unbiased information There is strong public support for transparent, unbiased information about how political parties are funded in Northern Ireland. However, there is limited awareness of and knowledge about how the system of funding and regulation currently works. This means that perceptions can be based largely on assumptions and instinct. Existing perceptions of party politics may contribute negatively to attitudes towards political party funding and donations. Public perceptions about the transparency of the system of funding and regulation can improve when people become aware of the controls and regulations in place around political finance. We play an important role in ensuring transparency and confidence in that system and will consider what more can be done to improve confidence and trust. Support for the publication of donations made between 2014 and 2017 The majority of research participants felt that information on donations made between 2014 and 2017 should be published, to help to improve transparency in the political finance system and to improve political accountability. We continue to call on the UK Government to change the law to allow us to publish this information. Concerns around the current political finance system in Northern Ireland For some participants, getting more information about party finance rules improved their perceptions of the transparency of the system. However, the majority of participants do not consider the current system in Northern Ireland to be transparent even once they know more about it. They gave various reasons for this, including the following. Giving an amount under £500 to a party or campaigner is not classed as a donation. This created a perception among the public that this is a 'loophole', adding to the perception that the current regime is malleable. The current thresholds at which donations need to be reported to the Commission for publication are seen as too high. Donations made between 2014 and 2017 cannot be published for Northern Ireland. These negative perceptions damage confidence in the regulatory system. While some of the attitudes are linked to wider issues around trust in politics, we will be considering what more can be done to improve public confidence. Research methodology Research methodology A qualitative approach was used for this research based on a focus group methodology. Given the low awareness on the subject in question, the focus groups were designed with a deliberative approach, involving 'drip-feeding' participants with information throughout the course of the session in order to aid in the development of informed opinions. Fifteen online focus groups were conducted, using both online discussion boards and video groups, engaging a total of 118 participants. A spread of participants from across Northern Ireland was included to ensure the data generated was broadly reflective of the Northern Ireland population. Fieldwork was carried out in August and September 2020. Download the full report Northern Ireland political transparency research - full report Related content 2019 electoral fraud data about

electoral fraud in 2019 and view the data Public attitudes Read our reports about public attitudes towards voting Analysis of electoral registration data about electoral registration data Modernising elections research This qualitative research looks at public attitudes to voting and the information available around elections.

5. Supporting local electoral services delivery and resilience in Wales | Electoral Commission Search

5. Supporting local electoral services delivery and resilience in Wales You are in the Corporate Plan for Wales 2022/23 to 2026/27 section Home Our plans and priorities Corporate Plan for Wales 2022/23 to 2026/27 On this page Setting challenging performance standards for local electoral services Providing accessible guidance and support for electoral administrators Supporting increased resilience of local electoral services Ensuring the electoral system works effectively First published: 25 April 2022 Last updated: 25 April 2022 Summary Local electoral services face significant economic, social and environmental challenges which risk impacting on their ability to deliver well-run elections and referendums. We will help local authorities and electoral administrators in Wales and the wider UK to respond to these pressures. We will work to support the consistent delivery of high-quality services for voters, and the development of resilient local electoral services by: setting challenging performance standards for local electoral services providing accessible guidance and support for electoral administrators supporting increased resilience of local electoral services ensuring the electoral system works effectively Setting challenging performance standards for local electoral services We will continue to support Returning Officers to deliver the elections scheduled to take place during the period of this Corporate Plan, and remain prepared to respond to unscheduled polls if required to do so. We will also support Electoral Registration Officers to deliver electoral registration services, including the annual canvass in Wales, for each year of this Corporate Plan. We will set and ensure compliance with challenging performance standards. We will provide guidance and advice to help electoral administrators meet the standards and challenge them when we identify areas for improvement. We will review the performance standards framework for Returning Officers to further enhance its role in identifying and driving performance improvements, and providing accountability for the elections they deliver. Providing accessible guidance and support for electoral administrators We published accessible digital guidance for Electoral Registration Officers in May 2021 to support the delivery of the first reformed annual canvass in Wales and the other nations of Great Britain. We are working to ensure all guidance for Returning Officers, candidates and agents is published in this accessible format on our website, and we will continue to refresh this guidance on an election-by-election basis. We seek the views of electoral administrators after set of elections, and over three-quarters of administrators that responded to our survey after the May 2021 elections told us they'd found our guidance very or fairly useful. We will continue to seek feedback from and consult with electoral administrators to ensure our guidance meets their needs. We will continue to provide in person and telephone support, to help electoral administrators in their work. Supporting increased resilience of local electoral services Our research and the feedback we gather from electoral administrators after each set of elections tells us about the pressures on the electoral system that are currently being experienced at the local level. In response we will develop and deliver a programme of activity to support resilient electoral services. We will work collaboratively with electoral administrators to understand the challenges they face and identify solutions to address them. We will implement agreed measures to build resilience, working in partnership with local authorities and the wider electoral community to ensure maximum impact. We will also explore how data on the costs of electoral services can be collected and used to identify and drive efficiencies in the delivery of electoral processes. Ensuring the electoral system works effectively Electoral administrators need confidence that the

electoral system works effectively. We will continue to conduct research to report on how elections have been run, including to secure a detailed understanding of electoral administrators' experiences. This will enable us to raise concerns and make evidence-based recommendations where appropriate, ensuring electoral administrators have confidence in the electoral system as a whole. We will continue to work closely with and support the work of the Wales Electoral Coordination Board which is in a key position to lead on the delivery of electoral events and activity in Wales. We continue to recommend that this group should become a statutory board similar to the Electoral Management Board in Scotland. This, we believe, will assist not only with the effective planning of electoral events in Wales but in ensuring a greater resilience to the electoral system. Navigation 4. Supporting and securing campaigner compliance with the law in Wales Section 4 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan for Wales 6. Making sure electoral law is fair and effective in Wales Section 6 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan

and equality: feedback from local and national organisations | Electoral Commission Search and equality: feedback from local and national organisations You are in the May 2019 voter identification pilot schemes section Home Our research Voter identification pilots May 2019 voter identification pilot schemes First published: 12 July 2019 Last updated: 15 October 2019 Intro Our evaluation considered whether the identification requirements might have disproportionately affected particular groups of people with protected characteristics. We asked 165 national and local organisations to provide us with evidence of how the pilots affected the specific groups they represent. A total of 29 organisations responded, with 16 providing the more detailed feedback available below. Organisations Age UK North Craven "The majority of the geographical area that we cover did not have elections. Where there were elections we have had no negative feedback at all about the process. We always advise getting a postal vote." Age UK Nottingham & Nottinghamshire "We became involved with the Broxtowe pilot when we were asked to support publicity around the project. We were happy to help, and took the following actions: We identified those clients in the relevant post code areas (for whom we had GDPR permission to contact) and sent them a letter outlining the pilot and how they should comply with it We created entries in our internal and external e-newsletters and shared that in each of the editions in the 2 months prior to the vote on 2 nd May (combined circulation of around 700) We put information about the pilot on our website and out via our social media platforms. Broxtowe Borough Council covered the postage costs and a couple of hours of time to prepare the mail out. Our social media presence has followers across the age range which we hope will have encouraged all residents to comply. We have not been made aware of any issues at the polling booth, although there may have been some. If we do get any feedback to suggest that voters couldn't cast their vote, we will let you know. "Age UKs are always concerned when activities like this take place because it can have the effect of disenfranchising voters because they don't have, or can't get the relevant ID. The pilot was asking people who may have voted for many years to do something very different. Whilst many older people now use the internet safely and with enjoyment, many others don't, so the range of information would have been harder for them to find out and compliance with the new requirements may have involved multiple trips to obtain the necessary ID. Decisions about the merits of the pilot should be weighed against the risk of voter fraud which, by all accounts, appears to be very small. Factors such as transport issues should also be taken into account. Nottinghamshire has numerous good bus services but there have been cuts. Pensioners may well have access to free transport because of their bus passes but, if there is no bus, then they have gained nothing. When work cannot be done online, or there is no access to online, then these types of considerations should be factored into further roll-outs. "Whilst we did what we could to support the pilot in this area, there wasn't a lot of time for prospective voters to engage with the concept and ensure they had the necessary documentation if it wasn't already in their possession. We could, perhaps, have done more if we had had more time. I hope this minimal feedback is of some use and I will let you know of any other anecdotal evidence if we receive any." Broxtowe Youth Homeless "I have been promoting the pilot ID voting scheme here at our drop-in using your leaflets and through general chats. The feedback I have received is that not many young people are wanting to vote, but do feel the ID approach is a good idea for those that have ID. Although, there are many young people that access our service that don't have any form of ID for many different reasons. These young people struggle to even have a bank account that

allows for benefits to be paid. "There was also a general consensus from our young people that feel a bit confused about voting full stop and not knowing which party to vote for. Myself and colleagues have tried our best to explain as much as can without being too 'pushy'. However, I do feel if a young people makes the effort to vote and they are turned away for forgetting this, would deter them from going back to vote or discourage others from doing so." Consultant Psychiatrists at Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (members of the UK Government's Access to Elections working group) "As far as we know no surveys were carried out, of those living with mental illness, to specifically gauge their views regarding voter ID and/or the impact of the voter ID requirement on intention to vote/impact on casting their vote on voting day. Around the time of the pilots we suggested that local Rethink Mental Illness & MIND groups might wish to undertake surveys in the ID pilot areas but we don't think this was progressed. We aren't able to offer any specific evidence for the voter ID pilots however we have previously explained: People living with mental illness are much less likely to register, and once registered to cast their vote, than the general population. Barriers to voting may be usefully divided into informational, attitudinal, psychological and physical. "A requirement for ID will be an additional barrier to voting (see below in which will act as a barrier) and will detrimentally impact on both our patient/service user groups intention to vote and on whether they successfully cast their vote in person or not. Potential negative impact on voting of ID requirement maybe related to: Informational barrier: Unaware need ID to vote. Attitudinal barriers: Resentment that require ID to vote/think too onerous a task etc Psychological barriers:

overwhelmed/disorganized/unmotivated/anxious/paranoid etc Physical barrier: - no actual ID/obstacles to access ID If the government intend to roll out a voter ID requirement nationally then it is important to consider how best to minimise the negative impact on voting for those living with mental illness by considering how to overcome the barriers listed. "We also acknowledge that it is useful to hold ID and that some of our patients/service users find it difficult to get ID therefore if the initiative were coupled with easier access to ID for patients/service users then that might prove attractive for some." East Grinstead Macular Support Group "I did mention it at our meeting after I received your initial email. The response at that time was that they all had voting cards and understood. They were going to wait until voting day to see if there were any issues." Friends, Families, Travellers "We are a national charity working with Gypsies and Travellers. Gypsies and Travellers are already very disenfranchised, with low levels of voter participation. We know this as we have run targeted campaigns to increase voter registration amongst Gypsies and Travellers, including those of No Fixed Abode. It would be more useful to look at measures which would increase their, and other socially excluded groups', participation in voting. Voter fraud is actually extremely rare, there was only one conviction in the 2017 General Election. "We have not had contact with any Gypsies or Travellers in the ten voter I.D areas on this issue so cannot comment on whether or not the requirement to produce I.D influenced their ability to vote. However we do know that the requirement to produce I.D stops Gypsies and Travellers from accessing other services. For example, we run a national casework helpline and we get lots of calls from Travellers who are unable to open a bank account because they cannot comply with the I.D requirements for this (even though the government have recently lowered the I.D requirements banks can ask for). And in a mystery shopping exercise we carried out this year of 50 GP's surgeries, we found our mystery Gypsy/Traveller shopper was unable to register at 24 of the surgeries because of a lack of

identification or an address, despite this being illegal . "We consider that requirements to produce I.D when voting will adversely impact two protected ethnic minorities, Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers who are already probably the most socially excluded ethnic minorities in the UK today. There is also a cost implication to having photographic I.D such as a passport or driving licence, which many of our clients don't have. Many of our clients are also of No Fixed Abode, i.e. statutorily homeless, as local authorities do not provide enough Gypsy/Traveller sites for Travellers to live on. Being homeless and not having an address provides another barrier to people obtaining the requisite I.D such as utility bills etc, for voting. "We are concerned that the voter I.D trials could have been undermined Travellers' and others' right to vote and would prefer to see this money spent on increasing their participation in the democratic process." Gendered Intelligence Purpose "The Government is trialling new checks on voter identification across several test constituencies in an attempt to curb what is claimed to be widespread electoral fraud. Most recently, at least 800 people were turned away from the ballot box during the May 2019 local elections. Gendered Intelligence has grave concerns about the implications of such restrictions on voters, of the potential long-term unfurling of even tighter restrictions in general and of disenfranchisement of certain trans and gender diverse people in particular. Who we are "Gendered Intelligence is a trans-led charity, the mission of which is to increase understandings of gender diversity across all sectors. Our vision is of a world where people are no longer constrained by narrow perceptions and expectations of gender, and where diverse gender expressions are visible and valued. We work closely with the trans community and those who impact on trans lives. We particularly specialise in supporting young trans people aged 8-25. Background "In an attempt to address voter impersonation, the Government announced plans to introduce the mandatory use of voter ID at several test sites. Several organisations have expressed concerns at the far-reaching implications for such trials, especially were they to be rolled out more widely. Issues "With just 8 cases of voter impersonation in 2018, the background to these trials seems like a solution looking for a problem. This disproportionate response to a relative non-issue will undermine efforts to reduce the democratic deficit and ultimately push tens of thousands away from the ballot box if rolled out nationwide. The recent trials (at the 2019 local elections) allowed for different rules at different sites: two pieces of non-photo ID, polling card or photo ID only were asked for at different polling places. As part of the trial, people with no access otherwise to ID should be able to apply to their local authority for a 'certificate of identity', but with lack of time and resource, several councils had to cancel their participation altogether. This does not bode well when for the realistic ability of local authorities up and down the country to enact these changes wholesale and without issue. Discrete and changing bureaucratic demands and whims alone should be a reason to look at these trials with a critical eye, let alone the very real issues of voter disengagement these trials are already causing. Whilst the current trials have allowed for non-photo ID at several sites, it is worth considering the very real possibility that these policies could eventually dictate for the sole allowance of photo ID if rolled out nationwide. As a trans-led organisation, Gendered Intelligence recognises the unique issues facing trans and gender diverse people when it comes to obtaining and presenting photo ID. Trans and gender diverse people showing up to vote, even with photographic ID, are liable to be turned away by officials if it is deemed their presentation and pieces of identity are incongruent. As way of example: A trans person whose physicality has changed may

be unable to update their photo ID, to make it more congruent with their current appearance, through lack of money to do so. Trans people are less likely than their non-trans peers to be in employment (with workplace harassment and anti-trans recruitment widespread) and thus less likely to be able to afford photo ID where it is not provided free of charge by the local authority. A trans person may have to police their appearance in their local area, including the polling station, for their own safety (to avoid transphobic attacks). This may see a (trans) woman having to frame her gender expression in a 'male-coded' way to avoid public scrutiny or attack on the day of voting. However, the photo ID may feature this person with a different gender expression incongruent with how the official sees them, and they may be turned away. Remedies "Understanding that people's gender expressions and presentations may change underlies Gendered Intelligence's approach on this specific proposed aspect of voting. Widescale education and knowledge around trans identities would help reduce confusion or refusal of participation at the polling station. However, with wider society very much in flux with regards its understanding and appreciation of varied gender expressions, mandating the entire electorate to use photo ID at this juncture would prejudice many trans and gender non-conforming people, inevitably leading to discrimination and a closing-off of the democratic process. It is unrealistic at this point for every staff member or volunteer at polling stations nationwide to be sufficiently clued-in to the specific issues affecting trans people and their occasional yet ongoing need for incongruent photo ID. We must then reject any push for photo ID to be mandatory for voting for all people." LGBT Foundation General Concerns "Introducing voter ID risks disenfranchising a large number of people, furthermore voter fraud is not a significant problem in the UK. 7.5% of people in the UK do not have a photo ID, therefore introducing voter ID risks disenfranchising 3.5 million people. In the 2017 election just 28 allegations of in-person voter fraud were made, out of 44.6 million votes cast (0.000063%). Concerns for LGBT Communities "Decades of international studies show that restrictive identification requirements are particularly disadvantageous to certain voter groups who are less likely to possess approved ID for a variety of socio-economic and accessibility reasons. " reforms could therefore disproportionately affect young people, older people, disabled people, LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) people, BAME (black, Asian and minority ethnic) communities and the homeless. This is partly due to the financial costs of obtaining an ID: A new driving licence costs £34 if the application is submitted online and £43 if the application is submitted by post. A new passport costs £75.50 if the application is made online and £85 if the application is submitted by post. "Groups within LGBT communities may be more likely to earn less. One study based on data from the 2012-2014 Integrated Household Survey found that gay and bisexual men are less likely to be working full time compared to heterosexual men and that gay men in relationships earn less than heterosexual men in relationships. "LGBT people also face discrimination in employment, 18% of LGBT people who were looking for work said they were discriminated against because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity while trying to get a job in the last year. This discrimination may be having an impact on employment and earnings although evidence is limited (trans communities also face a range of barriers to employment, these are outlined in section 4). "Not having a fixed address is an additional barrier to obtaining an ID. This will disproportionately affect LGBT people as 24% of homeless young people aged (16 to 25) are LGBT. This is hugely disproportionate as 4.2% of people aged 16-24 identify as LGBT and an estimated 0.3% to 0.8% of people in the UK identify as trans (although there is overlap between the

two groups, with some trans people also identifying as LGB). Specific Concerns for Trans and Non-binary Communities "A trans or non-binary person's photo or gender marker on their ID may not reflect their gender expression or identity. This could lead to challenges from polling staff, which would likely be distressing and uncomfortable and may force someone to out themselves as trans against their will. "An additional unintended consequence may be that some trans or non-binary people are turned away from voting stations. Trans and non-binary people may be discouraged from going to vote for fear of such a reaction. "Trans people already face barriers to registering to vote, a trans person's National Insurance number may be protected and classified by HMRC as 'sensitive information'. This prevents the voter from registering online, instead they have to present themselves with a number of identification documents to their local council in order to register, a time burden that the vast majority of people don't have to deal with. Barriers to Obtaining a New ID for Trans Communities "In order to be able to vote without fear of being turned away, or in order to feel comfortable showing their ID, trans people may need to obtain new ID documents that are in line with their gender identity. This can be time consuming and costly: It costs £17 to change the photo on a driving licence. A new passport with a change of gender costs £75 and requires a letter from a GP or medical professional, which costs £25. Obtaining a GRC is the only way a trans person can change their gender linked to their National Insurance number. The total cost of obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC) is £752, this includes a £140 application fee. Furthermore obtaining a GRC is a time consuming and invasive process. "These costs are a particular barrier for many trans people given that they face significant employment discrimination and are less likely to be employed: Just 63% of trans people had a paid job at any point last year, this falls to 56.2% of ethnic minority trans people. The 2017 Labour Force Survey indicated an employment rate of 75% for the general UK population aged 16-64 years old. 60% of trans people earnt less than £20,000 last year. 1 in 3 UK employers say they would be 'less likely' to employ a trans person. 1 in 3 trans people have been the target of negative comments or conduct from work colleagues in the last year due to the fact they are LGBT. LGBT Foundation's Evidence "LGBT Foundation does not have any evidence on service user's experiences of voter ID. Most of our service users are based in the North West and all the boroughs in the May 2018 trail were in the South of England and just two borough trialled in the 2019 election were in the North West which has limited our ability to collect experiences. Recommendations "Ideally we would recommend that voter ID does not come into force as it risks disenfranchising people and will discourage some people from voting, including a likely disproportionate number of people in minority groups. Voter fraud is not a significant problem in the UK so introducing voter ID is unnecessary. "However in order to address challenges faced by bringing in voter ID for LGBT communities a number of step should be taken: Training must be carried out to ensure staff understand that someone's gender marker on their ID may be different gender to how they are presenting and to not challenge this. Specific outreach to trans and non-binary individuals must be carried out, reassuring them that having an ID that does not match up to their gender identity will not mean that they are turned way or challenged. If the government chooses to introduce voter IDs they have a duty to support people to obtain IDs. This may include financial support or support with the bureaucratic process. One potential way of overcoming some of these barriers is by issuing free and easy to obtain voter ID cards. When Northern Ireland introduced voter ID they also introduced a free Electoral Voter Card. Critically, these cards should be free to access and contain a

minimal administrative burden to obtain, as a difficult process to obtain them could lead to further barriers to voting. Furthermore these cards must allow people to register their gender identity they choose as well as give the option to register a non-binary gender identity." Mencap Mencap shared a copy of 12 responses they had received from service users at Braintree Mencap. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 Q1. Have you voted in an election before? Yes Q2. What type of ID did you show when voting? Bus Pass Passport Passport/Bus Pass Passport Bus Pass Bus Pass Bus Pass Driving Licence Photocard Blue Badge Parking Permit Bus Pass Passport Bus Pass Q3. How did you find out that you needed to show ID when voting? Other (Told by friend) Social Media Other (Post) Family or Friend/ Book on voting Supporter/ Carer Q4. Did you need to get a new form of ID in order to vote? No No No No No No No No Yes No No Q5. Did you have a good experience when voting? Good Bad (Not very helpful and willing to help me) Good Bad (Didn't like going into booth, felt crowded) Good Good Good Good Good Good Good Good Q6. What can be done to make voting more accessible? Ok Electronically/ Online Advertise more N/A Q7. Is there anything else you want to tell us? N/A Polling stations can't help as not allowed but how ca I vote if on my own? We need more people to vote in the whole town of Braintree N/A A man form the Council came to tell us about it. It was very helpful. The Democracy Manager from Braintree District Council came to our self-advocacy group and told us all about it. The Council sent someone to talk to us about this and he listened to what we said and then the Council produced an easy-read booklet to explain it. Someone from the Council asked us how to make it easy for people with a learning disability to understand this new way of voting. Then the Council gave us copies of a lovely booklet about it to share with our friends. The Council made an easy read leaflet to explain what we had to do. It had some good pictures to help us. We liked the little booklet the Council gave us to help us to understand. All the people at the places where we went to vote were very helpful. I liked the booklet they gave us which told us what we had to take. We had a very good meeting before the election. A man from the Council came to ask us how the Council could make it easy for us to understand. Mid Sussex Older People's Council "I actually have a postal vote so for me nothing really changed. But having spoken to friends and others no-one from what I can actually gather had any negative thoughts about having to provide identity, in fact they thought it a good thing to have, and if it helps to make the voting system much fairer. And also helps reduce coercion of voters by some less ethical parties that is a good thing. "These days people are used to being asked provide their identity and from what I can gather from friends was not an issue for them. So very positive and a good thing to have to do." Royal Naval Association Sleaford "I was contacted by the Electoral Commission concerning their survey into the effects of the voter ID trial taking place in North Kesteven. I am the Hon Secretary of the Sleaford Branch of the Royal Naval Association, RNA, a small group of people who have served in various branches of our naval forces such as Royal Navy, Royal Marines and Women's Royal Naval Service, WRENS. "The RNA, by its nature consists of older individuals, the youngest in our branch would be in their late forties and the oldest a 94 year old WW2 veteran, with the majority being in the late sixties to mid-eighties age range. I scanned the literature produced by the local authority and posted it on our closed Facebook group, there are however some members that still do not have access to computers or the Internet. "Before the local elections I mentioned your survey at our March 29 meeting and again at our meeting on

April 26th. At the March meeting one member in particular, an 85 year old, was not aware of the ID requirements and was, until persuaded otherwise, adamant that the polling card sent to each voter would be sufficient. Once the process was explained most members said that the ID requirement would not cause them any problems. One member, a 78 year old who, because of illness and infirmity, does not have a driving licence and also does not have a passport expressed concern and, I suspect was not going to bother to vote. "You ask about ways to make the voter ID process easier, in the discussions after my explanations I would say that the general consensus was that an ID card would solve everyone's concerns, bearing in mind that this group of people are quite used to carrying ID cards having carried one during their military service.

"In closing the group of people I represent do not have any problems with producing ID however in my opinion, and this is probably outside your remit, the big problem is voter apathy brought about by Brexit. I go to various ex-service groups in Sleaford, the local camaraderie club, a veteran's breakfast club and the RNA. I cannot think of anyone I meet who voted remain, Brexit is discussed endlessly at meetings and on various Facebook groups where more and more people are saying things like nobody listens, nobody cares, I am not going to vote any more. I think that voter apathy will be a bigger problem than the odd, minuscule amount of voter fraud." Sleaford Parkinson's Support Group "As far as I can tell, the voter ID local elections went as any other. There were plenty of reminders about taking ID so no-one was unaware of the need. As with myself, people simply presented their ID, answered the usual questions and voted. No hassle. No complaints." St Mungo's "Thank you for your email and the opportunity to submit evidence on the voter ID pilots. We do not actually run any services in this year's pilot areas and so will not be able to gather evidence from our service users. " We have shared our general views previously, including in this joint letter. " Stonewall "Stonewall is a national charity that campaigns for lesbian, gay, bi and trans (LGBT) equality, Britain and abroad. We warmly welcome this opportunity to respond to the Electoral Commission's call for evidence to support their evaluation of the Pilot Schemes. "Along with many others, Stonewall raised cases when the Government announced their plans to pilot a new vote ID scheme for the local government elections on the 3 May 2018. Not only are cases of electoral fraud very rare, we were concerned that a requirement to provide a form of approved ID would create a further barrier to minority groups who may want to vote. "For many minority groups, including LGBT, black, Asian and minority ethnic, disabled and homeless people, the complicated and costly process to obtain ID, such as a passport or driving licence, means many simply do not have these. "Furthermore, trans and non-binary people may have been particularly vulnerable to these ID requirements as the photo on their ID may not reflect their gender expression or identity. Stonewall was deeply concerned that this may lead to confusion or challenges from staff at the pilot polling stations. "Stonewall now urges the Government to reconsider rolling these pilots out as standard and instead, work closely with minority communities to understand what can be done to reduce the barriers they face when voting." United Response "Anecdotal feedback from people we support, families and carers suggests that compulsory use of ID for voting would create a further barrier for people with learning disabilities. "The attached response to the Government's call for evidence, demonstrates the level of difficulty already experienced by people we support to exercise their democratic rights; the necessity of producing photo ID to vote makes this even harder. "Feedback we had last year on a similar voter ID scheme in the London local elections, was that leaflets in the post to tell people about ID requirements, were inaccessible (not written in Easy read format) and easily missed

for people with learning disabilities. Posters advertising voter ID from the local authority were few and far between and were difficult to read. And as you know, people we support can sometimes be less likely to have access to or own a passport or driving license or other photo ID. "As an organisation, we worked extremely hard on successive election campaigns with our Every Vote Counts campaign, to make elections more accessible for people we support. We managed to improve numbers of people with learning disabilities voting, and raised greater public awareness – with messages of support from then PM David Cameron as well as leaders of the other major political parties. "Every Vote Counts and our outline of how to make elections more accessible for people with learning disabilities, has been copied by others globally (see attached report which United Response collaborated on with Victorian Electoral Commission, Australia). "We genuinely feel that progress made in the past few years to improve accessibility would be seriously undermined by introduction of voter ID. It does seem unfair that instances of some people breaking the law and committing electoral fraud should impact on the ability of another group of people to vote. We'd be keen to hear about the result of the recent pilots and any substantive impact on voting in the UK." Voice4Change "Voice4Change England have been aware of the intention for quite a while to run new pilots to trial additional voter ID checks and the government desire that the pilots aim to provide it with further insights into how best to ensure the security of the voting process and reduce the risk of voter fraud. Hence, in May 2019 ten local authority areas: Braintree, Broxtowe, Craven, Derby, Mid Sussex, North Kesteven, North West Leicester, Pendle, Watford and Woking were scrutinised. "We understand once again, none of the areas looked at in these local elections has any great history of fraudulent activity – and again noted the absence of any major incidence of voting fraud taking place generally across the UK in elections in recent years. "Having spoken with some of our members in Derby and West Leicester, two of the areas where the current pilot takes place and where we have a significant reach, we would like to make the following observations: Difficult to assess any negative impact on voter's turnout, or whether it had been effective in rooting out fraud due to the relatively small size of the voter's sample. Making any analysis inconclusive. Asking for voter's IDs could be seen as a policy certainly has echoes of the strategy aimed at making society an uncomfortable place for illegal migrants. We maintain through very limited feedback from the two areas mentioned, that the introduction of the pilots was viewed generally as unnecessary. Our members expressed strong concerns that this type of policy will not only have minimal impact on the minuscule level of voting fraud but, will create potentially new and unnecessary barriers to participation in the electoral process if people become uncertain of requirements when they turn up at polling stations, further impacting negatively on registrations. "The Commission "evaluation method identified several areas where further work is required, where evidence was found to disprove concerns or where evidence was inconclusive. This relates particularly to the potential impact on some BME groups of people who may find it harder than others to show certain types of identification. E.g. Windrush scandal. "So, to sum up. Although we have not seen all the relevant information - from the May pilots. We believe the conclusions will again prove to be inconclusive in detecting voter fraud as a significant problem. It remains to be seen if it has been of significance in any of the pilot areas under scrutiny in May 2019. "Voice4Change England maintains its commitment to working with the government and the EC to improve the participation of BME communities in elections and voter registration drives." Related content Register to vote All you need to register to vote is 5 minutes and your National Insurance number. Donations

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Panel meeting minutes: 8 March 2022 You are in the Party panels section Home How we make decisions Party panels On this page Welcome and introductions Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising Preparations for Scottish Council elections 2022 Electoral Commission Guidance EMB update E-Counting project Public awareness and partnership activity UK Elections Bill Updates (not related to Scottish Council elections 2022) Dates of future meetings First published: 26 May 2022 Last updated: 26 May 2022 Welcome and introductions John Hardy welcomed those present and apologies were noted. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising The minutes of the last meeting held on 20 January 2022 were approved. Scott Martin (SM) noted that as stated in Paragraph 3.5 he would like to discuss matters further with Superintendent Faulds and Andy O'Neill agreed to arrange this. SM also noted that as there was another panel member with the same initials, he suggested identifying his comments as (SXM). Preparations for Scottish Council elections 2022 Legislation - (AON) said all legislation for the election was now in place. Electoral Commission Guidance Electoral Commission Guidance - (AON) Confirmed that all guidance was now on the website and the Commission's advice service now active to parties. He reiterated the standing offer to brief any groups and said the Commission would be attending party conferences this month to host a series of such events. EMB update Chris Highcock (CH) said Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers had been busy getting everything in place for delivery of the election. He said the event on 27 January had been a useful exercise and was content all Returning Officers were in a good place to deliver the election. They had engaged with public Health Scotland for guidance on how best to ensure a safe public event on 5 and 6 May and would use the same baseline measures as last year, though the general direction of travel probably indicated it could be more relaxed. He confirmed all Returning Officers were offering pre-submission validation of nomination papers by email and a range of directions had been issued. (SXM) said they planned to appoint one Depute Nominating Officer per authority. E-Counting project (CH) noted that Returning Officers were working with the Scottish Government to ensure that the e-counting system was secure. (CH) and James Kelly (JK) clarified the spreadsheet composite would be published as a complete finished document on the EMB website listing results of all 355 wards in Scotland and hope this would be by late afternoon on Friday 6 May. It would be possible to drill down into the result of each of the wards. As each result was declared, those reports from the system would be downloaded to a memory stick (one per contest) and published on the relevant council website as soon as available. (CH) agreed they would encourage use of the hashtag as (SXM) said this made the results easier to follow. Public awareness and partnership activity Catherine Heggie (CHe) said the Electoral Commission's voter registration campaign, which targets those who need a reminder to ensure they are registered, would launch on 11 March and run across a range of platforms. The Commission's paid digital campaign to target 16 and 17 year olds would also launch on 11 March and run until the registration deadline. The Commission would then run a paid campaign from 19 April until polling day , which would explain voting under STV. An information booklet would be delivered to all households from 28 March, and the information included was available in BSL and other formats on the Commission's website. (CHe) offered to provide a summary of all the voter information resources available from the Commission. Work continued with partners to reach recently-enfranchised voters, and the Commission would be running 'Welcome to Your Vote' Day on 10 March to raise awareness amongst qualifying foreign citizens, with

support from EROs, councils and third sector organisations. (XSM) asked about candidacy rights of foreign nationals in the UK Government's Elections Bill. He understood it was based on reciprocation between EU member states and asked if further consideration in relation to foreign nationals standing for election (who are EU nationals) but from a State that is not reciprocating. Was this because of treaties negotiated by the UK Government? UK Elections Bill Hannah Standring (HS) had provided a written update which had been circulated. Updates (not related to Scottish Council elections 2022) Scottish Government Nothing further to add. Scotland Office/Cabinet Office A written update had been circulated. Boundaries Scotland Isabel Drummond-Murray (ID-M) said they were mid-way through the secondary consultation of Westminster Parliamentary constituencies but, disappointingly, five hearings around Scotland had been poorly attended. Boundary Commission for Scotland (ID-M) said they were now looking at presentations for the Scottish Parliament review with the first consultation in around 12 months. There would be a further update at the next meeting. Royal Mail Scott Forsyth (SF) said that he now had full responsibility for Scotland and this would be his priority. He had received 19 out of 31 voting plans. He asked (CH) when the weekly calls should commence and said he should come to him if anything was required. (SXM) asked for contact details of Scott Forsyth to be shared. Electoral Management Board for Scotland - Electoral Registration Pete Wildman (PW) said all was on track with the election being the first focus, followed by the next canvass between July and November and engagement ongoing with the Department for Levelling Up to introduce voter ID in December this year. This was the first time the new style canvass had been done and it was hard to say what the trends were but through learning and exchange of ideas they would see what worked and what had not. (SXM) asked about the UK Elections Bill and where that was with online postal vote application. (PW) indicated June 2023 was the date for that going live and as it was a reserved power, it was just for Westminster absent votes unless the Scottish Government chose to legislate for that. The Electoral Commission Nothing more to add. Dates of future meetings 2022 16 May at 11am Pre-meeting 10:30 and meeting proper at 11am

On this page Changes Our role First published: 5 July 2021 Last updated: 2 February 2023 Summary From May 2024, some EU citizens will not be able to vote and stand as a candidate in certain elections in England and Northern Ireland. EU citizens will continue to be able to vote while they remain on the register, but will not be able to re-register once they are taken off after May 2024. Changes The Act removes the rights of some EU citizens to vote and stand in elections in England and Northern Ireland. The changes apply to: local elections in England and Northern Ireland elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly elections for Police and Crime

Commissioner in England and Wales These changes will not apply to local and devolved elections in Scotland and Wales. EU citizens where the UK Government has negotiated agreements with EU Members States to allow its citizens living in the UK to vote, in return for the same right for UK citizens living in that country, will still be able to vote and stand in elections. So far these agreements have been made with: Spain Portugal Luxembourg Poland Other EU citizens who were living in the UK before the end of the EU Withdrawal Agreement Implementation Period (up until 1 January 2021) will also still be able to vote and stand in elections. The changes will not affect citizens of the Republic of Ireland or citizens of Commonwealth nations. Our role We will support Electoral Registration Officers and their teams to update the electoral registers and provide guidance on who is and is not eligible to register to vote. We will communicate with EU citizens in different ways to make sure they understand whether they can vote at elections. We will also update the paper registration application forms and canvass communications to reflect these changes, and ensure they are clear and straightforward for voters to use. We will communicate with candidates, through communication channels with parties and campaign groups, to make sure they understand how this change affects their eligibility to stand for election.

Related content Elections Act about the UK Government's Elections Act and what it means for voting and campaigning About the Elections Act about the Elections Bill, including the measures it contains and which elections it applies to. Preventing undue influence Read about the proposals to simplify and clarify the offence of undue influence (when someone uses, or threatens to use, force or violence to make someone vote a certain way). Changes to overseas voting about proposals to remove the 15 year limit on voting rights for British citizens living overseas.

From: Louise Edwards, Head of Regulation Format: Sent by email Full letter Dear Ms Patel, Complaint regarding EU Referendum campaigners We have now completed our assessment of the allegations you made in your letters dated 27 May 2018 and 3 June 2018. We aim to respond to complainants within 21 days of receiving their complaint.

I apologise that on this occasion it has taken longer. To complete the assessment we needed information from your office and from DDB UK Ltd (otherwise known as Adam and Eve). This additional stage extended the assessment. On this note, thank you for the additional information you supplied in a letter dated 25 June 2018, which we received by email on 17 July 2018. As our Enforcement Policy explains, we may open an investigation where we have reasonable grounds to suspect an offence within our remit has been committed. This threshold is applied to every case we assess, and has been applied in this case. I set out below the conclusions of our assessment. Joint

spending rules The 'working together' or 'joint spending' rules for the EU Referendum were set out in the European Union Referendum Act 2015. They were known as the 'common plan' rules in that Act. Under these rules, campaign groups can work together to achieve a particular outcome, but their spending – when combined – must not exceed their individual spending limit. Where a lead campaigner is working together with other campaign groups, all the spending will count towards the lead campaigner's total. Under the rules, set out by parliament, the following does not count as joint working, as they are permitted and do not dictate how money is spent: Donations from an individual or group to multiple campaigners. A single supplier working for multiple campaigners. s registering late in the campaign. When looking at joint spending we are not necessarily looking for a written plan, although we advise campaigners to have something in writing if they are working together. But we are looking for evidence of: joint or coordinated spending; control or influence over spending by another campaigner; or discussions or consultation about campaign activity that affects spending decisions. You may be interested to read a recent blog we posted on this subject: When does working together break the rules? Thank you for sharing details of the two instances where you believe joint working took place but the spending was not declared: 5 seconds to mark an X/Don't fuck my future/Project Ruby videos Various campaigners that registered late in the campaign 5 Seconds to

Mark an X/Don't Fuck My Future/Project Ruby We have looked at the links you provided to items of spending reported by DDB and apparently connected to these videos. These show that DDB incurred and reported spending on the videos. The issue is whether that spending should have been reported in accordance with the common plan rules. We looked at the media reports you shared with us from 2016 which indicate that these videos were the work of other campaigners. The evidential weight we can reasonably put on these accounts is limited, as they do not offer reasons for their claims and are contradictory. We then looked at the following, to see whether it – individually or together – was evidence of joint working: The fact that donors to Britain Stronger In Europe (BSIE) also donated to Wake Up and Vote (WUAV) and BSIE. The law allows donors to give to as many campaigns as they want, and donations are not the same as spending. So we looked at whether there was evidence that donations from the same donor were being used by different campaigners for a common purpose. We didn't find

any evidence to suggest this. The fact that DDB provided services to more than one campaigner. The joint spending rules aren't engaged if, for example, campaign A commissions its own services from a supplier and campaign B commissions separate services from the same supplier. For joint spending to happen campaigns A and B must commission services that are part of a common plan. There was one instance where we suspect this may have happened. I explain this below. The fact that BSIE hosted a campaign video from another campaigner on its website. Deciding to host a campaign video or share a link to another campaigner's work could be part of a common plan, if there was some evidence that this common plan existed. But it isn't evidence of a common plan in and of itself. DDB advises us that the videos were its initiative, funded by its donations. These included donations from WUAV and We Are Europe (both reported in its return although we note the WUAV donation is reported as from Ms Emma Duncan). However, WUAV reported spending £24,000 on services from DDB. The invoice references the '5 seconds' campaign. This indicates that spending on the same campaign activity was incurred by DDB and WUAV. It raises a reasonable suspicion that DDB and WUAV incurred joint spending that has not been declared as such. We have opened an investigation to establish what happened and whether or not any offences were committed. As I am sure you will understand, it would not be appropriate for me to discuss the investigation with you while it is ongoing. However, as with all our investigations, we will publish the outcome in due course. As you are the complainant in this matter, we will also tell you what we conclude. BSIE and other campaigners We reviewed the EU referendum campaigner registration dates you provided, and the donor and staffing connections between them. We note your belief, based on these dates and connections, that these five campaigners were set up by BSIE and acted under a common plan with it. The dates and connections are not in and of themselves evidence of joint spending. There wasn't a cut-off date for registering as a campaigner in the EU Referendum. Individuals and organisations registered throughout the campaign, with some on both sides of the debate choosing to register late on as their campaign activity was concentrated in the final few days before the poll. Again, campaigners could use the same suppliers, and the same volunteers, and donors were allowed to give to more than one campaigner. While we are not necessarily looking for a documented plan in order to show joint working, there must be something we can point to that explains why we think it happened. We looked at whether we could locate sources of evidence that BSIE set up these campaigners, or whether even in the absence of such evidence we could infer a reasonable suspicion of undeclared common plan expenses. After a thorough assessment, our conclusion is that we can find nothing beyond conjecture to support the argument that there must be undeclared joint spending between these various campaigners. There is nothing we can point to that reasonably indicates some kind of common campaign activity. As such, this does not meet the threshold for an investigation to be opened. Should evidence of any breaches of the rules for the EU Referendum come to light, we would of course look again. The Commission's independence and impartiality Finally, I must express my disappointment at your continued suggestion that the Commission's impartiality has been compromised in respect of how we regulate EU referendum campaigners. Our statutory duty, our published Enforcement Policy and our internal enforcement processes all provide clear and meaningful assurance that we regulate based on evidence. We also publish the outcome of all investigations so that voters can see the conclusions we make. Our investigations cover parties from across the political spectrum, and campaigners from both sides of the EU referendum. You will, I am sure, have seen our detailed report on the investigation into Vote Leave, Mr Grimes and Veterans for Britain. The report

explains why we opened the investigation, and summarises the significant evidence on which our conclusions were based. I appreciate your support for the Commission's role and independence and believe the best way for us to maintain our independence is to continue our evidence-led approach. It would be wrong for us to take decisions on the basis that we must balance action in respect of 'leave' campaigners with action in respect of 'remain' campaigners. That would undermine our neutrality, rather than ensure it. I repeat my offer, made in my letter of 15 January, to meet if you would find that helpful. Though we cannot discuss live investigations we remain happy to provide a thorough explanation of our enforcement approach and processes. To arrange a meeting please contact our Public Affairs Manager Laura McLeod. Thank you for your letters. We will contact you again once our investigation into DDB and WUAV is concluded.

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Board minutes: 13 March 2019 | Electoral Commission Search

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Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Apologies and introductions Declarations of interest Minutes of the Commission Board meeting of 13 February 2019 (EC 14/19) Speaker's Committee update Key messages for the Annual Report 2018/19 (EC 15/19) Annual risk review (EC 16/19) Recommendations from innovation and development project 4: Improving youth democratic engagement (EC 17/19) Update on progress on new website Chief Executive's update (EC 18/19) Forward plan of Board business 2018-2020 (EC 19/19) Action tracker (EC 20/19) Chair and Chief Executive's meeting and meetings in devolved legislatures (EC 21/19) First published: 26 July 2019 Last updated: 26 July 2019 Meeting overview Date: 13 March 2019 Time: 9:30am to 12:20pm Location: Boothroyd Room, 3 Bunhill Row, London Date of next scheduled meeting: 24 April Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Holmes, Chair Alasdair Morgan Alastair Ross Anna Carragher Elan Closs Stephens Joan Walley Rob Vincent Sarah Chambers Stephen Gilbert Sue Bruce Bob Posner ,Chief Executive Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation Craig Westwood, Director, Communications and Research Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services David Bailey, Head of Strategic Planning and Performance David Meek, Senior Adviser, Governance Tim Crowley, Head of Campaigns and Corporate Communications Natasha Hutchinson, Digital Communications Manager Apologies and introductions No apologies. Declarations of interest No new declarations of interest. Minutes of the Commission Board meeting of 13 February 2019 (EC 14/19) Resolved: That the minutes of the Commission Board meeting on 13 February 2019 be agreed. Speaker's Committee update Bob Posner confirmed that the hearing with the Speaker's Committee had been postponed to 18 March. We understand that Treasury had no specific observations to make, and were broadly supportive of the proposed budget, though concerned that further increases should not be proposed for future years. Key messages for the Annual Report 2018/19 (EC 15/19) Bob Posner introduced the paper suggesting key themes in the annual report. There was a need to find the right balance between marking our achievements and appearing self-congratulatory. The Board encouraged a greater emphasis on the work we have done with the devolved nations, particularly Wales and Scotland. There could be a stand-alone section on this. The Board also suggested that the report should continue to emphasise the need for legislative reform. The Board requested that the Annual Report highlight specific examples of areas of progress, perhaps by Directorate, and suggested including reference to the contingency planning work that we have done to ensure preparedness for a range of potential polls, and to the work we had done on digital campaigning. There should also be references to the work of the Audit Committee and the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee. Areas where we had missed our targets should be mentioned as necessary. Resolved: That the paper be noted, subject to the comments made. Annual risk review (EC 16/19) Bob Posner introduced the paper, and noted that we needed to be comfortable with the balance between risk appetite and risk capacity. The Audit Committee looked in depth at the risk matrix but the Board needed to take an overview as well. The Board noted that the most serious risk we faced was damage to our reputation, and asked for this to be more specifically reflected in the risks matrix. The awareness of reputational risk cut across a number of risks identified in the paper. There was also a need to look again at the definitions of red, amber and green to make sure we were getting them right, and to take account of how the risk context could change quickly. The Board heard how information was gathered from local authorities around the country on whether they

had the resources and the capacity to deliver elections. This information was reflected in the risk ratings. Action: That risk and assurance be the topic for a future Commissioner Day. Consider how to revise risk one to better acknowledge reputational risk as important to the organisation. Resolved: That the paper be noted. Recommendations from innovation and development project 4: Improving youth democratic engagement (EC 17/19) Craig Westwood introduced the paper, and explained the two recommendations – one for a specific new project on helping educate the young on electoral issues, and the other for enhancing information provision within business as usual procedures. On the project, we had explored with an open mind how we would work with educators to deliver our work with them in this area. The aim was to move cautiously. We would initially focus work in Scotland and Wales, owing to the (actual and proposed) lower age franchise and forthcoming elections to the devolved legislatures. This would give us important insights that could be used in extending this work across the rest of the United Kingdom in the longer term. Where possible existing material would be used, for example from the ‘Democracy Cookbook’. The second recommendation was about putting in better links, using mainly the website, to important data about, for example, the location of polling stations. The Board noted the political sensitivities about some of these issues, and concerns from some schools about engaging with politics in the classroom. Commissioners also noted that we needed to be aware of the mechanics of doing this well, and to take care to ensure that whatever we proposed fitted well into the world that teachers were operating in. Concerns were also expressed about how to reach those not in formal education. The Board discussed the legislated role of the Commission and the extent to which there were restrictions on what we could do in educational terms. Various potential partners in this work were discussed, including the BBC, the Department for Education, and Young Scot. There was agreement that our approach should be developed iteratively in order to ensure it was fit for purpose. It was also noted that, in the context of the reduction of the franchise to 16 in Scotland, a lot of such educational work was already happening. There was also discussion about the respective roles of the Commission and of political parties in inspiring young people to vote. The Board noted that our role was not to tell people to vote, but to offer information and advice on how to register and vote, and how to better understand the electoral system. It was agreed that we should focus on providing resources to support teaching only in that context, and seek to adapt our approach as we gained more experience. Resolved: That the paper be approved, subject to the comments made.

Update on progress on new website Tim Crowley and Natasha Hutchinson provided an update on the project to develop the new website, and demonstrated the more flexible functionality of the new site, including much improved search facilities. The Board welcomed the work under way. Resolved: That the presentation be noted.

Chief Executive’s update (EC 18/19) The Board received an update on the contingency plans for unscheduled electoral events. It was a very busy period but good progress was being made on many fronts. Following a legal challenge from an individual, the UK government was expecting a court judgement very soon on whether ID pilots could go ahead at the May local elections. The Board heard about the proactive work we were doing to register new political parties and to improve the party register overall. There had been encouraging engagements in this area. We were also increasing our outreach to members’ associations, such as companies or unincorporated bodies that were made up wholly or mainly of members of a political party. The Board received an update on current litigation. The Board was updated on the inquiry by the House of Commons Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC) into

Electoral Law. We would be making a written submission and sharing what we had submitted with other interested parties, to help influence their approaches. Commissioners noted that the PACAC inquiry was an important opportunity for us to lay out what changes in election law we would like to see. The Board was updated on some of the recent work that Human Resources have done, and the proposed changes to our approach to hiring staff on fixed-term contracts. There was also an update on the National Audit Office's (NAOs) interim audit of the annual accounts, which had gone well. Anna Carragher provided an update relating to Northern Ireland. Sue Bruce left the meeting at this point. Action: The approach to and scope of the proposed submission to PACAC on the electoral law reform inquiry be shared with the Board. Resolved: That the paper be noted. Forward plan of Board business 2018-2020 (EC 19/19) Action: Explore adding an Audit Committee meeting in April. Explore opportunity to liaise with the Australian, New Zealand, and Canadian electoral commissions at the July Commissioner Day. Add scoping of modernising voting project to the "items to be allocated" section of the work plan. Resolved: That the paper be noted. Action tracker (EC 20/19) Resolved: That the paper be noted. Chair and Chief Executive's meeting and meetings in devolved legislatures (EC 21/19) Resolved: That the paper be noted.

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2022 Northern Ireland Assembly candidate spending | Electoral Commission Search
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spending: Candidates section Home Campaign spending: Candidates First published: 27
October 2022 Last updated: 27 October 2022 About the election and data At the May
2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election, there were 239 constituency candidates who
had to submit a spending return, listing details of what they spent during the
election campaign. The dataset includes the headline figures for the spending
incurred and donations received by candidates at the 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly
election. We publish these figures to enhance transparency and to provide voters with
information on donations to candidates' election campaigns and their spending and to
ensure that this information can be seen together in one place. The full individual
candidate returns are available for public scrutiny from the Electoral Office of
Northern Ireland (EONI) for a period of two years after an election. The returns
include the total the candidate spent, as well as a breakdown of how much they spent
on things like advertising, transport and public meetings. They also include any
donations the candidate received above £50 during the regulated period. The data
taken from the spending returns reflects what candidates and their agents submitted
to the EONI. We publish this information exactly as it appears on the candidate's
return so that there is an accurate record of what was reported. Spending limits vary
between constituencies and differ between single or joint candidates in the same
constituency. The EONI has sent us the returns submitted to them for inclusion in
this dataset. Where information is missing, this may be because the EONI didn't send
them on to us, or because the candidate didn't submit their return to the EONI, or
because the return did not include all the information it was to. Information about
candidate spending data for previous devolved elections is available online in the
National Archive. 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly candidate spending Download the data
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Response to consultation on draft statutory guidance: digital imprints | Electoral Commission Search Response to consultation on draft statutory guidance: digital imprints You are in the Our consultations section Home Our consultations Statutory guidance on digital imprints - final draft On this page Summary How we developed the draft guidance for consultation Main changes to the guidance after consultation Themes raised through the consultation Conclusion Next steps Annex A – Breakdown of statutory consultation responses First published: 18 May 2023 Last updated: 30 May 2023 Summary Summary ‘Imprints’ are added to certain political or election-related material to show who is responsible for the material.

This helps to deliver transparency for voters about who is spending money to influence them. The Elections Act 2022 includes provisions requiring imprints on digital campaign material. The Act introduces a new duty on the Commission to prepare statutory guidance explaining the digital imprints regime and how the Commission and the police will exercise their enforcement functions under it. Once the statutory guidance comes into force, the Commission and the police must have regard to the guidance as they enforce the regime. For campaigners, showing that they have complied with the guidance will be a statutory defence to any offence under the new laws.

Between 31 October 2022 and 20 December 2022, we conducted a consultation on a draft of the guidance. The consultation received 22 responses from political parties, academics, and a range of other groups, including trade unions and organisations representing charities. We set out below a summary of the key themes and issues that emerged in the consultation, and how we have considered them all in updating the guidance and in our wider work to support campaigners. We are grateful to everyone who provided us with feedback. We have used this to inform the further development of the guidance, and to make it as clear and helpful as possible. We recognise how important it is that the people who will use the guidance support it. View the final draft of the guidance How we developed the draft guidance for consultation Before we commenced with the development of the guidance, we talked to a range of political parties and non-party campaigners from across the UK to inform the draft. We asked them about: their understanding of the imprint provisions how they use digital material in their political campaigning what digital platforms they use to reach voters how they see digital campaigning evolving in the future We used this pre-consultation phrase to draw on their expertise, as well as our experience of regulating elections, to produce a draft that would be subject to a public consultation. Main changes to the guidance after consultation Overall, feedback was positive and stakeholders felt that the draft guidance was “generally straightforward and well-written” and “navigates a complex and at times ambiguous statutory regime in an accessible way”. There were areas where additional clarity or examples were sought to make it clearer for parties and campaigners to understand the law and how to apply it in practice. In response to the feedback, we have made changes to the draft guidance. We go through the details of these below, but in summary the main changes include: Including more examples and a range of images throughout the guidance to support campaigners understand the rules and in what situations they apply. Making it clearer what factors are relevant to determining whether it is ‘reasonably practicable’ to include an imprint as a part of the material. Adding in a flowchart to explain the sharing exemption and including a new section that sets out where the liability lies when material is shared. Updating some of the terminology to make it easier for campaigners to understand and navigate. Redrafting the section on who the promoter is, making it clearer that when material is published by an organisation, the organisation itself will typically be the

promoter, so no individual's name needs to appear. Including more information on the factors that the Commission will consider when determining whether enforcement action is proportionate. Within this report we have highlighted where we agree with recommendations to improve the guidance's intelligibility. We have also set out why, in some circumstances, we have retained the original wording. In some cases, we were unable to make the amendments suggested because they conflicted with the law in the Elections Act 2022 or were views on how the law itself could be clearer. In other cases, pieces of feedback were incompatible with each other. Themes raised through the consultation Material that requires an imprint Background Digital material is any material in electronic form that consists of or includes text, moving images, still images, speech or music. However, it does not include telephone calls or SMS messages. There are two different sets of criteria which determine if digital material requires an imprint. If someone has paid to publish the material as an advert, then an imprint is required if the material is 'political material'. If no one has paid for the material to be published as an advert, then this is 'organic material'. Organic material requires an imprint if the material is any of: election material referendum material recall petition material However, an imprint is only required on organic material if the material is published by or on behalf of a 'relevant entity', which is any one of the following: a registered party a registered non-party campaigner a candidate or future candidate an elected office-holder a registered referendum campaigner a registered recall petition campaigner Distinction between 'paid adverts' and 'organic' material 80% of respondents felt that the guidance was helpful in explaining what is meant by 'paid to be published as an advert'. However, some respondents did ask for further clarification on the distinction between the two types of material. We have therefore added some additional examples to explain that material only counts as a paid advert if the platform hosting the advert has been paid for the publication of that advert. We included information to clarify and make clear that: content from a social media influencer or paid ambassador who is publishing material on their own normal social media channels, would be classified as organic material rather than a paid advert, even if they are being paid by campaigner pay-per-click and pay-per-impression adverts would be paid adverts paying a platform to promote a particular post (through a mechanism such as a Facebook boost) would turn it into a paid advert, but paying for a general service (such as a Twitter blue tick) would not turn all the material posted from that account into a paid advert These changes and specific examples will support campaigners to better understand in practice how different types of material are classified and how to apply it to the modern realities of campaigning. Supporting campaigners to understand what is election material and political material 60% of respondents explained that the guidance effectively detailed what political material is, and 73% said that the information on how to apply the tests in general was clear. 73% said that more examples would be helpful. Several respondents noted the complexity of the tests that campaigners need to apply, highlighting that " publishers will likely have to make difficult judgements about whether their material requires an imprint...the burden of interpreting whether content meets this threshold will largely be borne by publishers ". This is true and something we know campaigners are concerned about, as the duty to include an imprint falls on the promoter of the material, and anyone else on whose behalf the material is published. We acknowledge that the law is complex and want to do what we can to ensure the guidance as clear and helpful as possible. We have made amendments to the draft wording that will help campaigners in two ways: we have been clear in recommending that campaigners should

include an imprint on all digital material as best practice we have explained in more detail the criteria that determine whether material would be election material or political material A number of respondents asked for the guidance to include more recommendations and suggestions of good practice to help them comply with the law. We have therefore added more throughout, and have been clear that it is good practice for campaigners to include an imprint on all of their material. We have also explained that if they adopt a best practice policy of including an imprint on all of their material, this would bypass the need to engage with the detail of the legal tests. Several respondents found the categories used in the definitions of political material and election material confusing, and explained that it was hard to apply the definitions in practice. To help campaigners understand the distinction better, we have included an example image for each type of scenario in which something can be either political material or election material. This also addressed more general feedback we had from respondents who explained how more examples and graphics in the guidance would provide them with greater clarity and assurances. document. We also added exemptions to the flowchart summarising what material needs an imprint to make sure it is as comprehensive as possible. A number of respondents told us that they found the phrase 'election-related material' very confusing. We have therefore replaced 'election-related material' with 'election material' to ensure the terminology is as user friendly and clear as possible. We also updated the terminology from 'political entities' to 'relevant entities', to address concerns raised by some respondents, that some types of campaigners, including registered non-party campaigners, might not identify as 'political' in its ordinary sense and therefore think that the laws may not apply to them. Navigating the guidance A couple of respondents suggested that the guidance might be easier to navigate if it was structured by type of reader (candidate, political party, non-party campaigner, and elected office-holder) rather than by topic. We agree that structuring the guidance by reader type can make it easier for campaigners to read and simpler to navigate, and this is normally the approach we adopt for drafting our own non-statutory guidance. However, the requirement on the Commission to produce this guidance is specified in law and must relate to the whole of Part 6 (and Schedules 11 and 12) of the Elections Act 2022, covering the new digital imprints regime and that alone. We therefore have produced a single guidance product that can be used by all campaigners, and where possible we have used signposting to help them understand as clearly as possible related sections of the law. In order to make the guidance as user friendly as possible for different users, and we have added new sections specifically for candidates/future candidates and for political parties, and have moved and updated the section on non-party campaigners. This allowed us to give specific and targeted guidance to those reader types which may not be relevant to others and reflects how they operate in practice. Non-party campaigners Background Non-party campaigners are individuals or organisations who campaign at elections but do not stand candidates themselves. Non-party campaigners play a vital role in our democracy, and we are committed to providing them with as much clarity as possible to ensure they are not discouraged from active campaigning. Many non-party campaigners are issues-based campaigners. This means that unlike parties or candidates, who will typically include imprints on most or all of their material, non-party campaigners will typically publish material which may or may not require an imprint on a case-by-case basis. A third of the responses to the consultation were from non-party campaigners, or groups representing them. Understanding what requires an imprint There were requests from respondents for more detail on the requirements that

determine whether material needs an imprint, especially as they relate to non-party campaigners and what sort of material does not require an imprint. Respondents told us that they were concerned about being able to make this assessment in practice, and that the different types of material they use could be hard to distinguish between. We have therefore added specific detailed examples that relate to non-party campaigners. This includes non-party campaign material that does not require an imprint, an issues-based campaign that does not relate to elections, and a campaign against government legislation. When we drafted the guidance, we included detail to explain if a registered charity followed charity law and guidance from the relevant charity regulator, any material they pay to publish as an advert is unlikely to require an imprint because its sole or primary purpose is unlikely to be one in the definition of 'political material'. We received very different responses from two different groups representing charities. The first welcomed our drafting noting it was "very helpful" to understand when an imprint would be required. However, other respondents were "concerned that this case could lead to complacency and inadvertent breaches". This is because for spending, the spending threshold (of £10,000 during a regulated period) provides a kind of buffer, whereas for imprints a single advert could potentially lead to a charity committing an offence. We do understand the concerns of some individuals but have retained our original wording to help provide as much reassurance to charities, who told us they want to manage the risks of them accidentally breaching the law in the best way they could. We therefore have highlighted that charities and other campaigners could for best practice include an imprint on all material that they publish around election times, even in cases where no imprint is required by the legislation. This would support transparency and we've added suggestions of how campaigners could do this in practice. More generally, a number of respondents wanted us to be clearer in the guidance that a charity (or other campaigner) putting an imprint on their material would not always mean that their material had needed an imprint by law, and that any spending on the material would meet the related 'purpose test' for regulated non-party campaigner spending. We agree that this is important to explain so have added in some additional wording to highlight that if campaigners include an imprint on all their material as good practice, then one cannot infer that an imprint was required (or that spending is regulated) from the actual inclusion of the imprint. Information that must be included

Background The imprint must contain the name and address details of: the promoter of the material anyone else on whose behalf the material has been published. The majority of respondents, (90%) felt that the guidance effectively supported them to know what information to include, and less than half saying that more examples should be included. The types of information that must be included Some respondents were very concerned about the requirement to include an address, particularly a home address, for security reasons. Some suggested that an email address should be acceptable, or that the address requirement be dropped entirely. However, the requirement to include an address is set out in the legislation so the guidance must reflect the law as passed. There was also a lack of understanding about whose details are required as the promoter. We have therefore updated this section and added examples, making it clear that if an organisation causes some material to be published, then the organisation is the promoter, so it is the organisation's details which must appear in the imprint. In this case, an individual's details may not be required.

Location of the imprint Background The imprint must be included as a part of the material, unless it is not reasonably practicable to do so. If it is not reasonably practicable, then the imprint must be included somewhere directly

accessible from the material. Helping campaigners to understand what is reasonably practicable and directly accessible This was the section that respondents felt least confident with, as only 38% felt that the guidance supported them to understand when it is ‘reasonably practicable’ to include an imprint as a part of the material. This was the section that respondents were least confident with, as only 38% felt that the guidance supported them to understand when it is ‘reasonably practicable’ to include an imprint as a part of the material. To address this, we have added more detail about what is and what is not relevant to making an assessment of reasonable practicability. In particular, we have made clear it is based on the technological capacity of the platform being used, and not on other considerations, such as design preferences, effectiveness, or how much time or effort it would entail. 81% of respondents wanted more examples on direct accessibility and reasonable practicability. Respondents were able to provide a number helpful and illustrative examples of how different platforms and how their functionality might pose a problem somewhere for including an imprint directly accessible from the material. We have therefore made it clearer that the examples in the guidance of profile and pinned tweet are just examples of places that an imprint could appear, highlighting that a campaigner can add a link in to the imprint themselves – it does not have to be using the platform’s existing functionality. We have explained that there are many ways to make an imprint be directly accessible from a piece of material, and it is up to each campaigner to use the best option for them. We also added in new examples, including of a TikTok video and a Google search advertisement. Concerns about technological limitations and the pace of technological change There was a general concern raised by consultees about the pace of change of social media and how the guidance would cope with that – especially if the direction of travel for social media platforms is towards more deliberately restricted functionality. We are aware of the potential for fast change in this area but the guidance aims to give principles which can be applied to any platform with any functionality, including functionality not yet invented. All the examples given to illustrate these principles are necessarily limited to existing functionality as of March 2023. We have also made clear in the guidance that if there was a platform with such extremely reduced functionality that including an imprint on its posts would be impossible, then campaigners would not legally be able to post material that required an imprint on that platform. This is a straightforward consequence of the legislation. However, we do not consider that such a platform is in mainstream use. Republishing material Background When material is shared on social media, sometimes it does not need a new imprint, if it still includes the original imprint. This applies when someone shares material that has already been published with a correct imprint and the sharer does not alter the material. 71% of respondents felt that this section of the guidance was clear. However, a number of campaigners highlighted that the laws are particularly complex in relation to republishing: “explaining this clearly is a real challenge, and the examples are useful” “This is the most complex area of the legislation, but the tables provide clarity and are welcomed” We have therefore made minimal edits to this section, but added a new flowchart to summarise how the sharing exemption works, as well as adding an extra example. Liability The most common query respondents had was over where the liability lies when shared material is published without a compliant imprint – is it with the publishers of the original material, or with the publishers of the shared material? We had included detail on this in the draft guidance, but in response to consultation feedback we have added some text into the Sharing section as well, making clear that the liability is on the republishers and

not on the individuals who published the original material. Enforcement Background The guidance sets out our approach to enforcement of the regime, the police's approach: the Commission and the police must have regard to the guidance when carrying out their duties under the Act. For campaigners, showing that they have complied with the guidance will be a statutory defence to any offence under the new laws. Overall, this section got good feedback from respondents – 73% felt that the criteria the Commission and the police will have regard to in considering enforcement action are appropriate. The National Police Chief's Council explained that “ the enforcement section (regarding proportionality) is strongly supported ”. Process and proportionality Some respondents requested additional information that is already within a in the Commission's separate Enforcement Policy, which is another form of statutory guidance laid before Parliament independently of this statutory guidance, and which sets out our enforcement approach to the rest of the political finance regime. This included information about procedure when the Commission receives a complaint, when and how a campaigner would be contacted following a complaint or an investigation being opened, what the threshold for opening an investigation is, and more detail on what we mean by ‘proportionality’. We are conscious of not replicating content from the Commission's Enforcement Policy within this separate statutory guidance, but we have added in some details to address the common questions we saw from campaigners. In particular, we have made clear that we will only open an investigation where it is proportionate to do so, considering for example the level of experience of the campaigner, their record of compliance, and whether they quickly rectified the matter. Conclusion The introduction of the requirements for imprints on digital material is important for transparency in campaigning, and it is essential that campaigners understand the new duties placed on them. The statutory guidance is a central part of the Commission's work to help ensure that campaigners are confident in applying the law to their activities. The digital imprints regime is complex. Many respondents welcomed how various sections of the draft guidance provided “ clarity ” and “ helpful examples ”. We are grateful to all our respondents and have used their expertise and knowledge of how campaigning works in practice to make the guidance as clear and as helpful as possible. Next steps We have presented the final draft guidance to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The Minister may then modify the guidance, before laying it for parliamentary approval. A statement of reasoning is required to detail any changes that have been made. The guidance is then subject to the negative procedure in Parliament, which means that once it is laid, it will be approved unless either House rejects it within 40 days of it being laid. Following approval, the guidance will come into force. We expect this to be in November 2023. Annex A – Breakdown of statutory consultation responses Questions All responses have been considered when updating the guidance and in our wider work to support making elections accessible to all campaigners. References to percentages in the text above are percentages of respondents who answered the question. Question 1: Is the guidance helpful in explaining what is meant by 'paid to be published as an advert'? Yes/No/Don't know Yes No Don't know Didn't answer % of those who answered the question 80% 20% 0% N/A Numbers 12 3 0 7 Question 2: Does the guidance effectively explain what 'political material' is? Yes/No/Don't know Yes No Don't know Didn't answer % of those who answered the question 60% 40% 0% N/A Numbers 9 6 0 7 Question 3: Is the information included on how the digital imprints tests apply for non-party campaigners clear? Yes/No/Don't know Yes No Don't know Didn't answer % of those who answered the question 71% 29% 0% N/A Numbers 10 4 0 8 Question 4: Are there any other examples we can include that would support your understanding?

Yes/No/Don't know Yes No Don't know Didn't answer % of those who answered the question 73% 27% 0% N/A Numbers 11 4 0 7 Question 5: Does the guidance support you to know what information to include in an imprint? Yes/No/Don't know Yes No Don't know Didn't answer % of those who answered the question 93% 7% 0% N/A Numbers 14 1 0 7

Question 6: Are there any other examples we can include that would support your understanding? Yes/No/Don't know Yes No Don't know Didn't answer % of those who answered the question 43% 57% 0% N/A Numbers 6 8 0 8 Question 7: Does the guidance explain clearly where the imprint must appear? Yes/No/Don't know Yes No Don't know Didn't answer % of those who answered the question 87% 13% 0% N/A Numbers 13 2 0 7 Question 8: Is it clear what is considered 'a part of the material'? Yes/No/Don't know Yes No Don't know Didn't answer % of those who answered the question 87% 13% 0% N/A Numbers 13 2 0 7 Question 9: Does the guidance support you to understand when it is 'reasonably practicable' to include the imprint as a part of the material?

Yes/No/Don't know Yes No Don't know Didn't answer % of those who answered the question 38% 62% 0% N/A Numbers 6 10 0 6 Question 10: Does the guidance give enough information on what is considered 'directly accessible' from the material?

Yes/No/Don't know Yes No Don't know Didn't answer % of those who answered the question 50% 44% 6% N/A Numbers 8 7 1 6 Question 11: Are there any other examples we can include that would support your understanding? Yes/No/Don't know Yes No Don't know Didn't answer % of those who answered the question 81% 19% 0% N/A Numbers 13 3 0 6 Question 12: Is the guidance clear at explaining what types of republishing will require a new imprint? Yes/No/Don't know Yes No Don't know Didn't answer % of those who answered the question 71% 21% 7% N/A Numbers 10 3 1 8 Question 13: Are there any other types of examples we can include that would support your understanding?

Yes/No/Don't know Yes No Don't know Didn't answer % of those who answered the question 43% 43% 14% N/A Numbers 6 6 2 8 Question 14: Are the criteria the Commission and the police will have regard to in considering enforcement action appropriate?

Yes/No/Don't know Yes No Don't know Didn't answer % of those who answered the question 73% 13% 13% N/A Numbers 11 2 2 7 Question 15: Is the information on obtaining information and take down notice powers helpful? Yes/No/Don't know Yes No Don't know Didn't answer % of those who answered the question 67% 20% 13% N/A Numbers 10 3 2 7 Question 16: Are there any other digital platforms or types of digital material that are not included in examples that you think should be? Yes/No/Don't know Yes No Don't know Didn't answer % of those who answered the question 69% 13% 19% N/A Numbers 11 2 3 6 Question 17: Is there anything else you would like to tell us to help us draft this guidance? Yes/No/Don't know Yes No Don't know Didn't answer % of those who answered the question 69% 31% 0% N/A Numbers 9 4 0 9 Respondents We had 22 written responses. Of those who told us, these were from:

Type of respondent Number
5 Academic 4 Non-party campaigner 5 (2 of which were charities/third sector) Trade association 4 (2 of which were representing non-party campaigners/charities/third sector) Police 1 Social media company 1

Donations and loans reported by campaigners at the EU referendum | Electoral Commission Search Donations and loans reported by campaigners at the EU referendum You are in the EU referendum section Home EU referendum On this page Table: Pre-poll donations Table: Summary of pre-poll loans and credit facilities Pre-poll summary documents First published: 26 July 2019 Last updated: 29 July 2019 Overview Under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendum Act 2000 as amended by the European Union Referendum Act 2015, donations received and loans entered into by registered campaigners, and those who later become registered, must be reported on a regular basis before and after the date of the poll. Registered campaigners must complete and submit four pre-poll reports. These cover all donations received and loans entered into over £7,500 during each reporting period. Pre-poll donation and loan reports Pre-poll reports cover the regulated period from 1 February 2016 to 22 June 2016. The first pre-poll report covers the period from 1 February 2016 to 21 April 2016. The second pre-poll report covers the period from 22 April 2016 to 12 May 2016. The third pre-poll report covers the period from 13 May 2016 to 9 June 2016. The fourth and final pre-poll report covers the period from 10 June 2016 to 22 June 2016. Table: Pre-poll donations Table: Summary of pre-poll loans and credit facilities Total of loans and credit facilities of over £7,500 entered into by registered permitted participants in the reporting period 13 May 2016 to 9 June 2016. Outcome: Remain Outcome Total Referendum Facts Ltd Remain Loan £10,000 Total £10,000 Outcome: Leave Outcome Total £0 Total £0 Full details of creditors can be viewed on our database . Pre-poll summary documents View full details of donations and transactions reported in the final pre-poll reports (PDF) View full details of donations and transactions reported in the third pre-poll reports (PDF) View full details of donations and transactions reported in the second pre-poll reports (PDF) View full details of donations and transactions reported in the first pre-poll reports (PDF)

Board minutes: 13 February 2019 | Electoral Commission Search

Board minutes: 13 February 2019 You are in the Electoral Commission Board section Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Who was at the meeting Apologies and introductions Declarations of interest Minutes of the Commission Board meeting of 5 December 2018 Business Plan and Main Estimate 2019/20 Governance update Remuneration and Human Resources Committee Chief Executive's update Forward plan of board business 2018-2020 Action tracker Chair and Chief Executive's meeting and meetings in devolved legislatures First published: 7 June 2019 Last updated: 12 August 2019 Meeting overview Date: Wednesday 13 February 2019 Time: 9:30am to 1pm Location: Boothroyd Room, 3 Bunhill Row, London Date of next scheduled meeting: Wednesday 13 March Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Holmes, Chair Alasdair Morgan Alastair Ross Anna Carragher Joan Walley Rob Vincent Sarah Chambers Stephen Gilbert Sue Bruce Bob Posner, Chief Executive Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Louise Edwards, Director, Political Finance and Regulation Craig Westwood, Director, Communications and Research Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services Louise Footner, Head of Legal David Bailey, Head of Strategic Planning and Performance Petra Crees, Planning, Performance and Governance Manager David Meek, Senior Adviser, Governance Apologies and introductions Apologies from Elan Closs Stephens were noted. The chair welcomed the new Commissioners following receipt of their Royal Warrants. The board welcomed BP as interim Chief Executive following his appointment. Declarations of interest Alastair Ross is a senior consultant, Weber Shandwick Northern Ireland (remunerated), is a board member, Probation Board Northern Ireland (remunerated), and was previously consultant, Leonard Cheshire, Northern Ireland (remunerated). Joan Walley is non-executive director, Combined NHS Trust (remunerated), honorary chairman, Aldersgate Group (pro bono), honorary chairman, Burslem Regeneration Trust (pro bono), Council of Fellows member, Keele University (pro bono), and a member of the City Learning Trust (pro bono). Stephen Gilbert is Member, House of Lords (remunerated), chair of the Communications Select Committee, and principal, Stephen Gilbert Consulting (remunerated). Sarah Chambers is Trustee of Greenhouse Sports (pro bono). Minutes of the Commission Board meeting of 5 December 2018 (EC 1/19, 2/19, 3/19, 4/19) The minutes of the Commission Board meeting on 5 December 2018 were agreed after correcting an error in 6.5. The record of the Commission informal session of 5 December 2018 was noted. The draft minutes of the Audit Committee meeting on 4 December 2018 were noted. The draft minutes of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee meeting on 5 December 2018 were noted. Business Plan and Main Estimate 2019/20 (EC 5/19, 6/19) Bob Posner introduced the paper, and explained that the Commission was required to submit a Business Plan to the Speaker's Committee in support of its annual application for funding (the Main Estimate). The proposed growth represented an increase compared to the expected spend for the 2019/20 plan year, and compared to 2018/19, but the total proposed spend was within the range of the five-year plan, as some of the spending had been brought forward from future years. The board asked for more details of the impacts to support the investment sought, including what would happen if our proposed increases were not accepted, and of efficiency savings. A commissioner suggested re-evaluating the long-term areas of spending, such as policy development grants, to determine if best value had been received from such spending. Each director outlined the expected impact of increased funding in their area, and addressed how these impacts were measured. The board heard that investments in political finance and regulation would streamline some processes and reduce the burden on that team, as well as on the parties and campaigners who

used the system. The move to fully digital guidance would improve its usability, which should result in a reduction in queries. In general we had moved away from a reactive regulatory approach, towards a proactive approach, and were working more closely with political parties. The board heard about developments in our investigative approach, and our responses to government priorities. In relation to canvass reform, the proposed changes should deliver significant savings to local government and the investment would allow us to deliver our implementation functions effectively. The board considered the legislative agenda of the devolved legislatures, to which extra resource would enable us to respond appropriately. The board also heard that the new website would merge with the Your Vote Matters website, bringing benefits through overall savings in the costs of supporting two separate websites. The largest element of the budget increase in Finance and Corporate Services (FCS) was due to a large increase in contributions across the civil service pension scheme. Investment in FCS also involved bringing forward planned investment in corporate systems to drive improvements in governance and performance management to support greater impact across the Commission. The board believed that addressing the challenges of the digital agenda was key to what we were proposing, and should be emphasised in our presentation of the planned changes. The board noted that this would address voters' expectations and that there were benefits that would accrue to the voter from this work.

Action: The board endorsed the Business Plan and the request for more funds, subject to the draft Business Plan and covering letter being updated to include the information raised above before they were sent to the Speaker's Committee. Board members should be sent an information note reflecting the discussed efficiencies, value for money, and impacts.

Resolved: That the proposed Business Plan and Main Estimate, with the change noted above, be submitted to the Speaker's Committee.

Governance update (EC 7/19) David Bailey introduced the item, explained that this was part of the annual review of the Corporate Governance Framework and included some technical updates. The board would discuss more substantive updates at future meetings, such as the board effectiveness review in April.

Action: The board requested that the second-to-last sentence in G11, about the role of the Independent Adviser to the Audit Committee, be deleted.

Resolved: That the proposed changes to the Corporate Governance Framework, with the change noted above, be adopted.

Appointment of a Commissioner to a vacancy on the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee The Chair explained that the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee needed a new commissioner after the end of Bridget Prentice's term. The chair nominated Joan Walley.

Resolved: That Joan Walley be appointed as a member of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee for a term of three years.

Chief Executive's update (EC 8/19) The board received an update on the contingency plans for unscheduled electoral events. The board received an update on the registration of new political parties, and the investigation work that arose from the 2017 UK General Parliamentary Elections. The board was updated on progress in preparing for the scheduled May polls, including updated guidance to reflect legislative changes, and the planned ID trials.

The board heard about the more proactive approach that the communications team had led on in response to recent inaccurate criticisms. The board also heard about the progress with the updated website project, including the steps being taken to ensure that web content is accessible. The board was told about progress made by the equality and diversity group, including the mentoring schemes and management training that has been offered.

The board received an update on litigation. The board acknowledged with thanks the great work that Louise Footner had done for the Commission over her 13 years of

service, as this was her last meeting. Anna Carragher updated the board on the UK Government's potential further delay to holding Northern Ireland Assembly elections, despite recent lack of progress on re-establishing the devolved government. The board discussed their general position that due polls should not be delayed and endorsed that this should be communicated to the Government in relation to the Assembly elections and (as needed) be openly said by the Commission. The chair restated our position on the approach to retrospective transparency for donations in Northern Ireland. Sarah Chambers left the meeting at this point. Action: Craig Westwood to provide Commissioners with some referendum related background reading for their information. Resolved: That the paper be noted Performance and finance report quarter three 2018/19 (EC 9/19) Bob Posner introduced the paper, and summarised Commission performance in quarter three (October – December 2018) against our key performance measures and key milestones. Petra Crees highlighted the key achievements, such as preparation of guidance, the new observers' code of practice, and devolved accountability work. Responses were provided to Board queries on detailed points. Resolved: That the paper be noted. Forward plan of board business 2018-2020 (EC 11/19) Resolved: That the paper be noted. Action tracker (EC 12/19) Resolved: That the paper be noted. Chair and Chief Executive's meeting and meetings in devolved legislatures (EC 13/19) Action, That the introductory meeting between Alastair Ross and Anna Carragher and Ann Watt on 1 February be removed from the list, as it had not yet taken place. Resolved: That the paper, with amendment, be noted. Related content Register to vote All you need to register to vote is 5 minutes and your National Insurance number. Our Commissioners Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Our Executive Team Meet our Executive Team, and find out more about them

Report on the May 2021 elections in England | Electoral Commission Search Report on the May 2021 elections in England You are in the Police and Crime Commissioner elections section Home Police and Crime Commissioner elections Currently reading: of 3 - Show page contents On this page Voting at the elections Campaigning at the elections Delivering the elections Introduction This report looks at how the May 2021 elections in England were run, how voters and campaigners found taking part, and what lessons can be learned for the future. On 6 May Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) took place in England. Most local authorities had local government elections and some areas had Combined Authority Mayor and local mayoral elections. In London, people could vote for the Mayor of London and London Assembly members. Many of these polls had been postponed from 2020. This was one of the most complex sets of polls held in recent times, with the additional challenges presented by the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. Even with these challenging circumstances people had high levels of satisfaction with the process of registering to vote and voting, and were confident that they were well run. Turnout across the different elections in May 2021 was similar to comparable elections in previous years, suggesting that concerns about Covid-19 did not stop voters from taking part. Changes that were put in place by electoral administrators and the Government helped to support and reassure voters. People were confident that they could vote safely at the elections, and the overwhelming majority were able to vote using their preferred method. They adapted their activities in response to public health restrictions and were able to communicate with voters face-to-face, online and through printed material.

Transparency about who is responsible for producing campaign material online remains important for voters, and new digital imprint requirements will help voters understand who is paying to target them online at elections in the future. The experience of these polls has again highlighted concerns about the resilience and capacity of electoral administration structures in the UK, which are coupled with the challenges of delivering elections within an outdated and increasingly complex electoral law framework. We will work in partnership with the electoral community, the Government and local authorities to develop and deliver proposals to support resilient electoral services for the future.

Voting at the elections

The experience of voters at the May 2021 elections

Most people were confident that the elections were well-run, even though they took place in unprecedented and challenging circumstances. People were highly satisfied with the process of registering to vote and casting their vote.

Changes that were put in place helped to support and reassure voters. People were confident that they could vote safely at the elections, and the overwhelming majority were able to vote using their preferred method. New rules allowed people who were required to isolate to appoint a proxy to vote on their behalf as late as 5pm on polling day. This positive change helped to provide a safeguard for anyone whose circumstances changed close to the polls, and should continue to be available if people are required to self-isolate as part of the public health response to Covid-19. There was a notable increase in the proportion of ballot papers that were rejected at the Mayor of London election because people had voted for too many candidates. Good ballot paper design is essential to help voters understand how to cast their votes without making errors. Possible alternative design options for ballot papers should be tested ahead of future Mayor of London elections.

Voting at the elections

summary

This was one of the most complex sets of polls held in recent years, with the additional challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic. In March 2020, due to rising concern about the Covid-19 pandemic, the UK Government postponed the local elections that had been scheduled for May 2020, until May 2021. This meant

that on 6 May 2021 there were: Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) elections across England (except for London, Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire) Local government elections in most areas of England Combined Authority Mayor elections in some areas Local mayoral elections in some areas Mayor of London and London Assembly elections in London Some voters had multiple elections using different voting systems. In Bristol and Liverpool, for example, there were four different scheduled elections using two different voting systems. In both areas, local elections used the first past the post voting system, and PCC, Local Authority Mayoral and Combined Authority Mayoral elections used the supplementary vote system. A number of authorities also needed to hold by-elections and local referendums on the same day, adding to the complex picture for voters in those areas. During the summer and early autumn of 2020, the Electoral Commission worked with and consulted electoral administrators, political parties and governments across Great Britain to identify a shared set of high-level objectives for delivering successful elections in the current public health environment . These objectives were used to assess and test different options for supporting voters, campaigner and electoral administrators, and to identify and manage significant risks to successful delivery of the elections. We have also used them to inform our research, analysis and reporting on these polls. Returning Officers put in place new procedures in polling stations based on guidance from public health bodies and the Electoral Commission to comply with public health regulations and guidelines and to ensure that voters could be confident that they could vote safely. Voters who didn't want to vote in person at the polling station could also choose to cast their vote by post or appoint a proxy. To make sure everyone knew about the different voting options available to them and to reassure people that voting in person would be a safe experience, we – along with local authorities – took a lead role in communicating these messages before the elections. This covered a range of topics including how to find your polling station, options for casting your vote and how to get help at the polling station. Our voter registration campaign ran from 9 March until the application deadline on 19 April. Our ads directed people to the gov.uk/registertovote service and were promoted across TV, video on demand, radio, digital audio, out-of-home billboards, social media and digital display. In England, there were 852,830 applications to register during our campaign between 9 March and 19 April. A total of 18.3 million people were registered to vote in the local elections and 14.5 million in the county council elections in England. There were 32.1 million people registered for the PCC elections and 6.2 million for the Mayor of London elections. Voters continue to have positive views about how the election was run People had high levels of satisfaction with the process of registering to vote and voting, even with the challenging circumstances of these polls taking place during the Covid-19 pandemic. Our research shows that: 87% of people across England 1 and 88% of people in London were satisfied with the process of registering to vote. This is consistent with levels of satisfaction reported by people after the most recent comparable elections held in 2016 94% of people across England and 92% in London were satisfied with the process of voting. This is an increase from 2016 when satisfaction ranged from 82% at PCC elections to 86% in London more experienced voters are more confident and satisfied with registering to vote and voting than first time voters Three-quarters of people said they were confident that the elections were well-run; however, at least one in 10 were not. Although this is similar to the 2016 PCC elections in England (73%), it is lower than the proportion of people in 2016 who were confident that the local elections (82%) and elections in London (85%) were well-run. When we asked people why

they were not confident that the May 2021 elections were well run there were some differences between voters in England and London, with voters in London more likely to identify concerns about Covid-19 and dislike of the voting system used. Reasons given by voters in England who were not confident elections well-run Reasons given by voters in London who were not confident elections well-run Wasn't enough information about the candidates (29%) Do not think it was safe for people to vote at polling stations because of Covid-19 (27%) [Information] about the elections (19%) Wasn't enough information about the candidates (21%) Candidates didn't canvass/have contact with people (18%). Don't like the voting system (20%) Did not trust that the votes were counted accurately (17%), Wasn't enough information about the elections (20%) Did not think it was safe for people to vote at polling stations because of Covid-19 (16%) Did not think there was enough information about alternatives to voting at a polling station (16%) We also saw that views about whether electoral fraud is a problem, and about the safety of voting, were consistent with other recent elections. Just over a quarter of people across England (28%) see electoral fraud as a problem, rising to 34% in London. This compares to the 26% of people across the UK who saw it as a problem after the 2019 UK general election. Voters continue to have positive views about how the election was run: breakdown The pandemic does not appear to have stopped people from turning out to vote Although the level of turnout at these elections was low, this is consistent with previous elections. In 2021 there was a slight increase in turnout for the local and county council elections compared to the last comparable polls. This suggests that Covid-19 restrictions or concerns did not stop people turning out to vote. Turnout at the PCC elections was also higher than in 2016. However, this is likely to be at least partly due to the combination of different types of elections in 2021. The postponement of some elections from the previous year, meant that more areas in England held local elections alongside their PCC elections compared with 2016. Local election turnout tends to be higher than standalone PCC election turnout. In London, turnout was lower than at the previous Mayoral and Assembly elections in 2016. However, we have no evidence that Covid-19 was a significant factor in that. Turnout in May 2021 compared to most recent comparable election County Council 2017 35.0% 2021 36.6% Local 2017 33.8% 2021 35.6% PCC (England only) 2017 26.0% 2021 33.0% London Mayoral 2017 46.1% 2021 42.9% People were most likely to tell us that they didn't vote because of a lack of information or lacking trust in politicians, rather than because of Covid-19. This further illustrates that the pandemic does not appear to have played a role in whether someone voted or not. England London There was not enough information/media coverage (10%) That they don't trust politicians (11%) Lack of information (10%) Lack of information (10%) That they don't trust politicians (10%) That voting takes too long (10%) That voting takes too long (9%) Forgetting/missing the deadline (8%) Illness (9%) 2 Illness (7%) You should be able to vote over a few days (6%). You should be able to vote over a few days (7%). People were confident that they could vote using their preferred method Although public health restrictions were in place at the time of the elections, people had a choice of how they cast their vote. They could choose to vote in person, by post or by proxy (asking someone to do so on their behalf). Most people who voted were able to use their preferred method: 93% of people who voted across England and 91% of those who voted in London said they were able to use their preferred method of voting first time voters and younger people aged 18 to 34 were less likely to say they were able to use their preferred method 6% of voters across England and 8% in London said that they were not able to vote using their preferred method. Among this group, around a quarter said this was due to reasons

related to Covid-19 (such as being worried about going to the polling stations and having to self-isolate), rising to around a third amongst those who generally prefer to vote in polling stations. Voters in polling stations were confident that they were safe places to vote. Across England and London, a number of different measures were in place to make sure that voting and working at polling stations was as safe as possible during the pandemic. To support and advise on what changes should be made to voting in polling stations, we worked with public health experts across the UK to provide guidance for electoral administrators. We also produced resources for local authorities designed to help: reassure the public that voting in person would be a safe experience, highlight the other ways to vote, for those vulnerable or concerned encourage voters to start thinking about their preferred voting option early. Voters in polling stations were confident that they were safe places to vote: breakdown

Polling stations were set up and managed to minimise public health risks	How safe voters at polling stations felt with the safety provisions in place.
London	Very safe 56%
Across England	64% Fairly safe 39%
33% Fairly unsafe 3%	2% Very unsafe 1%
0.5% Don't know 1%	0.23% 77% of polling station voters said that they had enough information about safety measures to cast their vote safely across England, first time voters were slightly less likely to feel safe than people who had experience of voting before.

Half of voters across England who said they felt unsafe said there was nothing more that could have been done to make a difference. Almost all (99%) polling station voters said that they noticed at least one of the various safety provisions that had been put in place. People were most likely to notice Hand sanitiser provided on exit and entry Cleaning of pencils (where single use pencils were not used) Staff wearing face coverings Cleaning of booths A one-way system with floor markings Polling station staff also felt that polling stations were safe places to work (96% of staff responding to our survey agreed), and that the safety of voters was adequately provided for by the changes introduced (95%). The new safety measures meant that voting took longer for some people. The combination of polls, where voters had more than one ballot paper to complete, may have also contributed to this: just under four in 10 people who regularly vote in polling stations thought that voting took longer than usual as a result of Covid-19 safety provisions. Half thought that despite the measures, voting took them about the same amount of time as usual. Some voters had to queue outside their polling station before they went to vote. Electoral administrators and polling station staff told us that in most instances people were prepared to queue, and understood that it was because of the additional public safety measures that had been put in place: There were short queues at polling stations all day, staff were more concerned about this than the electors were. "The one in, one out policy in such a small cabin, coupled with three ballot papers all with different criteria which were too complicated for a lot of voters and had to be explained, meant that there were long queues all day. People who didn't want to go to a polling station had options for voting remotely. People who don't want to vote in person at the polling station can apply to cast their vote by post or appoint a proxy. If their situation changes close to an election due to work or disability, people can appoint an emergency proxy up to 5pm on polling day to vote on their behalf. The law was changed ahead of these elections so that anyone who had to self-isolate close to polling day because they had tested positive for Covid-19, or had been in close contact to someone who had tested positive, could also appoint a proxy. Remote voting information Most people knew what other options they had if they didn't want to vote

in a polling station Most people found it easy to find information about how they could cast their vote either in person at a polling station or remotely by post or proxy. Our research showed that: three-quarters of people said that they found it easy to get information about the different methods of voting that they could choose from similar proportions of people who normally vote in polling stations said they found it easy to get information about different methods of voting (76% for elections across England and 80% for London) around a third of first time postal voters told us they chose to vote by post as they didn't want to go to the polling station because of Covid-19 related safety concerns, or because it was convenient a further 30% of first time postal voters across England and 27% in London said they were prompted by information from their local authority informing them they could register for a postal vote. A fifth across England said they saw similar advertising from us, rising to a quarter in London electoral administrators from over three-quarters of local authorities said that they did some form of campaign encouraging residents to apply to vote by post Most people who didn't want to vote in a polling station found it easy to apply to vote by post or appoint a proxy There was a small increase in the proportion of voters choosing to vote by post at these elections, compared with the most recent comparable polls. Percentage of electorate that chose to vote by post County Council 2017 16% 2021 19% Local 2016 17% 2021 21% PCC (England only) 2016 16% 2021 18% London Mayoral 2016 15% 2021 19% Our public opinion research found that there were many new postal voters at these polls with: just under a third of people who voted by post across England said that it was the first time they had voted by post nearly half of people who voted by post in London said they were first time postal voters Most people who voted by post for the first time found it easy to understand how to apply: almost all of these first time postal voters (92%) said they found it easy to understand what to do to complete and return their postal vote application People applying for a proxy also said they found it easy to understand what to do: nearly three-quarters of people who voted by proxy said it was the first time they had done so almost three-quarters of proxy voters across England said they found it easy to understand how to appoint a proxy, although a quarter said they found it difficult to understand what they had to do to complete the application People who needed to isolate because of Covid-19 could appoint a proxy to vote on their behalf The changes to the provision for emergency proxies meant that anyone who had tested positive for Covid-19 or had to self-isolate could still vote in these elections. Across all the elections more than 2,800 voters were able to appoint a proxy to vote on their behalf using these new rules. There was no increase in the overall level of proxy voting despite the new proxy provisions: for the local elections 0.01% of the electorate appointed an emergency proxy to vote on their behalf (including 2,313 voters at the PCC elections, 1,069 county council election voters, and 1,611 voters at other the local elections) for the London Mayoral election 0.02% of the electorate (1,160) people appointed an emergency proxy this was comparable to the percentage of electors (0.02%, or 8,518 people) in England who appointed an emergency proxy at the 2019 UK general election Administrators recognised the benefits of the changes to emergency proxy rules for voters. This change was not announced until late February 2021, and only came into effect six weeks before polling day on 24 March 2021. Some administrators found it difficult to update their plans to reflect the change in time to promote this option to voters. The extension of the emergency proxy provisions in relation to Covid and the updated application form were issued at a late stage which was problematic for planning. Most people who voted by post were confident they knew how to vote without making a

mistake Almost everyone who voted by post said they knew how to complete and return their postal vote. Our research showed that: more than nine out of ten people said it was easy to complete and return their postal vote, compared to 6% across England and 8% in London saying it was difficult first-time voters, people who had voted by post for the first time and those aged 18-34 were more likely to say it was difficult to understand what was needed to complete and return their postal vote compared to other voters the most common reasons for saying it was difficult across England were not being clear which envelope to return the completed ballot(s) in (39%); not being clear what information to provide (30%); and receiving more ballot papers than expected (29%) Despite more people voting by post for the first time we did not see an increase in the number rejected compared to previous elections. Data from electoral administrators shows: 2% of returned postal votes were rejected at the County Council and London mayoral elections 3% of returned postal votes were rejected for the local and PCC elections The most common reasons for postal vote rejection were where personal identifiers (signature/date of birth) didn't not match, which was similar to the last time each of these elections took place. Rejected postal votes by election County Council 2017 2% 2021 2% Local 2016 4% 2021 3% PCC (England only) 2016 4% 2021 3% London Mayoral 2016 4% 2021 2% % of postal votes rejected because of mismatched personal identifiers County Council 2017 52% 2021 48% Local 2016 50% 2021 46% PCC (England only) 2016 47% 2021 44% London Mayoral 2016 66% 2021 63%

Recommendation 1 Recommendation 1: Retain an emergency proxy option for isolating voters Legislation introduced for these elections to allow emergency proxy votes for anyone who tested positive for Covid-19 or had to self-isolate helped to provide a safeguard for anyone whose circumstances changed close to the polls and ensure that they were not prevented from participating. Although the provision was not widely relied upon in practice, it was nevertheless an important safeguard to make sure that no one lost their ability to vote. We recommend that the Government should ensure this option continues to be available if people are required to self-isolate as part of the public health response to Covid-19. Voters in some areas found it harder to complete their ballot papers Around nine in 10 voters said that it was easy to fill in their ballot paper, but some people said that they found it difficult. People who told us it was difficult said it was due to: unclear instructions the ballot paper being complex/confusing confusion caused by voting in multiple elections too many candidates A quarter of people who had difficulties filling in their ballot paper in areas holding both local government and PCC elections said it was confusing that the elections used different voting systems. A third of people voting in London said that they found the two voting systems confusing. The percentage of rejected ballot papers at those elections using the supplementary vote (SV) electoral system in May 2021 was higher than at those elections using first past the post: 0.8% for the local government elections compared to 2.7% for the PCC and 4.3% for Mayor of London. This is consistent with the experience at previous polls. Voters in some areas found it harder to complete their ballot papers: breakdown Rejection rates for Mayor of London ballot papers were higher The number of rejected ballot papers for the Mayor of London election was notably higher than it had been at previous elections or at other elections held using SV in May 2021: in total, 4.3% of first preference votes were rejected, compared with 1.9% in 2016 most of these were rejected because voters had voted for too many candidates (over 87,000 ballot papers, representing 76.4% of all rejected first preference votes) at the PCC elections which also use SV in England in May 2021 the first preference rejection rate was 2.9 % The most significant difference for the May 2021 Mayor of London election was that a new ballot paper

design was used, compared with previous London elections and other elections using the SV system. There was a record number of 20 candidates for the Mayor of London election. The arrangements for electronic counting meant they were required to be a certain size and format to be able to be scanned correctly. This meant that the length of the paper could not be extended to include all the candidates, so for the first time it was split to present candidates across two columns rather than one continuous list.

Recommendation 2

Recommendation 2: Ensure new ballot paper designs are tested before they need to be used by voters Good ballot paper design is essential to help voters understand how to cast their votes without making errors. User testing with the public can help to identify potential usability problems and improve the design of ballot papers. We recommend that the Greater London Returning Officer should test possible alternative design options for ballot papers for future Mayor of London elections, including two-column designs. We stand ready to provide technical support to this work, drawing on our extensive experience of user testing ballot papers and other voter-facing materials.

Campaigning at the elections

The experience of campaigning at the May 2021 elections Changing public health regulations and restrictions during spring 2021 caused uncertainty for campaigners, who had to adapt their plans as official guidance changed before and during the campaign period. Campaigners were able to communicate with voters face-to-face, online and through printed material, even though restrictions remained in place during the campaign. However, people in areas with PCC elections found it less easy to get information about the role of the elected office or the candidates or parties standing for election. Transparency about who is responsible for producing campaign material online remains important for voters, and new digital imprint requirements will help voters understand who is paying to target them online at elections in future. Changes to reduce the number of subscribers required for candidates to be nominated for these elections were well-received by many candidates and electoral administrators. The Government should review whether the range of current subscriber requirements are still proportionate for different elected offices.

overview

There was a record 20 candidates for the Mayor of London election, and 249 candidates stood for election to the London Assembly. This was more than at the last elections in 2016, when there were 12 and 205 candidates respectively. A total of 145 candidates contested the PCC elections in England, less than in 2016 when there were 169 candidates. Campaigners communicated with voters about a complex range of elections held in May 2021, including polls that had been postponed from the previous year. They also adapted their activities in response to public health restrictions because of the pandemic. Some candidates and agents get support from local or regional groups of their political party. This year, these local political party associations supported campaigns across a bigger range of elections than usual. This added a further layer of complexity as associations helped manage a wider range of campaign messages, spending limits and rules than they would normally do in one campaign period. All of this meant it was not straightforward for campaigners to plan and deliver their activities at these elections. The changing public health context caused uncertainty for campaigners Some changes to legislation were made close to the start of the election period but most candidates considered they were well-informed about them The Government made several changes to the law to support those campaigning in the elections: In December 2020, legislation was changed to make inflation-based increases to local council candidate spending limits. The Government argued that the pandemic could mean more emphasis on postal and digital campaigning and that this added to the case for limits to be increased in March 2021, legislation was changed

to reduce the number of signatures required to nominate candidates, in order to reduce the travel and contact involved in completing nomination forms Given the changing context of the pandemic, it was understandably more difficult for the Government to ensure changes to legislation were in place at least six months before campaigners or electoral administrators needed to comply with them. Most candidates who responded to our post-election survey said they felt well-informed about legislative changes before these elections. However, some changes were made very close to when they would affect campaigners, and this added to uncertainty and risk for candidates and electoral administrators. The changes to nominations were announced in mid-February and came into effect on 10 and 11 March, which was less than a month before the deadline for nominations. Some prospective candidates had already started using old nomination forms before the change to the rules, which meant their forms were out of date. After the changes took effect, some electoral administrators told us that they found it challenging to quickly update their plans and prepare nomination packs which reflected the new rules. The main issue on the nomination process was the lateness in the change of legislation, but the change was welcome and did speed up the processing." "The main challenge was the change to the number of people could nominate a candidate. This came incredibly late and meant that we couldn't produce the nomination papers as early as we normally would, it meant that we had to change our candidate and agent training fairly late in the day and the guidance came fairly late. The discussions on what legislative changes there should be came too late and hampered the running of the election. Official guidance on campaigning activities changed during the campaign period People across England were placed under new lockdown restrictions from early January 2021. This meant that campaigners had to adapt their plans for activities to reach voters. They had to comply with general public health restrictions, and the UK Government also published specific guidance on campaigning for elections in England at the end of February: The Government said its guidance meant that up to 8 March, door-to-door campaigning and leafleting by individual campaigners were not allowed under the lockdown regulations, and leafleting was only allowed to be carried out through existing commercial delivery services From 8 March, the Government changed the lockdown regulations to support door to door campaigning activity by people who were campaigning for a specific electoral outcome. This included anyone who had been asked by a candidate, party or campaign organiser to participate. Hustings and public meetings could only take place remotely From 29 March six people, or two households, were able to meet outside to plan or deliver campaign activities, but campaigners were told not to enter voters' homes In April, campaigning was also briefly suspended as a mark of respect following the death of HRH, Duke of Edinburgh. When we conducted in-depth interviews with candidates who stood in the PCC and London elections, the majority of participants said they did not feel well-informed about these changes. While many candidates noted that changes to the restrictions were reasonable and necessary, this added to the complexity and the frustration that they reported. I think it was very difficult to know what was a regulation and what was advice. I don't think they were at all clear. And it didn't help that we were getting, what I certainly perceived as, mixed messages from different parts of the government about what you could and couldn't do [...] In terms of delivering literature. Whether we could put leaflets out with volunteers or whether we had to use paid delivers or whether we couldn't do anything. That was an absolute mess trying to work out what we were meant to do and what we were not meant to do. Some candidates also expressed concerns about the role of the governing party in deciding what campaign activity should be allowed ahead of

the elections, although others considered that the Government would need to have this role during a pandemic. Our guidance to candidates, parties, and non-party campaigners about the regulated period included advice on the spending and donation rules, as well as the reporting rules , following the postponement of the May 2020 elections due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Our guidance also reflected legislative changes made as a result of Covid-19. We also asked parties and candidates for their feedback to better understand their questions and concerns about how spending could be affected by the pandemic, and updated the support on our website in response to this. s were able to engage with voters while following public health regulations and guidance s used a range of digital, print and in-person campaigning to communicate with voters Despite the initial restrictions on in-person campaign activities in early 2021, voters continued to receive information about candidates and parties at the elections from a range of different sources, and in a variety of formats. The most common ways voters reported seeing information on parties and candidates are shown in the following table: England London on a leaflet or flyer, either from a candidate/political party (40%) or another source (23%). On a leaflet or flyer from a candidate/political party (33%) In newspapers (14%) The household booklet about the London Assembly and Mayor of London elections (25%) On their local council website (13%) Newspapers (24%), News websites (10%) Leaflets or flyers from another source (22%) Social media (10%) on a news website (19%) Word of mouth (10%) Younger age groups and first time voters were more likely than older age groups and repeat voters to have seen information about the elections on social media, and less likely to have seen information on a leaflet or flyer from a candidate/political party or another source. Candidates told us that digital campaigning was particularly important during early 2021, when in-person activities were less manageable and they were unsure how voters would react to door-knocking and face-to-face campaigning. PCC candidates were most likely to have said that they used digital campaigning, where the geographical size of police areas made it impractical to deliver leaflets to every voter. However, other candidates told us that relying on social media to campaign restricted opportunities to get their views across to voters. They felt that social media didn't have the same reach as leaflets and that the audience for posts was often limited to those who were already engaged with local politics or who were their supporters. Some candidates said they were not able to campaign effectively Candidates generally agreed that it was clear what campaigning was and was not allowed in line with public health restrictions, although some candidates did not think it was clear. We also saw differences between PCC and London candidates as to whether they felt able to get their views across to voters. Candidates standing in the London elections were more likely to agree that they could get their views across compared to PCC candidates, and the majority of those who responded to our survey said they were satisfied the booklet was an effective way to communicate with voters. In interviews, some PCC candidates said that: the PCC elections were not well publicised and they struggled to reach all voters in the police area, and this meant that some voters didn't know that the elections were happening there should be a London-style household candidate booklet delivered to all households, as well as the existing choosemypcc voter information website Our research with voters also found that people in areas with PCC elections were less likely than people in London to say that they found it easy to get information about the role of the elected office. Almost six in ten people (57%) said it was easy to get information on the role of a PCC, compared to almost eight in ten of people (77%) who said it was easy to get information on the role of Mayor of London. People in PCC areas were also the least likely to say they found it easy to

get information on the candidates or parties standing. People in London were most likely to say this information was easy to find and that they had enough information to make an informed decision. How many people found it easy to get information and had enough information to make an informed decision Found it easy to find information on the role Found it easy to get information about parties / candidates Had enough information to make an informed decision PCC 57% 59% 49% London Mayor 77% 77% 62% London Assembly n/a 74% 62% Local govt. (excl. mayoral) n/a 72% 52% Local govt. (mayoral) n/a 73% 54% Transparency about who is responsible for producing campaign material online remains important for voters The Government has proposed legislation that would require most campaigners to include information to identify themselves as part of their online campaign material in future. This change has also been recommended in our policy reports and by parliamentary select committees. A new digital imprint requirement will help voters understand who is paying to target them online at elections and referendums in future. Our research after the election confirmed that people continue to value transparency about who is responsible for political campaign activity online at elections with: seven in 10 people across England and in London (70% and 72% respectively) agree that it is important for them to know who has produced the political information they see online. This was consistent with our findings after the 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election six in 10 people across England and in London (62% and 60% respectively) said they would trust digital campaigning material more if they knew who produced it Younger voters appear to be more confident that they can scrutinise the trustworthiness of political information they find online with: six in 10 18-34 year olds across England and London (57% and 59% respectively) agreed that information available online about politics is trustworthy, compared with just under half of 35-54 year-olds (43% and 49%) and around a third of people aged over 55 (37% and 34%) The differences in trust across England and London were also reflected in people's confidence in finding the sources of political information online with: similar proportions of 18-34 year olds (60% and 58% respectively) agreed that they can find out who has produced the political information they see online, compared with 35-54 year-olds (44% and 54%) and people aged over 55 (33% and 29%) Processes for submitting nominations prioritised access and safety Changes to nomination processes to minimise public health risks were welcomed and candidates agreed the process was well-run While completed nomination forms were still required to be submitted by hand, electoral administrators made changes to their processes to minimise risks to candidates, agents and their staff: candidate and agent briefings were often held using video conferencing tools informal checking of nomination forms was more frequently offered using email arrangements for safe hand delivery of nomination forms ensuring social distancing measures were in place These new measures were generally welcomed and feedback we received from candidates was that the nomination processes were well-run. Both candidates and electoral administrators noted in their feedback that many of these practical measures should be retained for future elections, regardless of the public health situation. We devised a system where candidates emailed their nomination form to us for an informal check. This worked really well as they were only allowed to deliver them when they were correct, we will definitely be using this system going forward. However, some candidates thought that further improvements could still be made to make the process more accessible, such as by accepting nomination papers electronically, or by allowing electronic signatures to be used on nomination forms. Candidates and administrators had mixed views about changes to subscriber requirements To minimise travel and contact involved in completing

nomination forms, the Government legislated to significantly reduce the number of subscribers required by candidates to stand in the elections. For example, candidates standing to be Mayor of London needed to collect 66 signatures from registered voters instead of 330, while PCC candidates needed to collect the equivalent of two signatures per local authority in the police area instead of 100 in total. Overall, candidates and their agents said that the reduction in the number of subscribers needed made it easier for them to stand as a candidate. Some candidates in London said they would not have been able to stand in the elections without the reduction:

Yes if I had been required to get 100 signatures it would have been a significant challenge under Covid. We faced some challenges with securing nomination signatures in the context of COVID, and whilst it helped to have to get fewer signatures this year it didn't mitigate the difficulties entirely. The process for checking and delivering nomination papers with London Elects was very efficient and well run. Some candidates did however express caution about the precedent the changes may set and keeping the reduced requirement for future elections, because they said that subscribers demonstrate that candidates have a certain level of support before standing: I think it should go back to having more people to be honest, there's a reason why you have a hundred when you've got 1.4 million in your electorate.

Electoral administrators told us that the reduction in subscribers helped them process nominations more efficiently, and they also recognised the benefits for campaigners. However, some expressed reservations about the possibility of retaining the new number of subscribers for future elections: The reduction in the number of subscribers certainly helped me in dealing with nominations and also the candidates who were only required to get a reduced number depending on the election. The nominations process was fine, and the reduction in the number of signatories for principal council elections helped us as well as candidates. That said, I would not favour it permanently as the requirement for ten signatures does in my view strike a balance in the sense of demonstrating a (minimal) level of support for candidature.

Recommendations

Recommendation 3: Review subscriber requirements for nominating candidates

The requirement to collect signatures from subscribers ensures that candidates have some level of local support, and is intended to deter frivolous candidates. The number of subscribers required should be proportionate to the degree of risk relating to different types of elections and elected offices. We recommend that the Government should review whether the range of current subscriber requirements are proportionate for different elected offices, taking into account evidence from this year's polls and conclusions from our Standing for Election review in 2015.

Regulators strengthened collaboration during the election period. For the May 2021 elections, we worked with regulator partners to run an online public awareness campaign and encourage voters to find more information from a new section of our website. The campaign aimed to encourage people to think more carefully about political campaign adverts they see online, and it provided information about which regulators or other organisations they could contact if they had concerns. Evaluation of the campaign showed that over 7.6 million people saw our adverts on websites and social media platforms. The number of people who clicked through to find more information from the adverts was encouraging, and provides a good foundation for further awareness-raising activity at future elections.

A group of representatives from 3 met regularly throughout the election period to share issues. This initiative built on a regulators' forum that we have co-ordinated since 2016. Regular discussions during the campaign period allowed the regulators to develop a greater understanding of their roles in helping to support public confidence in elections. We

will continue to work with other regulators during election periods to strengthen this type of collaboration for future polls. Delivering the elections The experience of electoral administration at the May 2021 elections These polls were well-run, despite the complex range of elections taking place and the significant challenges presented by the pandemic. Returning Officers and electoral administrators faced considerable challenges securing polling station venues, and finding and training staff to work on polling day. Also, although many electoral administrators were satisfied with the support provided by their suppliers, some experienced significant problems. The particular circumstances that led to the development and introduction of legislative changes in February and March 2021 were unprecedented and unavoidable, but the timing of these changes close to the start of the election period created additional challenges and risks for the delivery of the elections. The experience of these polls has again highlighted concerns about the resilience and capacity of electoral administration structures in the UK, which are coupled with the challenges of delivering elections within an outdated and increasingly complex electoral law framework. We will work in partnership with the electoral community, Government and local authorities to develop and deliver proposals to support resilient electoral services for future elections. Delivering the elections introduction Our evidence shows that the May 2021 polls were well-run. Voters and campaigners reported high levels of satisfaction and confidence, and there were only a small number of issues that had an impact on their experience in some areas. Our research shows: 94% of people across England and 92% in London were satisfied with the process of voting three-quarters of people said they were confident that the elections were well-run nine in 10 candidates were confident the elections were well run For Returning Officers and electoral administrators, however, these elections presented unique and difficult challenges, and their considerable effort and commitment enabled the polls to be delivered successfully. The capacity and resilience of electoral administration teams and suppliers are significant risks for future polls The challenging circumstances of these elections highlighted the limited capacity of some local electoral services teams Electoral administrators' ability to plan and deliver their work for these elections was impacted by Covid-19 restrictions in the months leading up to them: 95% said that the Covid-19 restrictions had made their job more difficult, with the same proportion saying that their workload increased because of the Covid-19 restrictions during the elections 63% said that they were concerned for their own health because of Covid-19 Some electoral administrators told us that they weren't able to rely on support from other parts of their local authorities in the way they would normally, and that they had seen a significant impact on the capacity and wellbeing of their teams: Project management was extremely difficult in these circumstances. The usual assistance from others in my council was limited due to them not being in the office or being under similar pressure in their area of the business. Our organisation just did not have the capacity to work in the way we usually do, and more work was left to a stretched elections team." "This election almost failed. Without the extended overtime hours worked by core staff it would have failed. The local authority did not have resources available during a pandemic. Every task took longer and we had to fight all the way to make it happen. Administrators also highlighted the difficulty they had finding suitable venues to use as polling stations. Covid-19 restrictions meant it was harder to contact people to make bookings, and in some venues there were issues with the facilities as they had been shut down for long periods in advance due to lockdowns. Confirming polling station bookings was very difficult as venues had been closed for a year. Many venues were

unsure if opening for an election was legal under lockdown restrictions. Many venues were reluctant to allow us to use social distancing floor and wall signs." "We had to change 40 polling station venues due to Covid, and supply things like water to others – where the premises had been shut and only reopened for our purposes and water supplies were not back on." "We did have issue with polling stations as a result of COVID. We had a number of buildings closed, or staff running sites being furloughed, so unable to make contact to arrange. This resulted overall in 29 new stations being used this year. Complex combinations of polls increased the risk to the successful delivery of the polls in some areas. The elections that were postponed from May 2020 meant that there were complex combinations of polls taking place in some parts of England. In many areas of England PCC elections were held at the same time as elections to County, Borough or District Councils, and parish council elections were also held in some areas. Four different types of elections were held on the same day in Liverpool, Bristol, Cambridge and Hartlepool, including mayoral elections and a Parliamentary by-election. Electoral administrators told us that the scale and extent of combination increased the risks to the successful delivery of the elections: The complexity of the combination of the polls led to errors on ballot papers which would just not occur under usual election conditions. Although these were rectified and did not lead to any greater issues the combination of polls did mean that there was a greater risk of error." "The combination of city and county elections caused the biggest challenge, particularly in relation to postal vote openings and the verification process. We had to design new procedures and systems, which took significant time and while they worked, the human element in implementing them did cause some problems. We were able to resolve them, but it was very labour intensive. In some cases, in delivering the particular combination of polls in May 2021, errors arose which meant that voters didn't receive the service they should be able to expect. For example, one local authority 4 issued postal vote packs without the political party emblems that should have been shown alongside the candidate names on the ballot paper for the local election, an error which has led to them being assessed as not fully meeting the Commission's performance standards. While recognising the pressures faced by Returning Officers and their teams, errors like these directly impact on voters' experience and can affect people's confidence in well-run elections. Finding staff to work on polling day was a key challenge for Returning Officers and electoral administrators. Finding staff to work in polling stations was a challenge for most administrators, although support was provided by the Cabinet Office and other organisations to help address this issue. Many local authorities employed extra staff as 'Covid-19 marshals', to help support social distancing in any queues and to make sure people knew about the restrictions inside polling stations. This meant more staff were needed than usual and our research suggests that a quarter of polling station staff at the May polls had not worked in a polling station before. Additionally: 83% of administrators responding to our survey said that they had difficulties recruiting polling station staff over a quarter of gaps were filled by members of the civil service (29%), while other areas relied on staff from the council, students, the national citizen service and private companies. Staffing was the biggest issue – it was a nightmare. Many of our usual staff simply declined right from the start. This meant finding new staff and having to appoint a couple of POs who had never worked in a polling station before." "Staffing polling stations is always difficult and the older age profile of many of our staff meant that many were not prepared to work this year. Over a third of the staff we eventually used had not done polling duty previously, which was an uncomfortably high

level. Reliance on key suppliers is a critical risk to the delivery of well-run elections. Electoral administrators continue to be dependent on a small marketplace of expert suppliers of electoral management software and specialist election print services. Administrators also faced new challenges identifying reliable suppliers for personal protective equipment. Although many electoral administrators were satisfied with the support provided by their suppliers, others told us that they experienced significant problems: Suppliers had changed their own production techniques because of Covid and there were some issues arising as a result of this. It was also clear that there was overall pressure on the system as a result of the number of complex combination polls across the country." "It was apparent that our print supplier, who had previously had an exemplary record in terms of customer service and accuracy, was under strain and we encountered some quite serious problems which was no doubt caused by the coincidence of the complexity of the polls and the pandemic. We are aware that there were some instances of delays to supplier delivery of materials, with local authorities not receiving the ballot papers they expected and needed on time, and some not being delivered until very close to polling day. As well as introducing additional risk by reducing the time available to deal with any issues with delivered material before the opening of polls, these delays meant that administrators needed to invest significant time and energy in managing these issues at a crucial time in the election timetable, inevitably taking their focus away from other parts of the process. The impact on electors was minimal in that polling stations ultimately had the ballot papers they needed in time on this occasion, but the timing of the despatch of postal vote packs to voters was affected in some areas.

recommendation 4

Recommendation 4: Build resilience and capacity for electoral administration

We have repeatedly highlighted concerns about the resilience and capacity of electoral administration structures in the UK, which are coupled with the challenges of delivering elections within an outdated and increasingly complex electoral law framework. We will work in partnership with the electoral community, the Government and local authorities to develop and deliver proposals to support resilient electoral services for the future. Through the Electoral Advisory and Coordination Board, which includes senior Returning Officers, electoral administration professional bodies and government officials, we will establish a programme of activity to gather evidence about the challenges facing electoral administration teams and identify solutions to address them.

Late confirmation of legislation and interventions made it harder for Returning Officers to plan in some areas. On 8 February 2021 the Minister for the Constitution confirmed the Government's formal position that these elections would go ahead in May. The Cabinet Office delivery plan for the elections was published in early February and included £31 million funding to support Returning Officers to secure venues and staffing and run Covid-19 secure elections. It also highlighted the Government's plans to legislate to extend the availability of proxy voting for people who were required to self-isolate and to simplify nomination requirements for candidates at the May polls. In addition to our usual core suite of guidance and resources to support administrators with the delivery of elections, we worked with public health bodies, the UK Government and the electoral community to develop and publish supplementary guidance to support the delivery of Covid-19 safe elections. The guidance was issued on a rolling basis from September 2020 and was informed by both the requirements of administrators and the latest expert advice from public health bodies. It was kept under review throughout the election period, and was updated to reflect the legislative changes to the nominations and proxy voting process as a result of Covid-19. Many electoral administrators said that they found

that uncertainty about the elections made it difficult for them to plan effectively. Just under nine in 10 administrators (88%) who responded to our survey after the elections said that they felt the initial uncertainty about whether the elections would go ahead made it difficult for them to plan. Waiting for legislation to be laid/enacted and then for corresponding guidance/documentation delayed plans and procedures being put in place to deal with those changes. This caused additional stress and uncertainty and added to an already heavy workload. The particular circumstances that led to the development and introduction of changes to electoral law ahead of the May 2021 polls were unprecedented and unavoidable. However, the timing of these changes created additional challenges and risks for the delivery of the elections. It affected when Electoral Commission guidance and resources to support the delivery of the polls, such as amended nomination forms, could be provided, and when electoral administrators could implement them. Issues with the use of schools as polling stations. Communications about the use of schools as polling stations in England caused significant problems for some electoral administrators. Administrators also highlighted significant problems caused by a letter from the Department of Education to Returning Officers and Head Teachers across England on 11 February 2021, asking for schools not to be used as polling stations at the May polls where possible. As a result, some schools went on to change their agreements or withdraw their consent to the use of schools as polling stations. This was just at the point that election teams were finalising polling station locations and printing poll cards, leaving some Returning Officers under pressure to find available and suitable venues at short notice. Administrators told us that this took their focus away from other parts of the process, impacting on their preparations for the polls more generally and further challenging capacity and resilience. The timing and content of the Minister's letter in relation to the use of schools as polling stations was very unhelpful as our polling stations were already booked and we were already working on producing poll cards. We did manage to move away from two schools but this created a lot of extra work for the team who were already under pressure. It would be helpful for such matters to be decided and communicated earlier in future."

"The DFE letter to schools in February was extremely unhelpful and we need clarity and consistency from Government about the use of schools as every year it gets more difficult. It is also frustrating that the process for designating venues in accordance with legislation requiring statutory polling district reviews can be undermined and overruled by government interventions such as these. Election teams updated count processes to support social distancing while maintaining transparency. In providing their feedback on the elections, electoral administrators told us about the challenges they faced in setting up and managing counts: 46% of administrators responding to our survey said they had difficulties recruiting count staff for the May 2021 elections. 42% either strongly agreed or agreed that the Covid-19 restrictions made it difficult for candidates and agents to observe at the count. We had to move count venues due to our current venue being used as a Vaccination Centre – that came with challenges to ensure the new venue met all the requirements. We had to operate two count venues to enable social distancing which made the count organisation massively more complicated and added to our workloads. Having to use less count staff in order to facilitate social distancing made the count process take much longer than normal. Given the need to comply with regulations and guidelines about social distancing that were in place in May 2021, Returning Officers and electoral administrators needed to adapt their plans and processes to maintain transparency at count venues. Changes included introducing Perspex screens in front

of count tables, agreeing with agents to limit the number of people attending the count, or providing video feeds of the count and adjudication processes for agents and observers to view away from the count tables. The adjudication of doubtful ballot papers was challenging due to the COVID restrictions. It was difficult to observe social distancing between the Returning Officer and agents whilst still allowing agents to see the ballot papers. Most candidates said they were confident that the elections were well run and content with the efficiency of the count and verification processes. However, some candidates were less satisfied with their ability to observe and scrutinise the count. We became aware of issues at three counts where errors were made which has led us to conclude that the Returning Officers 5 did not fully meet our performance standards: An error was discovered during the count for a directly-elected mayoral election. When counting second preference votes it was discovered that the votes of two candidates with the same surname and first initial had been reported the wrong way round at the end of the first count. This meant one candidate was recorded as having fewer votes than they had actually received and vice versa. The issue was identified prior to the result declaration, and it did not impact the final result. The second error was that the votes for two candidates in one ward were mixed up. This meant one candidate was recorded as receiving more votes than they had actually received and another less. The issue had no impact on the overall result. The third error also involved the mix up of results for two candidates, however in this case the error resulted in the incorrect candidate being declared as the winner. There has been a successful election petition in this case. While recognising the pressures faced by Returning Officers and their teams and the challenging circumstance of the combination of elections and changes to count arrangements due to Covid-19, it is important that voters, candidates and political parties can have confidence in the accuracy of election counting processes and results. Supporting Evidence Supporting Evidence England Public Opinion 2021 Full Tables Local and County Election administrative data May 2021 Police and Crime Commissioners electoral administrative data May 2021 London Mayoral Election Public Opinion Tables May 2021 London Mayoral Electoral Administrative data 1. In this report data presented for England excludes London but covers all other areas in England with PCC, local or mayoral elections ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. Although 'illness' was given as a reason by 9% of non-voters we cannot be sure what proportion of this related to Covid-19. Illness or medical reasons is also often given as a reason for not voting (6% of non-voters after the 2019 UK general election gave this reason). ■ Back to content at footnote 2 3. The regulator sub-group was attended by the Advertising Standards Authority, Electoral Commission, Equality and Human Rights Commission, Information Commissioner's Office, Ofcom, UK Statistics Authority and Office for Statistics Regulation. ■ Back to content at footnote 3 4. Gosport Council ■ Back to content at footnote 4 5. Durham County Council, South Gloucestershire Council and Oxfordshire County Council ■ Back to content at footnote 5 Related content Report on the May 2021 elections in Wales Read our report about how the 2021 elections in Wales were run Report on the May 2022 local elections in England Read our report on the May 2022 local elections in England Report on the May 2022 elections in Wales Read our report on the May 2022 elections in Wales. Report on the May 2022 Scottish council elections Read our report on the May 2022 Scottish council elections.

2021/22 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 On this page Summary Performance analysis Looking ahead Governance First published: 1 August 2022 Last updated: 1 August 2022 Summary Summary The Electoral Commission became formally accountable to the Scottish Parliament for our activities to support the delivery of devolved elections in Scotland. In this section we set out our key activities and achievements in this last year and look ahead to some of the challenges for 2021/22. The key focus for the Commission in Scotland in the last year has been on supporting the delivery of both the May 2021 Scottish Parliament election and the May 2022 council elections. Performance analysis We continued to work closely with the Electoral Management Board for Scotland to provide advice, support and challenge to Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and their teams delivering elections across Scotland. In January 2022, we delivered a briefing session for 184 electoral administrators in Scotland focused on supporting them to deliver a well-run poll in their area. This was followed by a seminar with Police Scotland to support those officers acting as single points of contact (or SPOCs) for electoral officials at Scottish polls. Our performance standards help us to understand how Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers are performing in relation to delivering well run polls and electoral registration services, and enable us to target our support effectively. In the past year, we have met with all 32 Returning Officers and 15 Electoral Registration Officers in Scotland. The Scottish Parliament election in 2021 was the first election in the UK requiring imprints on digital campaign material and we worked closely with candidates, parties and campaigners ahead of the election to support them to comply with the new rules. Our experiences in supporting compliance with these rules helped to inform our advice to governments on the introduction of imprint rules at other elections. In February, the Scottish Parliament passed legislation to set our advice function for candidates and agents at Scottish council elections in statute. Although we had undertaken this function on a non-statutory basis since 2001, this is an important step and provides certainty for candidates and agents. In September 2021 we published our report on the administration of the Scottish Parliament election. This included delivering our new duty to report on the steps that Returning Officers took to support disabled electors to participate. We drew on research with voters, electoral administrators and polling station staff to inform our assessment. We have used our findings to develop new materials for supporting disabled people to know what they should be able expect at the polling station and also to develop a session focussed on accessibility at our pre-council elections briefing for Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers, which included input from disabled people. We have continued to provide expert advice to the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament throughout the last year. This has included giving evidence to the Scottish Parliament's Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee on our assessment of how well-run the 2021 Scottish Parliament election was, and also on the implications for Scotland arising from the UK Government's Elections Bill. We also advised the Scottish Government on the UK Elections Bill and were consulted on seven pieces of secondary legislation for the 2022 council elections and a further bill to extend candidacy rights to foreign nationals. Throughout the last year we have continued to expand our partnership and learning work, particular in relation to supporting newly enfranchised voters to engage in the council elections. We have published a new range of democratic education resources to enhance our support for the teaching of

political literacy in Scottish classrooms and in January, we ran a week of 'Welcome to Your Vote' activity targeted at 16 and 17 year olds in partnership with education and youth work organisations across Scotland. We have also expanded our work to reach 'New Scots' with information about registering and voting in Scottish elections including the production of new resources for community organisations. We also worked with the Scottish Prison Service to distribute a guide and promotional materials for staff working with eligible prisoners. Looking ahead The next scheduled devolved election in Scotland will be the Scottish Parliament election in 2026. In the interim, we will work with the electoral community and wider Scottish society to ensure that we continue to strengthen capacity and expertise in delivering elections which can retain high levels of public confidence, accessibility and engagement. In the next year we will build on the work we have done so far to support young people to engage in Scottish democracy by widening the range of education resources we produce and by expanding or programme of work to support teacher confidence in political literacy activity in schools. This will include ensuring that our education materials continue to be informed by the voices of young people and by running workshops with teachers. We will also be developing our work with community groups to provide tailored resources to support their work with groups experiencing barriers to democratic engagement. We will continue to support parties and campaigners to comply with the law, while ensuring that political finance is transparent. Working in partnership with the Electoral Management Board, we will support and challenge Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers to meet the challenges of delivering well-run electoral services and to build resilience and capacity. This includes adapting to the increasingly diverse approach to the delivery of devolved and reserved elections and the changing needs of voters. The Scottish Government has indicated that it will be taking forward further electoral reform in Scotland in the coming year and we will continue to provide expert advice to the Government and Parliament to ensure that any reforms can be delivered effectively. Commitment to EDI The Electoral Commission serves a diverse democracy and is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion. Our programme of partnership work in Scotland has continued to develop resources to support democratic inclusion for those who experience particular barriers to voting. This has included providing election material in a variety of languages, including British Sign Language, and in a number of formats including Easy read, large print, audio and braille. We have also worked with partner organisations in Scotland to develop appropriate materials for Gypsy/Travellers, care experienced young people, domestic abuse survivors and people experiencing homelessness. Using resources During 2021/22, we utilised £2.59m of resources from the £2.62m available. This was predominately for staffing £1.48m (56%) and Campaigns £1.05m (40%); the remaining amounts represent the Scottish Parliament contribution to common activities and corporate overheads. The underspend is due to savings in design and print of guidance materials, savings on the Scotland core team and depreciation.

Governance While the Electoral Commission has regularly reported to both the Scottish and Welsh Parliaments in relation to our role at devolved elections, formal accountability (through legislation) has previously only been to the UK Parliament, specifically to the Speaker's Committee of the House of Commons. From 1 April 2021 the Commission became formally accountable to, and received funding from, the Scottish Parliament for our functions in relation to devolved Scottish elections and referendums. The Commission reports to the Scottish Parliament Corporate Body (SPCB) for accountability purposes. We continue to report to other committees for our work in different policy areas. In September 2021, we submitted our second estimate to the

SPCB for the funding of our work in the year 2022/23. The process for developing the estimate followed the 'Statement of Funding Principles' which we agreed in early 2021 with both the Scottish and UK Parliaments along with the Senedd. We also consulted the SPCB on our draft Corporate Plan for 2022/23 to 2026/27. Navigation Previous Next Wales (devolved) annual report Focus on Northern Ireland

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Voter identification pilots May 2018 voter identification pilot schemes First
published: 24 July 2019 Last updated: 24 July 2019 The May 2018 pilot schemes Voters
at polling stations in Great Britain do not need to show any identification before
they are allowed to vote. In 2014 we recommended that voters in Great Britain should
be required to show a form of identification before they vote at polling stations in
future. Voters in Northern Ireland have been required to show photographic
identification at polling stations since elections in 2003. We have found little
evidence to suggest that the scheme applied in Northern Ireland presents difficulties
for people in terms of accessibility. In 2016, the UK Government said that it would
ask local councils to run pilot schemes in May 2018 to test different ways of
identifying voters at polling stations . It said that pilot schemes would help to see
what the impact would be for voters and electoral administrators, and would help them
to decide how to design a scheme that could be used for UK Parliament elections and
local elections in England. Five local councils were selected to run voter
identification pilot schemes at their elections on Thursday 3 May 2018: Bromley
Gosport Swindon Watford Woking Each pilot scheme had specific rules for how they
should work which were agreed between the UK Government and the local Returning
Officer. Voters in some areas had to show identification with their photo on; in
other areas, voters could show identification without their photo. The Returning
Officer for each area ran the processes for the schemes. The Cabinet Office, which is
part of the UK Government, oversaw all of the pilot schemes in May 2018. The law says
that we have to independently evaluate each of the schemes within three months of the
elections . This report This report sets out what we found when we looked at the
results of the May 2018 pilot schemes. It also looks beyond these pilot schemes at
the implications for the future, and what we think the UK Government should do next.
To do this, we have looked at the impact of the pilot schemes on voters and on the
administration of the elections. We have also looked at the impact of the pilot
schemes on public confidence and on the security of the elections. We collected
information from different sources to help us reach these findings, including: A
survey asking people what they thought of the schemes A survey of people who worked
in polling stations Data about what identification people showed when they voted, and
the number of people who were turned away because they didn't have the right
identification Inviting feedback from organisations that represent different groups
of voters As well as this overall report, we have also written individual evaluations
of each of the specific pilot schemes. These reports have looked at specific
questions that the law says we have to consider which are: the turnout of voters was
higher than it would have been if the scheme had not applied voters found the
procedures provided for their assistance by the scheme easy to use the procedures
provided for by the scheme led to any increase in personation or other electoral
offences or in any other malpractice in connection with elections those procedures
led to any increase in expenditure, or to any savings, by the authority We have also
considered the UK Government's own objectives for the voter identification pilot
schemes: That proposed 'ID at polling stations' policy measures are proportional to
the policy objective of reducing the opportunity for electoral fraud That the
proposed 'ID at polling stations' policy measures enhance public confidence in the
security of the electoral system What we're not able to say in this report What we're
not able to say in this report We can evaluate these schemes against the statutory
criteria and the Government's objectives using the data and information we have

gathered. However, we are not able to draw definitive conclusions from these pilots on how a voter identification requirement would operate in the future across Great Britain, or at polls with higher levels of turnout. This is partly because the available evidence is drawn from only five local authority areas which are not representative of many other areas of Great Britain. There would be different challenges in areas with different demographics. These pilots also took place at local elections where turnout is significantly lower than other polls, such as UK Parliamentary general elections. Many people who do not normally vote at local elections will vote at a general election. These people also tend to have different demographic backgrounds to those who normally vote at local elections. Further pilot schemes at local elections are unlikely to provide more evidence about the impact of an identification requirement on voters and electoral administration at higher turnout elections. Returning Officers cannot run pilot schemes at UK Parliament elections, so the UK Government may need to look for other sources of evidence about the impact at elections where turnout is likely to be higher. This could include qualitative research with irregular voters and the less politically engaged to test likely reactions to an identification requirement. Related content Register to vote All you need to register to vote is 5 minutes and your National Insurance number. Our Commissioners Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run

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2024/25 Overview of what we publish and when We set out what our goals and priorities
are, and how we're going to achieve them, in our corporate plan and business plans.
Our corporate plan lasts for five years, and our business plan lasts for one year.
The plans follow the same timing as our financial year. This means they start in
April, and end in March. Equality and diversity is important to us and what we do. We
set out what we do now, and what we want to achieve in the future. Related content
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.2 Principles of declaring interests

.1 Transparent - this is of prime importance for the Electoral Commission. Integrity and public confidence in the UK's democratic process, and transparency in party funding, are among the aims and objectives of the Electoral Commission, and fairness, impartiality and transparency our declared organisational values. It is therefore especially important for the Commission to observe the highest standards of probity in its own practices.

.2 Comprehensive : the policy covers the three main areas of interest:

- External interests
- Financial interests
- Political interests

Commissioners should never use their official position to gain financial, material, political or any other benefit for themselves, their family, or their friends, in a way which might reasonably be seen to compromise the Commission's position or an individual's personal judgement or integrity. This includes financial, political, and other interests.

.3 Proactive - we declare and publish all such interests proactively in the case of Commissioners, the Executive Team, and the Heads of Commission offices in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. We ensure all other staff are aware of the need to declare these interests, internally at least, and are ready to publish when asked.

.4 What this means for you

- a) Be aware of the policy and of your obligation : Commissioners must be aware of the requirement to declare interests, and to update these as and when they change;
- b) Openness : a useful test of the need for an interest to be declared is whether members of the public knowing the facts of the situation might reasonably think it should be. If in doubt, err on the side of openness.
- c) Seek advice : if still in doubt about any aspect of the policy, or in the event of queries in relation to a particular case, consult the Chair, Chief Executive or Secretary to the Commission Board at the earliest opportunity;
- d) Complete the form: Commissioners, the Executive Team, and the Heads of Commission offices in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland should complete the Declaration of Interests Form at the earliest opportunity on their appointment and within 28 days of receiving it, and sign and return it to the Secretary to the Commission Board. Update your declaration within a month of any change in circumstances.
- e) Gifts and Hospitality : remember to declare any gifts or hospitality (received or offered) in any capacity for which you have recorded an interest (also appended to the Code of Conduct)
- f) Monitoring and publication : the Secretariat will maintain the Register of Interests which is reviewed on a quarterly basis by the Audit and Risk Committee and published on the Commission's website.

4

Commissioners Completion of Annual Declaration of Interests 4.1 The Commission publishes on its website the register of interests for Commissioners. 4.2 A declaration form is given to all the above on appointment to complete and return within 28 days. There is then a periodic reminder (approximately quarterly) to update the declaration, or you may update it as and when changes occur. Declarations of Interest before or during meetings 4.3 At the beginning of every Commission Board or Committee meeting there will be an agenda item inviting those present to declare any interest they may have in any item on the agenda. It is the responsibility of the individual concerned to consider the matter in advance bearing in mind the business on the agenda, and identify and declare such interests. If in doubt they can consult the Chair, Chief Executive, General Counsel, or Secretary to the Commission Board. Where an Electoral Commissioner has declared a significant and relevant interest in a particular matter, he or she should not take part in any discussion or decision on that matter. The Chair of the meeting may ask an Electoral Commissioner who has declared an interest to withdraw from the room during consideration of the matter. Related Party Transactions 4.4 Generally accepted accounting practice (and specifically Financial Reporting Standard 8) 1 requires Commissioners and the Independent Chair of the Audit Committee to report Related Party Transactions, whereby material transactions with related parties must be disclosed in financial statements. "Related parties" in FRS 8 includes close members of the family of an individual, who are defined for the purposes of the standard as those family members, or members of the same household, who may be expected to influence, or be influenced by, that person in their dealings with the reporting entity (ie the Electoral Commission). 4.5 Electoral Commissioners should so far as practicable be aware of and take steps to avoid conflicts of interest arising between their work in any outside appointments and their work with the Commission during tenure as an Electoral Commissioner. 5 Completing the form Section 1 – External interests 5.1 This section includes all interests, paid or unpaid, such as external appointments (any job, not your role at the Electoral Commission), any consultancy, trusteeships, directorships, advisory or voluntary roles. 5.2 Current or previous year – your first declaration will be made on appointment, and 'previous year' should be taken to include the 12 months prior to your first declaration. Thereafter you will be expected to notify the Commission of any alterations to your declaration of interests (additions, deletions, or changes) as they happen. You will also be sent annual reminders in about April of each year. In that case, previous year becomes the year prior to your last annual declaration, so that if you are sent a declaration in April 2022, the previous year will be April 2020-March 2021. Section 2 – Financial Interests (a) Your own financial interests - In this section of the form you are required to list any of the interests from section 1 for which you are currently or have previously been paid or otherwise benefited financially during the period in question. (b) Family or associate financial interests – here you are asked to declare any financial connection that you or your close family members have that may be connected to the work of the Commission, or where there is a likelihood that they may become connected to the work of the Commission. Section 3 – Local Authority membership or employment 5.3 This section asks you to declare whether during the last five years you have been a contractor, an employee or a member of a local authority. Section 4 – Political interests 5.4 Section 3 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, (the Act), as amended by the Political Parties and Elections Act 2009, prohibits Electoral Commissioners from being or having been a member, an office holder or employee of a registered party, or a named donor in the register of donations or a

candidate at a relevant election, during the previous five years. The four additional Commissioners nominated by political parties in accordance with the provisions of the Act may be members of a registered party, but the other restrictions apply. The term office-holder includes for these purposes, for example appointment as chair of a party selection committee, or a position as a Whip in the House of Lords. If you are approached to accept an appointment, and are not completely sure it would not fall into the category of office-holder, you should consult the Chair, the Chief Executive, General Counsel, or the Secretary to the Commission Board before accepting.

5.5 With the advent of the Transparency of Lobbying, Non-party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014 (Transparency Act), it is necessary for Commissioners also to consider their support (donations and in kind) to charitable or other third party campaign organisations. This is a complicated area and important area as a breach of the donation limit would result in the Commissioner ceasing to hold office. A separate guidance note on the implications of this for Commissioners declaring interests is included at Appendix 1A (or extended Appendix 1).

5.6 All Commissioners should at all times conduct themselves in a way that does not give rise to any questions as to the political impartiality of the Commission.

5.7 Those Commissioners who are not nominated by a political party should, in order to avoid any perception of bias, record any close family members or associates who are closely involved with a political party.

Notes and Definitions:

Close family member

5.8 For these purposes a close family member is defined as a spouse, parent (and partner of parent), parents-in-law, grandparent (and partner of grandparent), uncle or aunt, brother or sister (including step- or half-brother or sister), child (including step-child, adoptive or foster child, sons- and daughters-in-law, or children's partners), and anyone with whom you share your home.

5.9 In practice family relationships vary greatly from one family to another (parents and children and siblings may be estranged from one another, whereas nephews, cousins, aunts may be very close and occupy positions of influence). The onus is on you only to report those family relationships which

- you are close enough to know about – you are not expected to track down all extant relatives to check whether they might be involved in anything that needs to be declared. If they are distant enough for you not to know, they are not close enough to warrant a declaration
- are important or influential enough (even though not immediate family) for any reason and involved in a business or consultancy or activity which should be declared. (See also close associate below).

If in doubt, consider whether a member of the public, knowing the facts, might reasonably think that the matter in question should be declared. If still in doubt, consult the Chair or Chief Executive.

Close associate

5.10 This is defined as someone who is not a family member but with whom you have frequent or significant contact, or shared interests - a connection of which you are aware, which if not disclosed might give rise to a perception of a conflict of interests. This might be someone with whom you play sport, regularly socialise, do business, or have a close association with through a group or club. If in doubt, consult the Chair or Chief Executive.

5.11 If you have external interests which you have declared, remember that you are also required to declare gifts and hospitality received or offered in those roles, not just those directly relating to your role at the Commission.

5.12 Your completed form must be sent to the Secretary to the Commission Board. Examples of interests If a close family member or close associate is:

- an Electoral Registration Officer (or Returning Officer or Chief Executive) for a local authority subject to Commission performance standards, or where there has been an election petition
- is employed by a branch of the civil service which is connected

with elections work • involved in an electoral reform pressure group, or any group or organisation which is campaigning for a change in arrangements for political funding, electoral registration, or voting • part of a consultancy or company which may be involved in tendering for work with the Commission (research, IT, accountancy, facilities, media etc.) •involved through work or interests in contact with

politicians, political parties, or lobbying organisations nationally, regionally or locally Interests – Frequently Asked Questions 1. Q: I want to canvass in a forthcoming election/in support of a campaign – can I without compromising my neutrality as a Commissioner, or the neutrality of the Commission? A: No. If you were to canvass either in support of a particular party, or a cause or campaign which might be identified with a particular party or parties, you might call into question the neutrality of the Electoral Commission as the Government's elections watchdog. 2.

Q: (for nominated Commissioners) I have been approached to stand as a candidate for my party – can I stand? A: No. While you are able to maintain membership of your political party following your appointment as a Commissioner, public political activity is likely to call into question the political neutrality of the Commission.

While it has been determined that the point of disqualification for anyone accepting a candidacy would be submission of their name to the Returning Officer, it is strongly recommended that any Commissioner wanting to take this step should consider the extent to which it would bring them into conflict with the perception of neutrality. 3. Q: I donate to a charity/I donate to a charity through a trust/I am a trustee of a charity – see FAQs on the Lobbying Act in Appendix 1A Reviewed and approved 22 March 2023 1. standards adopted by the International Accounting

Standards Board which set standards, and provide interpretations and a framework for use in accounting and reporting. These standards were put in place from 2001 and are used in the public sector. ■ Back to content at footnote 1 Related content Register to vote All you need to register to vote is 5 minutes and your National Insurance number. Our Commissioners Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run

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Results and turnout at the May 2017 Combined Authority Mayor elections in England | Electoral Commission Search Results and turnout at the May 2017 Combined Authority Mayor elections in England You are in the Mayoral elections section Home Mayoral elections On this page Introduction Electorate Postal voting Proxies and waivers First published: 1 October 2017 Last updated: 28 October 2019 Download You can download our: full dataset as an XLS full dataset as a CSV (zip file) Introduction The Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016 gave UK Government Ministers powers to devolve powers and responsibilities to new combined authorities. Following devolution agreements with existing local authorities in six areas of England, the first Combined Authority Mayor (CAM) elections took place in 37 local authorities across the six combined authority areas on 4 May 2017: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Greater Manchester Liverpool City Tees Valley West Midlands West of England This report provides analysis on participation in and the administration of the first CAM elections in England. For this, data was collected from Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers. This compromised the Form K 'Statement as to Postal Ballot Papers' and an additional data form, specified by the Commission, which included data relating to electoral registration, turnout, absent voting and rejected ballots. 1 Electorate 6.8 million Turnout Ballot box: 27.8% (1.9 million votes) Postal vote: 59.0% In-person: 22.6% Rejected ballots Ballots at the first count: 1.3% Ballots at the second count: 8.1% 2 Postal votes: 2.7% Proxies appointed 4,993 (0.1% of the electorate) 179 emergency proxies Electorate The CAM elections gave 6.8 million registered electors the opportunity to vote. 62,580 electors were added to the electoral register during the weeks leading up to the election. As a proportion of the electorate, this was highest in West of England, where additions represented 1.2% of the electorate, and lowest in Tees Valley where additions represented 0.7% of the electorate. A total of 72,160 applications to register were received in the weeks leading up to the election. More than a quarter (26.8%) of these were recorded as duplicates. At a local authority level, duplicates were reportedly as high as 36.4% in South Gloucestershire. 3 In addition, 125,485 people tried to register after the registration deadline. This is likely to be attributable to the announcement of the general election, which came after the deadline for registration for the CAM elections. Based on data from 29 local authorities, 347 individuals were recorded as trying to vote on election day itself despite not being registered. 4 Votes were cast at 4,611 polling stations as well as by post. Turnout The measure of turnout referred to in this report, 'ballot box turnout', includes all valid votes cast ('valid vote turnout') and votes rejected at the count. Total turnout refers to valid votes cast, votes rejected at the count, and those rejected at the postal ballot verification stage before the count. At 27.8%, ballot box turnout was higher than at the first elections for Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) in November 2012 (15.1%), and at a similar level as the second PCC elections in May 2016 (27.3%). 5 Turnout was significantly lower than turnout at the 2017 (35.1%) and Welsh (42.0%), and Scottish (46.9%) local elections, which were all held on the same day. Table 3.1: Turnout Combined authority Ballots at the count Turnout (%) Cambridgeshire & Peterborough (C&P) 204,302 33.6% Greater Manchester 573,543 28.9% Liverpool City 291,449 26.1% Tees Valley 103,767 21.3% West Midlands 523,201 26.7% West of England 199,519 29.7% Total 1.9m 27.8% Combined Authority Mayors were elected with the Supplementary Vote (SV) electoral system. This, also used at elections for the Mayor of London, directly-elected mayors for local authorities in England, and for Police and Crime Commissioners in England and Wales, gives voters the opportunity to vote for both their first and second preference

candidates, (although they do not have to cast a second preference vote). Table 3.3 shows that first preference rejection rate at CAM elections was higher than at all 2017 elections that use the First Past the Post system (local elections in England and Wales and UK Parliamentary general election) but lower than at the Scottish councils elections which uses Single Transferrable Vote (STV) Table 3.2: 2017 elections – Rejected ballots Election Voting system Rejected ballots (%) UK Parliamentary general election FPTP 0.2% local government elections 0.3% Welsh local government elections 0.5% Northern Ireland Assembly election STV 1.1% Combined Authority Mayoral elections SV 1.3% Scottish council elections STV 2.0% Ballot paper rejection rate at the first round of the 2017 CAM elections was 1.3%, ranging from 1% in Liverpool to 1.9% in C&P. The proportion of rejected ballots at the second count was significantly higher at 8.1%. Rejection rate at the second count is calculated by dividing the number of rejected ballots – including those not marked at second preference - by the total number of valid first preference votes cast for the eliminated candidates. Table 3.3: Ballots rejected at the first and second counts Combined authority Ballots rejected at the first count % of ballots at the count Ballots rejected at the second count % of ballots rejected at the second count C&P 3,924 1.9% 7,419 9.6% Greater Manchester 6,808 1.2% - - Liverpool City 2,789 1.0% - - Tees Valley 1,667 1.6% 2,942 13.4% West Midlands 7,268 1.4% 7,515 8.4% West of England 2,572 1.3% 5,437 5.5% Total 25,028 1.3% 23,313 8.1% The winning candidate in Greater Manchester and Liverpool City received more than 50% of the valid first preference votes and were therefore declared elected without requiring second preference votes to be counted. The majority of all first preference rejections (57.5%) were due to voting for more than one first preference candidate. At the second count, the vast majority (99.8%) were rejected due to being either unmarked or their being uncertainty as to the second preference vote. 6 Table 3.4: Reasons for rejected ballots Reason for rejection First count Second count No official mark 0.1% 0.0% Voting for more than one preference 57.5% 0.2% Mark by which the voter could be identified 1.0% 31.7% Unmarked or uncertain 7 41.4% 99.8% Postal voting The total number of postal votes issued for these elections was one million, 14.9% of those with an election in their authority. This compares with 15.9% in the local elections across England. Of the one million postal votes issued, 600,707 covering envelopes were turned making postal vote turnout 59.0%. 8 This compares with an ‘in person’ turnout of 22.6%. Postal vote turnout was lower than at the England local elections where postal vote turnout was 68.7%. Postal vote rejection Postal voting packs (PV) require voters to provide their signature and date of birth (DOB). These identifiers are then matched against those provided at the time of application. If the signature or date of birth is missing or does not match, the postal vote is rejected and is not included at the count. Since 2014, Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) have been required to notify electors if their postal vote has been rejected and give the reason(s) for rejection. They can also request the elector to provide an up-to-date signature. Of the 600,707 covering envelopes returned, 2.7% were rejected. 9 Of the postal votes rejected, almost two-thirds (59.2%) were rejected due to mismatch of signature and/or date of birth. Table 4.1: Reasons for postal vote rejection C&P Greater Manchester Liverpool City Tees Valley West Midlands West of England Total Missing information Signature 5.0% 8.8% 13.5% 5.9% 6.1% 6.4% 8.2% Date of birth 5.6% 3.5% 5.1% 3.0% 6.0% 4.2% 4.4% Both 9.5% 9.6% 10.5% 22.0% 12.9% 10.0% 11.0% Mismatched information Signature 23.5% 27.4% 16.0% 18.2% 19.9% 21.8% 22.6% Date of birth 20.9% 33.0% 26.5% 24.6% 26.6% 17.2% 27.5% Both 4.5% 8.5% 7.9% 15.4% 9.8% 4.9% 8.3% Proxies and waivers The number of electors who appointed a proxy was 4,993 (0.07% of the

electorate). This is similar to the level of proxies appointed for the May 2016 PCC elections (0.08%) but lower than the equivalent at the England local elections held on the same day (0.12%). The number of emergency proxies issued was 179. A concession granted under the terms of the EAA 2006 was that postal electors who either had a disability, or were illiterate, or were unable to furnish a consistent signature could apply for a waiver to use their date of birth as their sole identifier. 6,007 waivers were granted for this election, representing 0.6% of postal electors.

Appendices Appendix A All information contained within this report and the accompanying dataset is based on data received from Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers. There remain inconsistencies in the ways in which local authorities record and report information. We continue to notice differences in the coding of information by different electoral management software. For example, customers of one electoral management software supplier consistently report a higher proportion of 'mismatching' than others. Inconsistencies relating to the reasons for and total number of postal vote rejections on the Form K appear to result from the potential for differences in interpretation and treatment. For example, in the treatment of the numbers of covering envelopes and ballot papers returned, covering envelopes may be sent in without the A envelope or postal voting statement enclosed, while the missing document may or may not be sent in a separate covering envelope later, or multiple ballots may be returned in one envelope. When local authorities are contacted about such anomalies they are often unable to provide revised figures or clarify why the data were coded in that way. In practice, we use a calculation of field B6 minus field C18 as a surrogate for the total number of postal votes rejected regardless of whether or not it is the same as recorded in field C19. Appendix B Form K: STATEMENT AS TO POSTAL BALLOT PAPERS REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE ACTS LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTION Ward: Date of Poll: A. Issue of postal ballot papers 1. Total number of postal ballot papers issued under regulation 71 2. Total number of postal ballot papers issued under regulation 77 (spoilt and returned for cancellation), regulation 78 (lost or not received) and regulation 78A (cancelled due to change of address) 3. Total number of postal ballot papers cancelled under regulation 86A (where the first ballot paper was cancelled and retrieved) 4. Total number of postal ballot papers issued (1 to 3) 5. Total number of ballot papers cancelled under regulation 78A B (1). Receipt of and replacement postal ballot papers 6. Number of covering envelopes received by the Returning Officer or at a polling station before the close of poll (excluding any undelivered or returned under regulation 77(1) (spoilt), regulation 78(1) (lost) and regulation 86A (cancelled ballot papers)) 7. Number of covering envelopes received by the returning officer after the close of poll, excluding any returned as undelivered 8. Number of postal ballot papers returned spoilt for cancellation in time for another ballot paper to be issued 9. Number of postal ballot papers identified as lost or not received in time for another ballot paper to be issued 10. Number of ballot papers cancelled and retrieved in time for another ballot paper to be issued 11. Number of postal ballot papers returned as spoilt too late for another ballot paper to be issued 12. Number of covering envelopes returned as undelivered (up to the 25th day after the date of poll) 13. Number of covering envelopes not received by the Returning Officer (by the 25th day after the date of poll) 14. Total numbers 6 to 13 (this should be the same as that in 4 above) B (2). Receipt of postal ballot papers – Personal Identifiers 15. Number of covering envelopes set aside for the verification of personal identifiers on postal voting statements 16. Number of postal voting statements subject to verification procedure rejected as not completed (excluding prior cancellations) 17. Number of

postal voting statements rejected following verification procedures due to the personal identifiers on the postal voting statement not matching those in the personal identifiers record (excluding prior cancellations) C. Count of postal ballot papers 18. Number of ballot papers returned by postal voters which were included in the count of ballot papers 19. Number of cases in which a covering envelope or its contents were marked "Rejected" (cancellations under regulations 77, 78, 78A and 86A are not rejections and should be included in items 2, 3, 5, 8, 9 and 10 above) Date: Signed: Returning Officer Authority: Additional data form 1) How many proxies were appointed for these elections? 2) How many emergency proxies were appointed for these elections? 3) How many waivers were granted for these elections? 4) How many postal votes were rejected for: a) Want of a signature b) Want of a date of birth c) Want of both d) Mismatched signature e) Mismatched DoB f) Both mismatched g) Ballot paper unreturned h) Postal voting statement unreturned 5) What was the total number of polling stations used? 6) How many covering envelopes were returned on polling day before 10pm? 7) How many covering envelopes were returned on the day after polling day before 10pm? 8) Total number of new electors added to the register after the publication of the revised register (01.12.16) up to and including those added via the first interim notice of alteration (04.04.17) 9) Total number of new electors added to the register via the second and final notices of alteration (26.04.17). 10) Total number of applications to register received after the registration deadline.

11) Total number of applications received between the last date for applications to be included on the December 2016 revised register (22.11.16) and the last date for applications for the first interim notice of alteration (24.03.17) 12) Total number of duplicate applications received between the last date for applications to be included on the December 2016 revised register (22.11.16) and the registration deadline for the first interim notice of alteration (24.03.17) 13) Total number of applications received between the day after the last date for applications for the first interim notice of alteration (25.03.17) and last date for applications for the final notice of alteration (13.04.17) 14) Total number of duplicate applications received between the day after the last date for applications for the first notice of alteration (25.03.17) and last date for applications for the final notice of alteration (13.04.17) 15) How many people tried to vote on polling day and were found not to be registered? 1. Tameside were unable to supply the Form K Statement as to Postal Ballot Papers or additional data form. Figures relating to postal voting and fields on the additional data form exclude Tameside. ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. Calculated as proportion of total possible second preference votes i.e. total number of valid first preference votes for eliminated candidates. ■ Back to content at footnote 2 3. Three local authorities – Rochdale, Tameside, and Bath and North East Somerset – were not able to provide data on duplicate applications ■ Back to content at footnote 3 4. Eight local authorities were not able to provide information on the number of individuals trying to vote on election day despite not being registered. ■ Back to content at footnote 4 5. PCC elections are based on the same election rules as CAM elections. At both elections, electors voted for a newly created elected position using the Single Transferable vote. ■ Back to content at footnote 5 6. Figures for 'unmarked' and 'void for uncertain' ballot papers were reported together by some Combined Authority Returning Officers (CAROs). ■ Back to content at footnote 6 7. Ibid. ■ Back to content at footnote 7 8. There is no statutory field that captures the number of postal voting statements received by the Returning Officer. In practice, we use field B6, 'Number of covering envelopes received by the Returning Officer or at a polling station before the close of poll'

as a surrogate but we know that, as mentioned, electors can return multiple postal ballots in one envelope or return envelopes without any ballots ■ Back to content at footnote 8 9. As figures reported for field C19 were inconsistent, we used a calculation of field B6 minus field C18 as a surrogate for the total number of postal votes rejected. This approach is consistent with previous years. ■ Back to content at footnote 9 Related content Report: Voting in 2017 Read our report about voting at the general election in 2017 Past elections and referendums Read our reports and view data about past elections and referendums Types of elections about the types of elections in the UK. Mayoral elections

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Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Apologies and introductions The future of voting – what we know of elections Providing services that meet the needs of all users The future of voting First published: 18 July 2019

Last updated: 18 July 2019 Overview Date: 24 October 2018 Time: 9:30am to 2pm

Location: Boothroyd Room, 3 Bunhill Row, London Date of next scheduled meeting: 5 December Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Holmes (JEH), Chair Sue Bruce (SB) Anna Carragher (AC) Sarah Chambers (SC) Elan Closs Stephens (ECS) Alasdair Morgan (AM) Rob Vincent (RV) Claire Bassett (CB) Ailsa Irvine (AI) Bob Posner (BP) Craig Westwood (CW) Kieran Rix (KR) Nancy Bruseker (NB) Tom Hawthorn (TH) Phil Thompson (PT) Petra Crees (PC) Marie Chadwick (MC) – RNIB Peter Stanyon (PS) – AEA Paul Woodrow (PW) – London Ambulance Service Apologies and introductions None. The future of voting – what we know AI introduced the discussion, contextualising it with the 2016 strategic review. She noted that while a great deal of work had been, and continued to be, done on registration, it was now time to start looking in more detail at options for reforming the voting process and improving its accessibility.

2.2 PT provided a brief summary of the research done to date including that public opinion about the voting process was generally positive. 2.3 KK introduced research on the barriers disabled people and other vulnerable groups could face in relation to voting. This outlined the problems they faced prior to the election, when voting by post and on the day itself in the polling station. 2.4 PT spoke about voter perceptions about changing the voting process, noting that there was no strong demand for online or advance voting (including weekends). He did highlight that some 18-24 year olds who said they did not vote also said they were more likely to do so if they were able to do so online. Moreover, the prospect of advanced and weekend voting led to more 25-34 year olds reporting that they would be more likely to vote. of elections MC talked about the needs and issues around voting for partially sighted and blind people. She offered quantitative and qualitative data, which had fed into the Cabinet Office Call for Evidence on the accessibility of elections. The headline messages were that registration had improved in recent years, but there were still many issues which persisted. Visually impaired voters still found the voting experience frustrating. Tools that should help were inadequate or inadequately deployed, for example the tactile voting device (TVD) or the accessibility kit for postal voting. She noted that the blind and partially sighted people RNIB had surveyed were very interested in changes to the voting system that would make it easier for them to vote independently and secretly. These included adaptations to forms, polling cards and telephone or online voting. She also suggested that performance standards would be a good way for the Commission to intervene positively with specific accessibility measures. Meanwhile the numbers of voters with visual impairments were increasing as the general population continued to age. A discussion followed, with JEH noting that more data was needed to establish numbers of visually impaired people who were deterred from voting. It was noted that the TVD was an unhelpful tool but the current legislation was too restrictive to allow for much innovation. Commissioners also noted that the demographic shift and an aging population meant that the number of people with sight loss was increasing. PS presented his organisation's perspective on accessibility of elections, also noting that the changes in registration had made major improvements to their work. He did highlight that further improvements were possible, such as links between electoral services and data on voters who were registered disabled. Currently voters had to let

EROs and ROs know about their needs proactively, rather than EROs and ROs being able to plan based on data given to them. He commented that, while the situation had improved a great deal in many ways, and training was now good, there were still pockets of bad practice, and sometimes staff were too nervous to use their initiative. He also noted that the inability to challenge an election result unless someone had been wrongly elected made it difficult to address access issues that might have prevented someone from voting. Other challenges included the reduction in available accessible buildings – particularly schools – as polling stations. Legislation existed to require the use of rooms in schools but it was difficult to enforce. He summarised the issue as being about balancing accessibility, security and resources. JEH asked how enthusiastic electoral administrators were for innovation in the voting process. PS responded that there was support for some additional forms of absentee voting, to provide more options for both those with accessibility issues and other constituents, such as overseas and service voters. ECS suggested that issues related to accessibility failures could be captured in the performance standards assessments in the Commission's post-election reports. PS discussed areas which had had major process failures, such as Plymouth and Newcastle-under-Lyme, noting that performance had subsequently improved dramatically. He suggested that scrutiny of 'near misses' would be preferable to waiting until a major problem had arisen. SC noted that there were resourcing implications for reforming accessibility, and that more data was needed to underpin the justifications for it. JEH suggested that it might be possible to use other organisations' surveys, adding additional questions to collect data on accessibility. TH replied that KK and PT would have to consider this proposition, though there was an issue on how it might work given it required self-presenting on disability and could cause problems of categorisation. RP noted that the Cabinet Office Group might be able to take forward this work. A further discussion followed on propositions put forward by Commissioners, many of which CB noted had already been put forward in the Commission's Report, such as allowing someone to choose which polling stations to vote in, mobile polling stations, and linkages with social services. AI noted that a holistic approach was easier to achieve when the local council's Chief Executive was also the RO. ECS suggested that a piece of work on the long term trends on aging population and resourcing might be helpful. A discussion followed on thinking about accessibility more globally. CB noted that if the process were improved in relation to disability access, then it would also more likely be better for all. JEH noted the critical step of reforming registration first to open up options for voting reforms in the future. Providing services that meet the needs of all users PW provided an overview of the previous three years in the London Ambulance Service, describing its transformation from an organisation in crisis to one that was functioning well. The change was fundamental, as the service moved from one focused on response standards to one that looked more widely at clinical outcomes for the people it transported. They had made fundamental changes in the integration with other parts of the NHS and emergency services, building relationships within the organisation, and getting direct feedback from patients and staff at their board. He described a useful tool for transforming their service being the 'Whose shoes?' method for looking at stakeholder perspectives for important issues. JEH asked about the use of technology in the service, and PW explained that they were still largely paper-based, though they were now increasingly using iPads. They were also developing online accessibility, video consultation, and the use of wearables to monitor the health of vulnerable patients. In the last case, this would permit them to intervene before the point of a health crisis. AC asked about resourcing and the blocks to

improvement. PW explained that they had had no additional investment. It had rather been a question of addressing challenges around board leadership, the culture of the organisation and the previous ‘command and control’ style leadership among senior staff. ECS raised the issue of board oversight, and how this was a common concern for all boards. PW outlined how they had added board sub-committees to deal with detail, and were encouraging a new culture of reporting issues, increasing scrutiny. RV commented that the Commission often felt constrained by the limits of electoral law and the need for legislation and commended PW and the ambulance service for their accomplishments despite similar constraints. PW summarised their position as one of working with partners and bringing forward evidence to build the case for reform. The future of voting AI introduced the discussion with a reminder that electoral registration reform was fundamental to unlocking other changes to elections, work in relation to which was ongoing. She also highlighted ongoing work around guidance, working with accessibility partners and the of Elections Working Group. KK summarised the historic pilot schemes in the UK, covering innovations on how, when and where to vote. The overarching conclusions had been that electronic voting should be considered within a wider modernisation framework, that postal voting should be an option but not used as the only way to vote, and that advance voting did not appear to appreciably add to overall turnout figures. She also noted that these pilots had been conducted from 2000 to 2007 and that technology had appreciably moved on. We should therefore be wary of drawing too many conclusions from them for current policyAC noted that as well as technological possibilities, political issues had also moved on. KK noted that, in the absence of more recent pilots in the UK context, other countries’ experiences with reforms to electoral practices could serve as examples. She gave as an example the gradual increase in take-up of advance voting in Canada. CB noted that there were implications for campaigning of advance voting, potentially changing the nature of the debate, which would require careful handling. ECS noted that this was already the case with postal voting. TH invited the board to focus on the opportunities for change, including those relating to the forthcoming legislation in Wales and Scotland. He suggested considering where attention should be focused for the next two years and then again for the subsequent four years. He asked the board to consider what aspects of electoral process reform should be explored further, and if there were particular aspects of reform the board wanted to progress more quickly than others. JEH asked the board to consider the long-term strategy, particularly as registration reform had to come first for many possible changes. He also noted that more research might be helpful in building the case for reforms. CB noted that preparation had to include being ready to take advantage of opportunities, and not just acting reactively. RV asked about the possibility of encouraging local authorities to be bold in their pilot proposals. AI explained that local authorities could propose anything but that their bid had to be approved by Cabinet Office. AC asked for further information about the Law Commissions’ review. RP explained that the report recommendation for primary legislation was not currently on the Government’s agenda. CB pointed out that there was some current political appetite for reform of campaign regulations and it might be possible to use current interest in that area to advance the wider cause. AC suggested that there could be closer working with the new Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation. CB concurred, citing their developments in how data collected across government was used. SC noted that an electronic option was necessary in the long term, while noting there were short-term problems with security and resourcing. She reiterated the earlier point on offline electronic solutions as a potential means of speeding up processes, starting for

example with help for the visually impaired. She also noted that more data was necessary to identify groups who were being disadvantaged in election processes. Pilots could be conducted accordingly, for example on overseas voters, service voters, and even rural voters. RV highlighted that a properly online register would be very important in this longer-term context. AM suggested that amendments to current practices to improve voting conditions for those with disabilities could be made contingent on fixing the register, helping to build support for registration reforms. A discussion followed on electronic voting, with a distinction being drawn between electronic voting in polling stations and online voting. While the appetite for online voting was tempered by concerns about security, the direction of travel was recognised as being towards electronic and connected voting solutions in the longer term, for both accessibility and longer-term resource savings. CB added a note of caution about looking in detail for longer term solutions using current technology such as block chain, as technology development was still fast moving. RP noted that it was important to make sure the law that underpinned any new developments was robust. Advantage could perhaps be taken of the legislative changes planned in Scotland and Wales to start to move towards consolidation and simplification. Other countries had made big changes to their voting systems but not without fixing the legislation underpinning it. SB noted that Scotland has the appetite for the legislative change, and the ability to move quickly when the situation calls for it.

5.15 A discussion followed about the lack of appetite for legislative changes in Westminster, noting that for some issues such as voter ID the general public seemed further advanced in their thinking than legislators. Change could be a long time coming but then move very quickly once the need for change was properly established. JEH invited Commissioners to consider other measures that were not specifically tied to a digital solution. Other locations for voting were discussed, most notably the use of mobile polling stations. AI noted that the challenge for the Commission would be to define what problems we were trying to solve. What we were trying to achieve with any reforms needed to be clear as some options could add a burden on to ROs and we would not want to do so without being confident that the changes were actually improving the voting process for electors. ECS noted that working with other services, such as mobile libraries, could allow both innovation and cost savings. AI invited Commissioners to consider what success would look like. CB noted that the Commission needed to balance the cost-accessibility-security triangle too. RV suggested a voting and counting steering group to complement the voter registration steering group. CB cautioned against spreading Commission resources too thin. AC noted that an easy win in relation to accessibility specifically was to add to our performance standards. RP noted that international research could provide a good basis for the Commission's own work. TH noted that it was important to consider upcoming demographic changes, and stressed the importance of being able to visualise the 18 year olds of the future. SC noted that both ends of demographic change needed considering, young and old. JEH noted that he had been struck by the emphasis in the discussion on the desirability of moving towards change based on new technology, though everyone was also well aware of the security and cost constraints. He remarked that overall the system was not broken but that a lack of changes would over time threaten the confidence of voters. ECS enquired as to the possibilities of partnership working with universities. PT noted that King's College brought together tech experts with policy experts to work together on solutions. ECS called for pure social science research partnerships, to share resources and knowledge. A further discussion followed on working with universities, concluding with TH noting that it

was important to understand what gave people confidence now, to avoid undermining it with newer developments. AI agreed to take away the ideas from the discussion and identify the principles against which any reforms could be tested. This would help to inform the scoping of a future innovation and development project on modernising the voting process, which would be taken forward from the second half of 2019/20.

Report: How the 2012 GLA elections were run | Electoral Commission Search Report: How the 2012 GLA elections were run You are in the Greater London Authority (GLA) elections section Home Greater London Authority (GLA) elections On this page About the report Facts and figures People's experience of voting Download our full report First published: 15 August 2019 Last updated: 15 August 2019 About the report This report focuses on the administration of the London Mayoral and London Assembly elections held on 3 May 2012. It reflects the experience of voters, based on public opinion research and electoral data provided by Returning Officers. It also reflects feedback and views about the administration of the election from candidates and agents, those responsible for delivering the poll and other participants. Facts and figures On 3 May 2012, elections were held for the Mayor of London and 25 London Assembly members. The poll was combined with local by-elections to elect councillors in wards in 10 London boroughs. The electorate at these elections was 5.8 million and the turnout, including votes rejected at the count, was 38.8%¹. This was a decrease of 6.5 percentage points from the 2008 elections, when turnout was 45.3%. 2.21 million valid votes were cast at the elections. 1.8% of ballot papers were rejected at the count, which was 0.1 percentage points higher than in 2008. 14.1% of the electorate was issued with postal ballot papers for these elections. This is 2.4 percentage points higher than in 2008. Turnout amongst postal voters was 68.8%. 4.6% of returned postal ballot papers were rejected and not included in the count, which was a decrease of 0.2 percentage points from those rejected in 2008. People's experience of voting A key priority for us is that voters are able to vote easily and know that their vote will be counted in the way they intended. Voters continue to have high levels of satisfaction with the voting process. Both polling station and postal voters remain positive about their experience. Voters also understood how to complete their ballot papers for the London elections. Nearly all (95%) said that they found it easy to fill in the ballot, with three quarters (76%) finding it very easy and just 3% reporting difficulties. Full details of our research findings are contained in this report. We want to ensure that people are aware of the need to register to vote in order to take part in the elections. We undertook an advertising campaign for the Greater London Assembly (GLA) elections to promote voter registration. The activity focussed on raising public awareness of the need to register in order to vote, how to register to vote and the deadline for doing so. Awareness of the elections was high in London, with nearly three-quarters (73%) of respondents in London saying they knew 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount' about the elections. Over-three quarters (76%) of people surveyed agreed that they had enough information to make an informed decision on how to vote in the London elections. Those who voted in London were more likely to say they had enough information about the elections to make an informed decision, than those who did not vote (86% compared with 63% respectively). Download our full report 2012 GLA election report 1. Turnout and rejected ballot paper figures are for mayoral first preference votes. ■ Back to content at footnote 1 Related content Results and turnout at the 2012 Greater London Authority elections View the results and turnout at the 2012 Greater London Authority elections Report: How the 2016 GLA elections were run Read our report about how the 2016 Greater London Authority elections were run Results and turnout at the 2016 Greater London Authority elections View the results and turnout at the 2016 Greater London Authority elections Testing the EU referendum question Find out about our testing of the EU referendum question

7. A modern and sustainable electoral system in Wales | Electoral Commission

Search 7. A modern and sustainable electoral system in Wales

You are in the Corporate Plan for Wales 2022/23 to 2026/27 section Home Our plans and priorities Corporate Plan for Wales 2022/23 to 2026/27 On this page Harnessing data and technology to meet the needs of voters, campaigners and electoral administrators Understanding, calling for action and acting on the changing risks to the election system from the misuse of data and technology Continuing to build strong relationships and streamlining working practices with all bodies that are part of the electoral system Supporting governments and the wider electoral community to adopt a strategy and implementation plan which meets environmental standards required of our electoral system First published: 25 April 2022 Last updated: 25 April 2022 Summary We need to make sure our electoral system keeps pace with digital developments. We need to capitalise on the scope for greater compliance, transparency and the financial savings technology offers, while working to retain voter confidence in the electoral system. We also need to modernise the electoral system to ensure it is environmentally sustainable. We will work towards a modern and sustainable electoral system by: harnessing data and technology to meet the needs of voters, campaigners and electoral administrators understanding, calling for action and acting on the changing risks to the election system from the misuse of data and technology continuing to build strong relationships and streamlining working practices with all bodies that are part of the electoral system supporting governments and the wider electoral community to adopt a strategy and implementation plan which meets environmental standards required of our electoral system Harnessing data and technology to meet the needs of voters, campaigners and electoral administrators Data and technology present opportunities for democracy. Working with others, we will ensure we utilise data and technology to achieve efficiencies in the electoral system, to increase compliance with electoral law, and to provide accessible information to voters. We will undertake research to provide an evidence base for how data and technology can be harnessed. We will develop and implement plans to utilise data and technology to meet the needs of voters, campaigners and electoral administrators. We will work with others to implement new practices in the use of data and technology across the electoral system. Understanding, calling for action and acting on the changing risks to the election system from the misuse of data and technology Data and technology also present significant risks for democracy. We will work with others to explore and implement new practices in the use of data and technology across the electoral system, to improve the accessibility, security and efficiency of elections in Wales and other parts of the UK. We will also undertake research to understand how data and technology threatens the integrity of elections, paying specific attention to voters' trust in the electoral system as a whole. Continuing to build strong relationships and streamlining working practices with all bodies that are part of the electoral system We work closely with other bodies that are part of the electoral system. We know that by working collaboratively we are better equipped to respond to the challenges the electoral system faces. We will continue to strengthen these relationships, including with a number of regulators and law enforcement bodies that play a role in enforcing electoral law. We will also continue to help voters understand who is responsible for specific areas of electoral law, and will work to ensure they know who to contact if they have concerns. We will continue to ensure we work with these other bodies in an efficient way, with the ultimate aim of increasing the impact we and they have in the delivery of an effective and trusted electoral system. Supporting governments and the wider

electoral community to adopt a strategy and implementation plan which meets environmental standards required of our electoral system Over the life of this plan it will become increasingly important to understand and reduce the environmental impact of the electoral system, ensuring it meets the challenging environmental targets which are likely to be brought into law by the Senedd and the UK's other parliaments. Responding to these targets will also increasingly challenge the local delivery of well-run elections and referendums. We will develop a strategy and implementation plan which seeks to reduce the environmental impact of our electoral system, to include innovative evidence-based solutions. We will work with the Welsh Government, other UK governments and local authorities to identify actions to reduce environmental impact. And, we will keep under review potential solutions which may lead to increased sustainability. Navigation 6. Making sure electoral law is fair and effective in Wales Section 6 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan 8. Underpinning this work in Wales Section 8 of our 2022/23 to 2026/27 corporate plan for Wales

Interim corporate plan 2020/21 - 2024/25 | Electoral Commission Search

Interim corporate plan 2020/21 - 2024/25 You are in the Our plans and priorities section Home Our plans and priorities On this page Our vision and goals The changing context Our goals and priorities over the next five years First published: 31 May 2019 Last updated: 30 September 2022 Interim corporate plan 2020/21 - 2024/25 Corporate plan This five-year Corporate Plan , for the period 2022/23 to 2026/27, replaces and develops our interim plan put in place after the December 2019 UK general election. We also have a Corporate Plan for Wales , covering our activities in Wales for the period 2022/23 to 2026/27. We have published an interim corporate plan covering 2020 - 2025. This is required by legislation following the 2019 general election. The plan covers our early priorities and how we plan to fulfil our responsibilities, particularly in the first year. A full five year plan will be published later this year. Our vision and goals Our vision is to be a world-class public sector organisation — innovative, delivering great value and getting right what matters most to voters and legislators. We plan to achieve this vision through a five-year work programme with four goals. Goal 1 To enable the continued delivery of free and fair elections and referendums, focusing on the needs of electors and addressing the changing environment to ensure every vote remains secure and accessible Goal 2 To ensure an increasingly trusted and transparent system of regulation in political finance, overseeing compliance, promoting understanding amongst those regulated and proactively pursuing breaches Goal 3 To be an independent and respected centre of expertise, using knowledge and insight to further the transparency, fairness and efficiency of our democratic system, and help adapt it to the modern, digital age Goal 4 To provide value for money, making best use of our resources and expertise to deliver services that are attuned to what matters most to voters. This goal underpins and supports all of our work The changing context The period since the last corporate plan was published has seen significant change. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is only beginning to be felt, including the postponement of the polls scheduled for May 2020. A welcome step, but one which presents a big challenge to running the May 2021 polls. Elections continue to be well-run, despite the demands that unscheduled polls place on electoral administrators. Public satisfaction with the process of registering to vote, and voting, continues to be high. Our regulation of political finance has continued to prove its worth. But our system is showing strain. There is significant pressure on local authorities' resources and capacity. For the public, the system depends on trust, which can be lost quickly if doubt begins to set in. While our research with the public shows that the majority of people were confident the May 2019 elections were well run, and most voters were satisfied with the voting process, overall levels of voter confidence in the running of the May local and European Parliamentary Election were lower than at previous polls. Over the next five years, investing in reforms to support the delivery of well-run elections, the effectiveness and transparency of campaigning, and the bolstering of voter confidence, will be critical. Outdated electoral law is one of the biggest challenge we face. From an outdated registration system in need of modernisation, to large volumes of legislation that electoral administrators need to refer to when running multiple elections. Existing proposals from the UK's Law Commissions have provided a strong basis for further work, and we continue to call on the UK's governments to take these forward. The nature of political campaigning continues to change. Digital advertising spend is increasing. Regulation, and the law, needs to keep up with these advances. As campaigning changes, we need to ensure that we have the right powers and tools to

effectively regulate political finance. We are working hard to encourage compliance with all those concerned. None of these issues are new, but they are increasing in risk and urgency. Our plan outlines how we want to play a part in addressing these challenges. We also plan to work with all UK governments to help them take forward their own reform plans. Our goals and priorities over the next five years Goal 1 This goal captures our central role in overseeing the delivery of elections and referendums across the UK's nations. We support electoral administrators, candidates and parties across the UK by providing guidance and tailored advice, as well as information for voters on registration and voting. There are 23 scheduled electoral events during the period of this corporate plan. In the lead up to those events, we will invest in supporting electoral administrators, candidates and parties across the UK. In addition, we will ensure we are fully prepared to respond to any unscheduled electoral events during the period of this plan. The UK Government announced on 12 March 2020 that the elections due to take place in May 2020 would be postponed until May 2021. While this welcome decision means we are not now facing the delivery of polls in an exceptionally challenging environment in May 2020, it does mean that the elections to be held in May 2021 will be more than previously expected. Events are now scheduled to take place across the whole of Great Britain, and with more significant combinations of polls. We are already working to help the electoral community understand the implications of the postponement and to put in place arrangements to support the effective delivery of these polls, and this will continue throughout 2020-21. Delivering well-run electoral events During the period covered by this corporate plan, we'll support the delivery of 23 scheduled elections. In the run up to these elections, we'll continue to support local authorities, candidates and agents. We're proposing that we invest in an enhanced guidance support service. This means we could offer more advice, tools and resources. We'll also be moving more guidance to a modern and accessible format. We'll also work with partners to improve accessibility of elections, so that everyone has equal access to election information and processes. Voter registration campaigns We'll run voter registration campaigns ahead of all major polls, raising awareness of the need to register amongst all eligible voters, but targeting under registered groups in particular. Supporting the UK's governments' annual canvass reforms in Great Britain We'll provide advice, guidance and resource materials for Electoral Registration Officers to support them with implementing these changes effectively. We will also work to support the 2021 canvass in Northern Ireland, including running a public awareness campaign to highlight what people need to do to ensure they are registered to vote. Increasing resilience in local electoral services We'll take forward work on a strategy to support increased resilience in the delivery of local electoral services. We'll work with key partners in the electoral community to explore initiatives, such as an induction and mentoring programme for new Returning Officers, and an electoral services toolkit. New performance standards for Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) We'll publish new performance standards to be used by us and EROs to understand and improve their performance, ensuring that registers are as accurate and complete as possible and that everyone who is eligible and wants to vote is able to do so. Franchise changes We will respond to and engage with the Scottish and Welsh governments' policy and legislative agendas for changes to the franchise to ensure they work for the public and EROs. We'll also invest in campaigns to raise public awareness of these changes. Electoral fraud work We'll continue to include close engagement with the police and with local authorities. We'll be supported by public-facing activity such as our 'Your Vote is Yours Alone' campaign. What impacts and

benefits will this achieve? This work will enable us to deliver enhanced support for local authorities in the delivery of electoral services, and improve engagement with key partners in the electoral community, such as Solace and the Association of s (AEA). This will contribute to the provision of high quality services for voters and the delivery of well-run elections and registration systems. Our work will help to ensure that the results of elections will be increasingly trusted and accepted and the number of successful legal challenges will be as close to zero as possible. Goal 2 This goal captures our regulatory role, and is vital to ensuring the transparency which sits at the heart of any healthy democracy. Our work in this area is already wide-ranging, and increasingly proactive, securing compliance by supporting parties and campaigners, by real-time intervention and – when needed – by enforcement action.

Ensuring transparency We maintain published online political parties registers, giving confidence that only parties that meet the legal registration tests can appear on ballot papers. We also maintain a register of campaigners which spend substantial sums campaigning in elections. We deliver transparency of UK political finance by publishing details of donations and loans, annual accounts from registered parties, and campaign spending, which parties and others are required to report to us. We provide high quality advice and guidance to support parties, candidates and campaigners in complying with the rules. And we take action, where appropriate imposing sanctions, when the rules are broken, in accordance with the Commission's statutory Enforcement Policy. We believe it is far better to work to ensure compliance before an electoral event rather than have to take enforcement action afterwards. So we propose to invest in supporting compliance through a user-friendly online tool and a more responsive regulatory service. Continue to maintain the registers of political parties and campaigners This ensures voters have clarity about registered parties and campaigners on the ballot paper. It includes completing a review of registered descriptions to make sure only those meeting the legal tests are included, and looking at how the constitutions and financial schemes of parties are formulated. Publishing financial data from parties and campaigners We'll continue to promote transparency of political finance by publishing financial data from parties and campaigners, including that related to elections. Alongside this, we will deliver a new Political Finance Online system to support parties and campaigners to deliver their financial returns efficiently. Providing timely and high quality advice To promote high rates of compliance with the rules, and thus transparency for voters, we will continue to provide timely and high quality advice and guidance to parties and campaigners to support them in meeting their legal requirements. This will include publishing guidance for the major elections in 2021, reflecting the impacts of the complex combination of polls, as appropriate, and developing codes of practice to underpin the law on reporting election spending. Working with parties and campaigners, we will develop a new strategic framework to ensure effective and impactful proactive support. Enforcing political finance rules We will deliver effective enforcement of the political finance rules, ensuring voters, parties and campaigners have confidence that the rules are enforced proportionately and with impact, within our current powers. We will continue to publish the outcome of each investigation, including in full reports where that is warranted, so voters, parties and campaigners can see the way we act to enforce the rules. To deter people from committing offences, and to make sure we can respond proportionally if they do, we will continue to build the capacity to prosecute suspected offences. We will consult on the way we approach the use of prosecutions. Responding to the changing environment We will respond to the changing environment as more money is spent on

digital campaigning by responding to and engaging with government policy and legislative agendas for political finance to ensure they increase transparency for the public and are workable for campaigners. We will strengthen our engagement with social media companies and other providers of digital advertising to ensure their services and policies support transparency for election and referendum campaign activity. Policy development grants We will administer the policy development grants scheme and ensure it operates effectively by making timely recommendations to the UK Government for any necessary changes. What impacts and benefits will we achieve? This work will provide a faster and more responsive engagement with stakeholders ,and guidance that is increasingly forward looking and gets ahead of potential regulatory issues. We should achieve a deeper and wider understanding of the campaign finance laws amongst parties and campaigners, leading to higher compliance rates. We will deliver an expanded range of tools that directly support parties and campaigners and are flexible enough to work for different structures and sizes, and that support targeted areas of the campaign finance rules, driven by strategic intelligence and horizon scanning. Together, this should result in improvement in the quality and reliability of the financial data parties and campaigners provide and we publish. The public will see and can have confidence that the spending and funding of political parties and candidates at UK elections is and transparent, and that we will take proportionate action if anyone breaks the rules on campaign funding. Goal 3 This goal captures our role in guiding the sector through the challenges it faces. We will provide the evidence, analysis and insight needed by us and others working in the field, to identify and address the most important issues facing the UK's democratic system. We will also monitor changes to the system of electoral registration and use post-election opinion surveys and our annual UK-wide survey to monitor the public's view on electoral issues and their experiences when taking part in elections. This data informs our decisions and policy recommendations, helps us to influence developments in legislation, policy and practice, and supports us in ensuring we are getting right what matters most to voters. We will continue to undertake research and report on the accuracy and completeness of the UK's electoral registers. We have a statutory duty to report on elections and referendums and keep electoral law under review. We will also continue to scrutinise new electoral legislation and provide expert briefings to governments and legislatures on legislative proposals. Voter confidence in our electoral system is crucial, and hinges on belief in the information offered. So we propose to invest in building voter awareness and education with a particular focus on digital campaigning. Providing expert advice and support to political parties, campaigners, governments and the public We will provide expert advice to these groups to inform policy change, educate and inform the public and promote partnership working across the electoral sector. This will include public relations and public affairs support for the Government's political finance policies and electoral law reform, a press office function to manage media and public enquiries and the provision of expert advice and evidence to inform policy consultations and reviews. Reporting on elections We will continue to report on the administration of elections to ensure we utilise learning to improve the delivery of future events. We will continue to promote and build support for changes to our democratic processes through dedicated campaigns and collaborative working with key partners and stakeholders. We will work with partners to consider options for improving the accessibility of elections and the modernisation of registration through the better use of existing public data records. Developing our evidence base We will develop our evidence base to enable greater understanding of the electoral

environment, emerging issues, risks and opportunities that could affect our work in the medium to long term, and enable us to plan accordingly. We will gather data and information after elections, including on public attitudes as well as the experiences of electoral administrators and candidates, to deepen our understanding of the issues faced by our customers including the public and local authorities. Increasing our public awareness activity We will enhance our public awareness activity to help voters understand the rules and systems that operate around elections and referendums, and their abilities to raise concerns and get involved. This will include activity around elections, related to the digital campaigning techniques increasingly used to reach voters, and the production of longer-term education materials to be used in formal and informal settings. of our information Promoting transparency is one of our corporate values and we will look to improve the accessibility of our information to partners and the public by developing our new corporate website further. We'll also be updating and revising the research content available. This will include a project to use open data and digital tools to make them accessible to all. Electoral fraud research We will proceed with our research and data analysis of cases of electoral fraud to identify any changes that could help tackle the issue, and to support engagement with the UK's governments and their legislative agendas, such as the UK Government's proposal to introduce voter identity across Great Britain. A full corporate plan Through the development of our full corporate plan, and in consultation with our stakeholders, we will develop a new work programme to cover the next five year period. This will seek to make the greatest possible contribution to helping the sector to identify and plan for the most significant opportunities and challenges it faces. What impacts and benefits will we achieve? Our expert evidence and views are referenced in public debate about our democratic system and processes, and government proposals reflect our priorities and recommendations for change. Goal 4 As a body directly accountable to Parliament, we are subject to the same expectations of Parliament for regularity, propriety and value for money as other public bodies. Meeting or exceeding these standards is integral to the way we manage the day-to-day. Our financial accountability to Parliament is exercised through the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission, a House of Commons committee, chaired by the Speaker and comprising ministers serving ex-officio and back-benchers appointed by the Speaker. Key to our success over the next five years and beyond is ensuring we have the right resources in place to support the delivery of this plan, including the initial need for resilience to ensure we are able to respond appropriately to the COVID-19 pandemic. This goal provides a focus to activities that support the organisation and ensure we have the appropriate skilled people and systems, that the delivery of services is efficient, effective and economical, and that we invest in modernising our infrastructure and systems to deliver consistent and improving value for money. This includes providing consistently high quality human resources, finance, planning, legal, support and information and communication technology (ICT) functions. People strategy We will implement our new 'people strategy' to promote a culture where staff teams are best able to perform their roles effectively. Digital working improvements We will continue to work on our 'ways of working' project to deliver digitally enabled business change to reflect the expectations of a modern employer, and ensure ICT can support those changes. Planned new investment in line-of-business systems over the coming years include a new regulatory case management system to support moving to undertake prosecutions, a replacement client case management system to track public and stakeholder contact, and post-poll reporting tools. Tracking corporate

performance We have successfully implemented a new corporate planning and performance system that enables the organisation to have a single, integrated picture of strategic and operational business activity, project delivery, risk and performance. This now enables us to focus on developing improved capability and understanding of the delivery of our strategic goals and the impact we are delivering for our customers. Accountability in Scotland and Wales We will continue to work with the Scottish Parliament and National Assembly for Wales to implement our new accountability arrangements, including a new funding formula and business plans for Scotland and Wales. Legal services Our ability to meet the needs of voters, legislatures, political parties and all of our other stakeholders is indirectly reliant on us having a specialist legal service. We will review and refresh how we deliver legal services that effectively and efficiently meet the changing and increasing requirements on us, and reduce use of expensive outside expertise. This initiative will establish a more stable core base of lawyers in re-orientated working arrangements that are underpinned by strong quality management processes and case management systems. Quality management We will embed quality management processes across all our services and functions, building on the sound practice in place in our regulatory teams. This will drive the development of our systems and processes and embed quality and continuous improvement in our culture. What impacts and benefits will we achieve? Improving our planning and performance reporting will enable improved monitoring and management across all our goals, thereby driving improved impact on the things that matter most directly to electors. Our 'ways of working' project combines real technological improvements and changes in working practices and conditions. We expect this to lead to real improvements in productivity through improved across-team working and greater flexibility. Our 'people strategy' is designed to ensure we have the engaged and empowered staff to deliver our ambitious agenda. We aim to see this reflected in higher staff engagement scores and higher staff retention rates. The real impact of these changes, however, will be felt in the performance and impact measures in this and other goals as we translate these internal goals into improved delivery. Read the corporate plan in full Corporate Plan 2020-21 to 2024-25

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Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23 On this page Work done to
achieve our aims Ongoing and future work Commitment to EDI Governance First
published: 4 July 2023 Last updated: 27 September 2023 Summary This report provides
an overview of our work on devolved matters in Wales and looks at our performance
during the last year. We have included summary financial information within the
performance report. This is consistent with the financial statements, where more
detail is available. The Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000
(PPERA) established the Electoral Commission. We are independent of government and
political parties and directly accountable to the UK, Scottish and Welsh parliaments.
Amendments made to the Government of Wales Act 2006, by the Wales Act 2017,
transferred responsibility for devolved Welsh elections and referendums from the UK
Parliament to the Senedd. The Senedd Elections Wales Act 2020 sets out the funding
and accountability arrangements for the Electoral Commission's devolved activities in
Wales. Work done to achieve our aims Our work in early 2022-23 focused on supporting
the delivery of the local government elections across Wales. This included: Working
with the Wales Electoral Coordination Board (WEBC) to provide advice and guidance to
Returning Officers and their staff on preparing for and delivering the polls. Working
with political parties and Returning Officers to provide targeted support and
briefing sessions to candidates and agents contesting the elections. Running a mass-
media public awareness campaign for voters, reminding them of the key deadlines for
registration and absent vote applications. There were 38,438 applications made to
register to vote in Wales during our voter registration campaign. Publishing our
evaluation, in July, on the early voting pilots that took place in four Welsh local
authority areas at the May 2022 elections. Publishing our statutory report on the
elections in September, which reflected data and evidence gathered on voting,
campaigning, and delivering the election. We found that the vast majority of voters
were satisfied with the process of voting and almost all were able to use their
preferred method of voting. Through the year we focussed activity on our advice and
support service to our stakeholders, including electoral administrators, candidates
and agents. This included: Consulting administrators in Wales on a new performance
standards framework for Returning Officers, which has now been laid in the Senedd.
Using our performance standards frameworks to support and challenge Returning
Officers at the local government elections and Electoral Registration Officers on
their year-round activities to maintain accurate and complete electoral registers.
Identifying new opportunities to provide support to the regulated community to help
them comply with the rules around campaign finance. We continued to provide expert
advice to Welsh Government and the Senedd on policy development in relation to
electoral matters: Appearing before the Llywydd's Committee to give evidence as part
of its scrutiny of the 2023/24 financial estimate. Providing a comprehensive response
to the Welsh Government's Electoral Reform and Administration White Paper, drawing on
our policy work and wide-ranging research with voters, electoral administrators, and
campaigners. We built on the success of our work to promote democratic education by
providing learning resources for teachers and youth workers. This included: Working
with local authorities, headteachers and our partner Democracy Box to develop and
promote our new resources for democratic engagement for schools and other learning
providers to support voter participation and confidence. Promoting our Welcome to
Your Vote Week at the end of January, which achieved a good level of involvement from
organisations across Wales. We held a launch event at the Senedd with the Minister

for Education and Welsh Language, Jeremy Miles. Ongoing and future work We see a continuing need to support more newly enfranchised voters across Wales to become involved in democracy. We will therefore expand the reach of our education programme, developing resources relevant to the new Welsh curriculum and engaging further with partner organisations. Our aim is to educate young people about the democratic process and prepare educators to teach political literacy with confidence. Through training and briefing sessions, we will support parties and campaigners to comply with the law, while continuing to ensure political finance is transparent. We will support Returning Officers and electoral administrators to help them meet the challenges they face in delivering well-run electoral services. Our focus will be on helping them adapt to a diverse electoral landscape and the changing needs of voters in Wales. We will work closely with the Senedd and Welsh Government as they introduce new primary legislation to bring into effect plans for both Senedd and electoral reforms. Working with the Wales Electoral Coordination Board, we will convey the views of Returning Officers and s to Welsh Government and seek to ensure that they are taken into account in the development of this new legislation. We will work with Welsh police, campaigners and electoral administrators to explore and address concerns raised by candidates about intimidation and abuse at elections. Commitment to EDI The Electoral Commission serves a diverse democracy in Wales, and we are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion. Our programme of partnership work has developed resources to support democratic inclusion for those who experience barriers to voting. This has included providing material in a variety of languages, including British Sign Language, and in a number of formats including easy read, large print, audio and braille. We have also worked with partner organisations in Wales to develop appropriate materials for Gypsy/Travellers, care experienced young people, domestic abuse survivors and people experiencing homelessness. In the year ahead we will be working closely with representatives from the electoral community to explore how we can improve the accessibility of the electoral process for people who experience barriers to participating in elections. We are also committed to the principle that the Welsh and languages should be treated on a basis of equality in public business and provision of resources and services. This has led to further improvement in the service we provide to partners in the language of their choice, and to ensuring that the Welsh Language Standards, set in July 2016, are not only met, but that we are innovative and ambitious in the services that we provide. We also continue to work closely with the WECB's Welsh Language Advisory Group whose aim is to ensure that the Welsh language is treated equally in matters of electoral legislation and guidance and that necessary support is given to the wider electoral community. Resources During 2022/23 we utilised 98% of £1.54m of budget available. This was predominately staffing £1.1m (71%) with advertising and research £0.3m (19%); the remaining amounts represent the Senedd contribution to common activities and corporate overheads. Our segmental reporting on shows the breakdown between direct and indirect costs. Governance The Commission is formally accountable to, and receives funding from, the Senedd in respect of its functions in relation to devolved Welsh elections and referendums. We report to the Llywydd's Committee which was established for this purpose and works to the "Statement of Funding Principles" which was agreed with the Senedd in early 2021. In September 2022 we submitted our third set of estimates to the Senedd enabling the UK Treasury to transfer the agreed level of funding to the Welsh Consolidated Fund. This process has been agreed by all parties and ensures all parliaments can be confident in scrutinising our work plans and accounts. Navigation Previous Next Northern Ireland annual report Scotland annual report

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Consultation on draft NPC Code of Practice You are in the Our consultations section Home Our consultations NPC Code of Practice On this page Summary How to respond How we developed the draft Code Questionnaire Background First published: 24 November 2022 Last updated: 24 November 2022 Summary Summary Some individuals and organisations that are not political parties campaign on issues or causes around elections without standing candidates themselves. They play a significant role in providing voters with information and a diversity of voices. The Commission calls these individuals and organisations non-party campaigners. In electoral law they are called third parties. The Elections Act 2022 includes new requirements for registration and spending by non-party campaigners. The Act introduces a duty on the Electoral Commission to produce a Code of Practice on the laws relating to non-party campaigner spending, including what qualifies as expenses, reporting controlled expenditure and donations, and joint campaigning. The Code will apply to general elections to the UK Parliament (UKPGE) and Northern Ireland Assembly (NIA). The Code of Practice, once finalised will be presented to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The Minister may then modify the Code before laying it for parliamentary approval. Your views will help us make the Code we present to the Secretary of State as clear and helpful as possible. The Commission must have regard to this Code when exercising its functions under Part 6 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA). It is a defence for a non-party campaigner to show that they complied with this Code in determining whether their campaign activity was regulated. The consultation closed on 20 January 2023. Read our response to the consultation on Code of Practice for Non-party s . How to respond The consultation is open from 24 November 2022 until 20 January 2023. You can respond by: filling in our online form emailing your views to codeconsultation@electoralcommission.org.uk or writing to us at: Regulatory Support Team The Electoral Commission 3 Bunhill Row London EC1Y 8YZ Throughout the consultation period, we will continue to engage with the electoral and campaigning community. We are happy to meet with any groups or interested individuals on request. If you have any questions, please do get in touch on 0207 271 0546. How we developed the draft Code We talked to a range of non-party campaigners from across the UK to inform the draft Code. We asked them about: their understanding of the new provisions their experiences of campaigning under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendum Act 2000 (PPERA) legal framework how they see non-party campaigning evolving in the future View the draft Code of Practice Questionnaire NPC guidance Status message This consultation closed on 20 January 2023. Leave this field blank Background Existing non-party campaigner legislation There are well-established laws regulating the activities of non-party campaigners in the periods before elections. These include laws on who can spend money at elections, how much money they can spend, how they must comply with who they accept donations from and what information they need to report about their spending and receipt of donations. For more information on these laws, please see our existing guidance . Elections Act 2022 The UK Elections Act 2022 includes provisions that lowers the notification threshold for non-party campaigners at UK Parliamentary elections. It also limits spending by non-party campaigners who do not have a UK connection at these, and Northern Ireland Assembly, elections. Section 29 of the Elections Act 2022 contains a specific duty on the Commission to produce a statutory Code of Practice for non-party campaigners at UK Parliamentary general elections and NI Assembly elections. This Code of Practice, unlike most of the Commission's guidance, must be approved by the relevant Minister,

and the UK Parliament.

Response to the UK Government policy consultation: Protecting the Debate | Electoral Commission Search Response to the UK Government policy consultation: Protecting the Debate You are in the Transparent digital campaigning section Home Transparent digital campaigning On this page Summary Applying electoral sanctions to existing criminal offences Intimidation of voters Increasing transparency in digital election campaigning First published: 15 August 2018 Last updated: 9 June 2021 Overview This response sets out our advice on three proposed changes to electoral law to protect candidates and voters from intimidation. We are responding to this consultation as Parliament has given us a role to keep electoral law under review and to recommend changes where we think they are needed.

Summary Applying electoral sanctions to existing criminal offences Candidates and campaigners have a key role in encouraging people to participate in elections and referendums. Activities for or against candidates and campaigners must not bring into question the integrity of the electoral process. We agree with the Government that allowing electoral sanctions to be applied as well as criminal sanctions could act as a strengthened deterrent against intimidating candidates or campaigners Removing the right to vote would be a disproportionate sanction, but stopping someone from standing for election may not be a sufficient deterrent for people who do not want to become a candidate The Government should consider whether increasing the maximum sentence for serious offences relating to elections, as recommended by the UK's Law Commissions, would also act as a strengthened deterrent against intimidation

Intimidation of voters – undue influence Voters should be protected from being intimidated to vote in a particular way or not to vote. We welcome the UK Government's review of the offence of undue influence and continue to support the modernisation and simplification of all aspects of this offence Any changes to the current laws on undue influence must be clearly and simply defined with workable definitions We continue to recommend that any changes should be made as part of a comprehensive reform of all electoral offences, as set out in the UK Law Commissions' 2016 recommendations. Many electoral offences are complex, out of date and not easily understood and reforming undue influence alone risks adding further complexity without addressing many of the problems with the legislation We would be pleased to work with the UK government and with prosecutors and police, who can advise on how the law will work in practice Increasing transparency in digital election campaigning We have recommended since 2003 that the imprint rules be extended to digital material. Extending the imprint rules to digital material is urgent. This gap in transparency is affecting voter confidence and our ability to enforce the rules All non-printed election and referendum material should contain an imprint Any new regulations should be drafted as general principles to make them platform neutral and to future-proof them for changes in technology The UK Government should give the Electoral Commission wider powers to compel information outside of an investigation, including from digital platforms The imprint rules for printed election material in the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) should be commenced for Northern Ireland The imprint rules in Northern Ireland should be the same as the rest of the UK Applying electoral sanctions to existing criminal offences The consultation asks for views on introducing a new offence in electoral law. However, the consultation actually focuses on applying new electoral sanctions to existing criminal offences. Our response reflects this interpretation. We agree with the Government that allowing electoral sanctions to be applied as well as criminal sanctions could act as a strengthened deterrent against intimidating candidates or campaigners Removing the right to vote would be a disproportionate sanction, but

stopping someone from standing for election may not be a sufficient deterrent for people who do not want to become a candidate. The Government should consider whether increasing the maximum sentence for serious offences relating to elections, as recommended by the UK's Law Commissions, would also act as a strengthened deterrent against intimidation.

Question 1: Do you agree that the new electoral offence should apply electoral sanctions to existing offences of intimidatory behaviour, such as those identified by the CSPL, listed in Annex A, and equivalent offences in Scotland and Northern Ireland? We agree that electoral sanctions should be applied to these existing offences. It is important that people are deterred from intimidating candidates so that people can stand for election and campaign without fearing abuse or intimidation. Voters must have confidence in the candidates standing in elections and those campaigning in a referendum. Seeing or hearing about intimidation should not stop them from voting, nor should it influence how someone votes. Applying electoral sanctions should deter some people from engaging in behaviour that intimidates candidates. Any changes to the legislation would need to be applied by the Welsh and Scottish Governments for the relevant elections in Wales and Scotland. The legislation in Northern Ireland would need to be changed by the UK Government through the Northern Ireland Office. We agree that the UK Government should examine existing legislation and make sure that the 'new' legislation reflects any future criminal legislation.

Penalty for the new offence

Question 2: We propose that the new electoral offence will attract the sanction of being barred from standing for elected office for 5 years. Do you agree? We agree that if an individual is found guilty of a specified offence they should be prohibited from standing or holding any elected office for a period of 5 years. Applying this sanction would make sure that there is consistency with other relevant sanctions for corrupt practices such as undue influence which is also about intimidation, although of voters. Without this sanction there would also not be consistency across different elections and referendums for someone being automatically disqualified from standing for election if they had been convicted of any of the offences listed in Annex A.

Question 3: Do you think the new electoral offence should remove an offender's right to vote? We do not agree that an individual found guilty of intimidation should have their right to vote removed. Corrupt practices under the Representation of the People Act 1983 (RPA), which have a sanction of removing a person's right to vote, are those which abuse someone's right to vote. Intimidating a candidate or campaigner does not do this. However, stopping someone from standing for election for five years may not be enough of a deterrent for people who have no intention of putting themselves up for election. We think that this area needs to be explored further to see if there is another, more suitable, sanction that could also or instead be used. Prison sentences could be a more effective deterrent. A person who has been found guilty of any offence and is detained in prison is not allowed to vote. The UK's Law Commissions have recommended increasing the maximum sentence in cases of serious electoral fraud to 10 years. The Government should consider whether to apply this maximum sentence to intimidation offences set out in Annex A that are committed during election and referendum periods. Which elections would be covered? Which elections would be covered?

Question 4: We think that offences committed against candidates and campaigners during all types of polls should attract the additional electoral sanctions. Do you agree? If not, please explain. Intimidating candidates and campaigners is not acceptable at any poll. Offences committed against candidates and campaigners should attract the additional electoral sanctions for all types of poll. It is important to ensure consistency across all polls. Consistency will prevent

confusion as to when, and at what elections, the sanctions apply. It will also send a clear message to campaigners and voters that intimidation is unacceptable behaviour and has serious consequences. Question 5: We propose that offences against campaigners during a referendum campaign should attract the additional electoral sanctions. Do you agree? If not, please explain. We agree that electoral sanctions should apply to offences against campaigners during a referendum campaign Applying these electoral sanctions should deter some people from engaging in behaviour that intimidates campaigners Who would be protected? Who would be protected? Question 6: We propose that the existing definition of when someone becomes a 'candidate', with reference to any election campaign, would be clear and workable for the new electoral offence. Do you agree? If not, please explain. We do not agree that the existing definition of when someone becomes a candidate will be workable for the new electoral sanction. This is explained in our response to questions 8 and 9. Question 7a: Do you think the new electoral offence should extend to campaigners? If so, please explain which campaigners you think should fall within the scope of the new electoral offence, given the above considerations. If not, please explain. Question 7b: If you think that campaigners should be included, do you have a suggestion as to how this could be done for use in the relevant legislation? We agree that protection of new electoral sanctions should be extended to campaigners. When defining a campaigner, and who should fall within the scope of the new sanctions, the UK Government may want to consider the approach taken in the Postal Voting Bill. This is Private Members Bill introduced under the 10 minute rule and due a second reading on 26 October. Instead of using the term 'campaigner' it defines 'a person who engages in activities for the purpose of promoting a particular outcome at a relevant election'. This was drafted with input from the Cabinet Office. We would be happy to work with the UK Government on any amendments to the legislation which would enable the new electoral sanction to be applied to campaigners. Applicable time period Applicable time period Question 8: Do you agree that protection should start from the period of notice of elections? If not, please explain. Question 9: Should there be a period before notice of election for a scheduled poll, for example during the long campaign period, during which this offence applies? If so, what would be a suitable time period of protection? If not, please explain. We do not agree that the provision should be tied to the notice of election. Protection should cover people who have publicly stated they are going to stand for election but their candidacy has not officially commenced for the purpose of electoral law. The earliest day someone can become a candidate for the purpose of electoral law (for example in relation to the regulation of their campaign spending) is either the last day for publication of the notice of election or, at a UKPGE, the day of dissolution of Parliament. Protection therefore could start at the point of becoming a candidate under electoral law. However a person might declare their candidacy publicly prior to this. For example the lead up to a UK parliamentary general election where there is a long campaign. During this period the spending rules apply and people are actively campaigning, but their candidacy has not officially commenced. This means that someone could be subject to intimidation during this time but before becoming a candidate under electoral law. They would not be protected by the electoral sanctions if it was to start from the period of notice of election. The Government should consider whether there needs to be a defined start date from which the new electoral sanctions could be applied. For example, it could be for the prosecution and sentencing judge to determine if a person was subject to intimidation because of the fact they were a candidate, based on the specific circumstances in each individual case. Question10a: Do you agree that protection,

under the new electoral offence, should end seven calendar days after the close of poll? Question 10b: If not, when do you think protection under the new electoral offence should end? If the protection of a new electoral sanction were to end seven days after the close of poll, there is a risk that elected representatives could be subject to intimidation. This could mean that they are prevented from carrying out their elected mandate. Ideally, there would be no end date to the application of the new electoral sanctions. The Government should ask further advice from the police, prosecutors and the judiciary should advise on how this could be achieved in practice. Question 11: Do you agree that protection, under the new electoral offence, should apply during the referendum period, as determined by the relevant referendum legislation? If not, please explain. The protection should start once the relevant legislation setting the date of the referendum has come into force. Once the date of the referendum has been set in legislation everyone knows when polling day is and that referendum is definitely going ahead. Therefore, regardless of whether the regulated period for referendum campaign spending has started, campaigners can start campaigning and may be at risk of being intimidated. Ensuring the offence applies only in appropriate cases Ensuring the offence applies only in appropriate cases Question 12: Do you agree that a new electoral offence should only be applicable in cases where a candidate or campaigner is intimidated because they are a candidate or campaigner? We agree that the new electoral sanction should only apply when a candidate or campaigner is intimidated because they are candidate or campaigner. We think that the police, prosecutors and the judiciary should advise on how this could be achieved in practice as they will be the enforcers of the new electoral sanctions.

Intimidation of voters - undue influence Voters should be protected from being intimidated to vote in a particular way or not to vote We welcome the UK Government's review of the offence of undue influence and continue to support the modernisation and simplification of all aspects of this offence Any changes to the current laws on undue influence must be clearly and simply defined with workable definitions We continue to recommend that any changes should be made as part of a comprehensive reform of all electoral offences, as set out in the UK Law Commissions' 2016 recommendations. Many electoral offences are complex, out of date and not easily understood and reforming undue influence alone risks adding further complexity without addressing many of the problems with the legislation We would be pleased to work with the UK government and with prosecutors and police, who can advise on how the law will work in practice Simplifying the law on undue influence Simplifying the law on undue influence Question 13: Do you agree that the law of undue influence requires greater clarity in its application? If not, please explain. We agree the law of undue influence requires greater clarity and we support a revised and more clearly defined offence Simplifying undue influence would deliver one of the UK's Law Commissions' proposals, recommendation 11-4, for comprehensive electoral law reform. The Government should also bring forward proposals for implementing the other recommendations published in February 2016 There must be trust and confidence in the integrity of the electoral process. Modern and clear electoral law offences are a central part of ensuring this. People who must comply with the law, and those who enforce the law, need to understand what behaviour is prohibited and the associated punishments. We said, in our 2015 response to the Law Commissions' consultation on electoral law reform that the offence of undue influence is perhaps one of the most complex of all electoral law offences and we would support simplification. We also supported the simplification and modernisation of the offences of treating and bribery. These are also complex offences closely linked to undue influence. We remain

concerned that the changes proposed by the UK Government would not go far enough to simplify the current range of electoral offences. We continue to recommend that any changes to undue influence should take place as part of a comprehensive reform of electoral offences, alongside a simple, modernised process of challenging an election. Reforming undue influence alone risks adding further complexity without addressing many of the problems with the legislation.

Question 14: If it is decided to simplify the existing offence of undue influence, we do not propose to materially change the element of the offence relating to physical acts of violence or threat of violence. Do you agree? If not, please explain. We agree that physical acts of violence or threat of violence should stay in the offence of undue influence. However it should be simplified and clearly defined. We think that the suggested definitions of physical acts of violence or threat of violence set out in the consultation document are a useful basis for simplification.

Question 15: Any act, whether lawful or unlawful, which is intended to cause harm to the individual and is carried out with the intention to make a person vote, vote in a particular way, or deter them from voting and should be captured within this offence. Do you agree? If not, please explain. We agree these should be covered by the offence. The UK Government should also revisit and simplify the definition of harm. The Oxford Dictionary contains three definitions of "harm": physical injury, especially that which is deliberately inflicted; material damage and; actual or potential ill effects or danger. It is important that it is clear which of these definitions apply to the offence of undue influence. Our understanding is that harm is meant to be broader than just physical injury. Therefore, any definition of harm put forward by the UK Government should include all three definitions. The consultation question does not refer to the offences of loss, damage or temporal and spiritual injury. These are captured under the existing offence of undue influence. It should be clear whether these will be included under the definitions of harm or duress, or removed from the offence entirely. We would be concerned if they were removed entirely.

Question 16: We propose to retain reference to 'direct and indirect' acts which cause the elector harm. Do you agree? If not, please explain. We believe that this reference should be retained. What constitutes 'direct and indirect' acts must be clearly defined. We believe an 'indirect' act is difficult to define and must be considered as part of clarifying the offence of undue influence. We think that the suggested definitions of direct and indirect acts which cause an elector harm set out in the consultation document are a useful basis for simplification.

Question 17: We propose that the redefined offence retains reference to offences committed by or on behalf of a perpetrator in relation to acts that cause the elector harm. Do you agree? If not, please explain. We agree that reference should be retained to "offences committed by or on behalf of a perpetrator".

Question 18: We propose that the scope of section 115(2)(a) continues to include those acts which are carried out before and after the election. Do you agree? If not, please explain. We agree that this offence should cover acts carried out before and after the election. There should be no uncertainty as to what is an offence. In our 2015 response to the UK's Law Commissions' consultation on electoral law reform, we asked that additional consideration be given to the issue of when electoral offences can be committed. We still hold this view. The law currently takes a variety of different approaches to when electoral offences can be committed. Some offences may be committed 'before, during or after an election', some can only be committed 'before or during an election' and others can only be committed 'at an election'. There may be justifiable reasons for different approaches being taken for each offence, or it may be that a more consistent approach

should be taken. Either way, we would like to see greater clarity in the law on the timing of when offences are committed to ensure greater consistency. People who must comply with the law, and those who enforce the law, need to understand what behaviour is prohibited and the associated punishments. Question 19: Do you agree that the offence should continue to cover actions of duress? If not please explain. We agree that the offence should continue to cover duress with a clear definition. We said in our 2015 response to the UK's Law Commissions' consultation that duress should be retained. Consideration should be given to its definition to avoid complicated drafting and to separate it from 'duress' as used in criminal and contract law. The law should stop anyone from forcing a person to vote for a particular candidate or to not vote at all. However, it is important that when defining a simplified undue influence offence, it does not conflict with the right to freedom of expression. Many people will legitimately want to persuade others to vote for certain candidates, and any restrictions on this freedom will need careful consideration. We are conscious that there are some electors who may be more vulnerable to pressure or undue influence because of their personal position within a family, social group or wider community, who might benefit from greater protection. We would expect any modernised definition of undue influence or duress to be capable of identifying and being applied to this type of influence. Question 20: Any redefined offence would still look to cover actions of trickery. Do you agree? If not, please explain. We agree that the actions of trickery should remain and should be clearly defined. The UK government could use the simplified definition of the actions of trickery set out in the consultation document rather than the existing definition: 'any fraudulent device or contrivance'. We think that the suggested definitions of the actions of trickery set out in the consultation document are a useful basis for simplification.

Intimidation at polling stations Intimidation at polling stations Question 21: Do you agree that the scope of the offence should remain the same, subject to including a specific reference to intimidation at polling stations? If not, please explain.

Question 22a: Do you agree that the offence should specifically capture intimidatory behaviour carried out inside or outside of the polling station? If not, please explain. Question 22b: If so, do you agree that the definition should include behaviour which falls below the current requirement of physical force, violence or restraint? We do not agree with adding a specific reference to intimidation at polling stations to the offence of undue influence. Simplifying and modernising the offence of undue influence, and providing clear definitions, should ensure intimidation at polling station is covered without needing to make a specific reference to it. However, if the UK Government decides to include specific reference to intimidation at polling stations there must be a clear, workable definition of what activity should and should not be prohibited. We agree that electoral law should include offences that deter and punish intimidation and coercion of voters, which can be used by police forces and prosecutors in addition to general public order offences. However, we also agree with the 2016 UK's Law Commissions' concerns about lowering the bar of undue influence to include any behaviour which could be reasonably considered as intimidation at a polling station. The Law Commissions highlighted that perceptions of what is "intimidation" will vary, and therefore must be clearly defined. This will ensure that rights to free speech and assembly are not infringed. It would also be important to ensure that people understand what is meant by "outside a polling station". Consideration of additional electoral law offences We want the UK Government to consider creating the following postal voting offences: In our response to the

recommendations from Sir Eric Pickles' 2016 review of electoral integrity we supported extending the offences contained in Section 66 of the RPA to postal voting. The secrecy of the ballot protections that apply to in person voting, would then apply to postal ballots. There should be greater consistency and equivalency between offences which may be committed in a polling station or at a count, and elsewhere, including in a voter's home We recommend that the UK's Governments should change the law so that candidates, parties and campaigners are not allowed to handle or take completed absent vote applications or postal ballot packs from voters, but ensure sufficient safeguards are in place to protect legitimate assistance Increasing transparency in digital election campaigning Extending the imprint rules to digital material is urgent. This gap in transparency is affecting voter confidence and impacting our ability to enforce the rules All non-printed election and referendum material should contain an imprint. Any new regulations should be drafted as general principles to make them platform neutral and to future-proof them for changes in technology The UK Government should give the Electoral Commission wider powers to compel information outside of an investigation, including from digital platforms The imprint rules for printed election material in PPERA should be commenced for Northern Ireland The imprint rules in Northern Ireland should be the same as the rest of the UK The PPERA and the RPA contain powers for the Secretary of State to make regulations requiring imprints on non-printed election and referendum material. This applies to digital material, and it can also include audio material. Our view is that any new regulations should cover all non-printed material. Question 23: Do you as a voter believe that the current system as applied to printed election material promotes transparency and gives confidence in our systems? The imprint rules for printed election material ensure voters can check the source of election material, and allow the police, prosecutors and us to enforce the spending rules. Extending the imprint rules to digital material is urgent. This gap in transparency is affecting voter confidence and impacting our ability to enforce the rules. The imprint rules have two purposes. They ensure that voters can find out who is behind the election material they receive. And they allow the police, the CPS, the Procurator Fiscal, the PSNI and us to track campaigners' spending so that we can enforce the spending rules. Without the imprint rules, campaigners could run campaigns without ever having to identify themselves as the source. This is currently the case with digital material. At the beginning of 2018, we contracted the research company GfK to carry out research with the public. Our aim was to find out what the public knew and understood about political finance regulation in the UK and digital campaigning at elections and referendums. The findings confirmed the need for digital imprints. It showed that participants were more likely to pay attention to digital material, were concerned about its source and thought the imprint rules should be extended to digital material. Question 24: Should the imprint rules in PPERA be commenced for Northern Ireland? The imprint rules in PPERA should be commenced for Northern Ireland. Voters in Northern Ireland should know who is behind campaign material. The imprint rules in section 143 PPERA originally applied across the whole of the UK in February 2001. Following representations from the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties, the Election Publications Act 2001 suspended the provisions from April 2001. This was because a large amount of election material for the 2001 UK Parliamentary general election had already been printed without an imprint, so could not be used. In 2006, SI 2006 No. 3416 reinstated section 143 PPERA provisions in Great Britain only. We do not know why the Order did not extend the provisions to Northern Ireland. Where party and non-party campaigner election material in Northern Ireland lacks an imprint, we

have no powers to investigate and sanction a campaigner under PPERA. This means there is no deterrent in Northern Ireland, as there is in the rest of the UK, for failing to include one. The UK government must commence the imprint rules for Northern Ireland. Question 25: Should the imprint rules for Northern Ireland elections be the same as for the rest of the United Kingdom? The imprint rules for all campaigners in Northern Ireland should be the same as for the rest of the UK. Making the imprint requirements in the Electoral Law Act 1962 the same as those in section 110 RPA would provide further clarity. This would help simplify electoral law as the UK's Law Commissions have proposed. Currently in Northern Ireland an earlier version of Section 110 RPA is in force for imprints on candidate material for UK Parliamentary and Northern Ireland Assembly elections. This is because the Election Publications Act 2001 suspended the application of the new version of section 110 RPA (introduced under section 136 and Schedule 18 PPERA). Under SI 2006/3416, the new version of section 110 RPA was brought into force only in Great Britain (not Northern Ireland).

Principle and purpose Principle and purpose Question 26: What are your views on whether imprints should be required on all digital electoral material or only where spending on such material has been over a certain threshold? All digital election and referendum material should include an imprint. Any new regulations should ensure that individuals expressing personal opinions are not covered. The current rules for printed election material do not specify a minimum spending threshold before a campaigner must add an imprint. We do not think that any new rules for digital material should be different from the rules for printed material. Specifying a spending threshold creates other problems. A campaigner may spend very little, or nothing (apart from staff time), on creating a campaign message that reaches a lot of voters because that they can achieve wide organic reach. We do not think it is right that because they have spent nothing on creating and distributing the message, they should not have to identify themselves as its source. Further, we would not know what, if anything, a campaigner has spent on digital election material. s are not required to report their spending during an election or referendum campaign. This means we would not know whether a campaigner had passed the threshold, and therefore whether they had committed an offence by not including an imprint. This would undermine the purpose of extending the requirement to digital material, and make it difficult for the police and us to enforce the new rules. It is important that any new imprint rules do not affect voters' right to engage in political debate online during election and referendum campaigns. Any new rules should not cover individuals expressing personal opinions. When should imprints be required? Question 27: Should any new rules on digital material only apply to what we would already consider to be "electoral material" or should broader categories be considered? The UK Government should use the regulation-making powers in the PPERA and the RPA to make imprints on non-printed election material a legal requirement. Regulating broader categories of political advertising requires more thought and more scrutiny. Extending the imprint rules to non-printed material is urgent. Therefore, we think that the UK Government should use the existing regulation-making powers in the PPERA and the RPA. But those powers only allow the Secretary of State to draft regulations that apply to "election material" as defined in the PPERA, and material that is intended to promote or procure the election of a candidate in the RPA. Regulating wider forms of political advertising would require amending primary legislation, which would take much longer than introducing regulations. Regulating broader categories of political advertising requires more thought and more scrutiny. This would be a much different form of regulation than the current rules. The UK's governments and legislatures would need

to consider which principles should underpin any new rules for regulating wider political speech. They would need to ensure that the rules do not curtail free speech, and to consider the practicalities of enforcing any new rules. We think that more would need to be done to explore this idea. Question 28: Do you agree that the requirement for imprints on election material can arise all year round, not just during election periods? We agree with the Government's interpretation of the PPERA imprint requirements. Sections 143 and 143A do not specify a particular time period when the imprint rules apply. The requirement to include an imprint arises where the material can be reasonably regarded as intended to promote or procure electoral success for particular parties or categories of candidates, and the material relates to an election. These two tests may be met before the regulated period for that election has started. We think that the RPA imprint requirements apply during the specific timeframe when people are formally treated as candidates. Under section 110 RPA, imprints are required on any material which can be reasonably regarded as intended to promote or procure the election of a candidate at an election. Section 118A defines the earliest date on which a person can become a candidate for a UK Parliament or local election. There are no candidates before that date. Therefore, it is the earliest date on which an imprint is required. This means, for example, that there are no imprint requirements for material promoting a candidate in the long campaign period at a UK Parliamentary general election. We think the Government should consider this further, because there is an inconsistency in the law if the pre-candidacy spending rules apply whilst imprint requirements do not apply. What form of digital communications should be covered? What forms of digital communications should be covered? Question 29: Should we prioritise regulating certain forms of digital communications over others? If so, please give reasons. Certain forms of digital communication should not be prioritised over others. Digital campaigning is constantly evolving. If certain digital communications are prioritised, they may become outdated in the next few years. This would make any new rules outdated and unworkable. Political campaigns use a variety of digital channels to communicate their campaign messages to voters. They currently use email, websites, website advertising, search advertising and social media posts. Digital campaign messages can consist of text, photo, graphics, video, audio, slideshows, and various combinations of these formats. We have observed in our monitoring of election and referendum campaigns the evolution of social media advertising from posts consisting of text only to embedded video. This shows why it is important that any new imprint rules for digital and other non-printed material should cover all kinds of digital communications. This will also help to future-proof the new regulations for changes in technology and media. How should the imprint be incorporated? Question 30: What sort of mechanisms for including an imprint should be acceptable? Are there any technical difficulties that would need to be overcome to include text which is not accessible without a further step? Question 31: Would you find an imprint in an overarching space such as a 'bio' sufficiently visible? We support the principle that a campaigner's full details should be part of the campaign message itself. We do not think that an imprint in an overarching space is sufficiently visible. Until now we have said in our guidance that it is acceptable to include a full imprint on a 'bio' or 'profile' page if it cannot be part of the message itself. We took this approach during the Scottish Independence Referendum because it was a pragmatic solution to the (then) 140-character limit. But advertisers can remove the imprint from 'bio' or 'profile' information at any time. This is not a solid basis for transparency. And it is a platform-specific solution,

which may not work for newer forms of social media. We think that the law should move away from platform-specific solutions. Digital media and digital campaigning are constantly evolving, and this includes technical facilities to put an imprint on election ads. Therefore, any new imprint requirement should be 'platform-neutral'. In other words, it should apply to any kind of digital campaign message on any platform, and it should be part of the message itself. On platforms with word or character limits, like Twitter for example, a video or photo embedded in or attached to the message would allow a full imprint to be displayed. This could also be achieved with the dropdown boxes some platforms use to give users information about the advertising they see. Question 32: How can these mechanisms be future-proofed in expectation of developments in media and technology? Any new regulations should be drafted as general principles to make them 'platform-neutral'. The regulations should say that the technical design of digital imprints must allow machines to read, record and store them. The Government should consider carefully how to specify in regulations the circumstances in which non-printed material is, or is not, considered to be published. In the longer term, the UK government should consider amending the regulation-making powers in the PPERA and the RPA so that the rules can be kept up-to-date with technological developments. This could include giving us the regulation-making powers or a power to make a Code of Practice for imprints. We think that any new regulations should apply to all digital material on different platforms and media. This could be achieved by drafting general principles for including an imprint rather than specific rules for different media. This approach would help to make the new regulations 'platform-neutral' and future-proof them. The explanatory notes and memorandum for the regulations could contain examples of how they apply to different forms of digital advertising. We can use our guidance to explain at elections and referendums how the rules apply to the digital channels that campaigners are using at that time. Regulations made under the powers in section 143 PPERA and in section 110 RPA may specify the circumstances in which non-printed material is, or is not, considered to be published. This will be an important part of future-proofing the regulations, and we think the Government should consider carefully how to specify those circumstances. We will work with the Government on how to specify them. Any new requirement should say that the technical design of digital imprints must allow machines to read, record and store them. A number of organisations have recommended creating a central database of all election and referendum advertising. The technical design of digital imprints should allow them all to be stored in one place, should this be necessary at some point in the future. At this stage, we think that the right approach is to use the regulation-making powers in the PPERA and the RPA to make imprints on digital material a legal requirement. But advances in technology mean that both we and the UK government will need to keep the rules under regular review. It is likely that the UK government will need to amend them at some point despite its best efforts to future-proof them. For this reason, the UK government should consider whether to introduce primary legislation, when the opportunity arises, to amend the regulation-making powers in the PPERA and the RPA. The current powers were drafted at a time when print advertising was the main form of election advertising. They require the Secretary of State to model regulations for non-printed material after the rules for printed material. This may not give the Secretary of State enough discretion in the future to introduce regulations that are up-to-date with developments in technology. In the longer term, the UK government should also consider either transferring the regulation-making powers to the Electoral Commission, or giving us a power to make a Code of Practice for imprints. We would be responsible for ensuring

compliance with the new digital imprint requirements. And we have a duty to keep the law under review. We would therefore be best placed to know if and when the regulation-making powers needed to be used to update the regulations. Alternatively, a power to make a Code of Practice would allow us to provide additional statutory guidance for campaigners on how and when to include an imprint on digital material. And this should be able to be amended more easily than the requirements in legislation. Who should be responsible for including the imprint? Who should be responsible for including the imprint? Question 33: Should those who subsequently share digital electoral material also be required to include an imprint and, if so, whose details should be on it - theirs or the original publisher? Individuals who subsequently share material on a personal basis should not have to include an imprint. But where campaigners distribute a new election or referendum message that involves sharing material from another, unrelated organisation because they think it will enhance their electoral chances, they should have to include their own imprint on the new message. Individuals who want to share material from campaigners they know and trust. We think this is an important aspect of democratic engagement. Individuals would be deterred from sharing election material online if they knew they had to put their own imprint on it. As long as the material they share has the campaigner's imprint on it, this is enough. Enforcement Enforcement and redress Question 34: Do you think the responsible bodies have sufficient enforcement powers? Our current powers would be adequate for enforcing any new digital imprint regulations in the course of an investigation, but not where we haven't opened an investigation. The UK government should give us wider powers to compel information, including from digital platforms. The UK government should increase the maximum fine we can impose for breaches of the imprint rules. The UK government should give us the power to investigate and sanction breaches of the candidate rules in the RPA. We have powers to investigate and sanction campaigners for breaching the imprint rules in section 143 PPERA. This includes being able to fine a campaigner up to £20,000 for failing to include an imprint. Only the police and prosecutors are able to investigate, prosecute and sanction breaches of the imprint rules in section 110 RPA. We consider the powers we have to enforce the imprint rules for printed materials to be adequate. We can compel any person or organisation to give us information during an investigation. In most cases where there is a clear case of a failure to include an imprint, we would open an investigation. We would expect to be able to do the same with digital platforms under our existing powers. However, outside of an investigation we can only compel bodies regulated under PPERA to give us information about income and expenditure. Our powers to require information do not extend to third parties such as newspapers or digital platforms. This means that currently we would not be able to obtain information about the source of an advert which had no imprint. The ability to find out the identity of campaigners outside an investigation is also relevant for enforcing the spending rules. We think that we should have the power to compel digital platforms, and others, to give us information we need to perform our statutory functions, such as advertisers' contact details or amounts spent on distributing election material. This would allow us to effectively monitor campaign activity and take action to prevent non-compliance where possible at an early stage. We have previously said that our maximum fine of £20,000 for each offence is too low. When considering how much to fine a campaigner for failing to include an imprint on campaign material, one of the factors we take into account is how many people may have seen it. Digital campaign messages can potentially reach many more people than a newspaper advert. And as they can be delivered directly to a

handheld device, voters have less control over whether they see them. Our maximum fine should reflect these factors. It should therefore be increased. We have previously recommended that we should be given powers to investigate and sanction breaches of the candidate rules in the RPA. We have seen some high-profile alleged breaches of the candidate rules, mostly at national elections, where referral for criminal prosecution was not considered to be in the public interest. But it may have been appropriate to investigate further and issue a civil sanction if we had had the power to do so. This is why we repeat this recommendation here. Related content

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Briefing: The Transparency of Donations and Loans etc. (Northern Ireland Political Parties) Order 2018 | Electoral Commission Search Briefing:

The Transparency of Donations and Loans etc. (Northern Ireland Political Parties) Order 2018 You are in the section Home On this page Briefing summary Read our briefing in full Further information First published: 1 February 2018 Last updated: 16 July 2019 Summary of the briefing Date: February 2018 For: MPs Full briefing Overview This briefing provides the Electoral Commission's view on the Transparency of Donations and Loans etc. (Northern Ireland Political Parties) Order 2018. The Order is scheduled for debate in the House of Lords on Tuesday 27 February. The Commission supports this Order. Transparency is an essential component of increasing public confidence in the democratic process. Information on how political parties, candidates and other campaigners raise and spend money should be open to timely public scrutiny. Once in force, this Order will allow us to start publishing regular information about donations and loans to political parties and other regulated entities in Northern Ireland for the first time. What the Order will allow us to do Subject to coming into force, the Order will allow us to publish information about donations and loans reported by Northern Ireland political parties and other regulated entities from 1 July 2017 onwards as part of our regular publication cycle. If this Order is not made then the Commission will continue to be prohibited from publishing any information relating to political donations in Northern Ireland, which would be disappointing for voters and others who want transparency. We have published an update on our website and a factsheet to inform political parties and other regulated recipients of donations or loans about the proposed changes. We have also written to all MPs, MLAs and Northern Ireland parties to inform them about this guidance. Our view on transparency from January 2014 This Order represents the first opportunity for us to begin publishing information about donations and loans to political parties and other regulated entities in Northern Ireland. We will continue to recommend that a further Order should be brought forward in the near future to provide for full transparency back to 2014, as anticipated by the Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014. The 2014 Act said that the names of donors and lenders from January 2014 may be made public at some point in the future. At that time we wrote to all of the political parties in Northern Ireland to advise them that they should make clear to their donors that any donations received from January 2014 may be made public. We strongly urge the UK Government to bring forward a further Order at a later date that would enable us to publish donation and loan information for the period dating back to 1 January 2014. This would however require detailed separate consideration about how to ensure information from the period before 31 December 2013 was kept confidential as required by the law. Further information For further information please contact Cahir Hughes on 028 9089 4028 or chughes@electoralcommission.org.uk. Related content Briefing: Our evaluation of voter ID pilots Read our briefing for MPs from May 2019 Briefing: Overseas Electors Bill Read our briefing for MPs from February 2018 Proposals in the Queen's Speech Read our briefing for MPs from October 2019

You are in the Party panels section Home How we make decisions Party panels First published: 14 July 2020 Last updated: 14 July 2020 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Conservative Party: Alan Mabbett OBE (AM), chair of meeting Labour Party: Andrew Whyte (AW) Scottish National Party: Scott Martin (SM) Plaid Cymru: Geraint Day (GD) Electoral Commission: Craig Westwood, Director of Communications, Policy & Research (CW) Louise Edwards, Director of Regulation (LE) Charlene Hannon, Head of Guidance (CH) Laura McLeod, Public Affairs Manager (LM) Minutes of the last meeting and actions arising (PPP 3/09/2019) The minutes were agreed. LE provided an update on the action regarding PPP engagement with police SPOCs. LE offered to put the parties in touch with the SPOCs, but asked for more detail on the issues the parties wanted to discuss. AM explained the SPOC conference had provided a unique opportunity for parties to interact with SPOCs face-to-face. SM agreed it was particularly useful learning experience and to understand how deal with specific issues and gave the example of treating. SM highlighted that it had been useful to receive the case update and suggested this could be sent through by email in future. LE agreed to talk to the SPO, Garry Cann and put the parties in touch. Post general election review AM asked about duplicate registrations and suggested that despite the high numbers of people registering in the run up the election, it would be likely the vast majority won't be new registrations, but from people already on the register, who had been reminded to register. CW explained the Commission's public awareness campaign had achieved 2.6 million applications to register vote, but that the data on duplications was not yet available. CW explained the Commission was in the process of gathering evidence to inform its statutory report on the election that will be published in spring. He explained this included research with overseas voters, EROs and ROS and for the first time, included a survey of SPOCs. He welcomed any feedback from the parties. AW asked about the inconsistency of local authorities accepting scanned copies of applications to register to vote, noting the issue was with the guidance. CH explained this was covered in the guidance, but could be addressed through the Commission's support and improvement work. CH agreed to explore how the message could be strengthened in the guidance. SM noted the issue with accessing registers, particularly given the election took place during the annual canvass. AM, AW and GD agreed that all parties had the same issue in getting the updated registers in a reasonable timeframe and highlighted the difficulties that this presented, particularly given resources in electoral service teams. SM noted the ongoing issue that EROs continue to reissue registers without any explanation, rather than by an update. CH stated all registers would have been published by 1 December 2019. AW asked if the Commission had identified any regulatory trends or offences at the election. LE explained that the 2019 election had the highest number of registrations of non-party campaigners register for an election. LE noted the social media ad libraries had been a useful tool during the campaign and would be used to compare spending. AM suggested it would be interesting to see how many candidates failed to submit any adverts. Update on PFR online LE outlined the project is well advanced on the registration side and will be launched at the start of the parties financial year, January 2020. She noted parties can focus and submit reports for the unscheduled elections in 2019 on the old system. GD raised the issue of guidance on the Commission's website and suggested it should be ranked in the order it is likely to be used. He noted the recent general election guidance had appeared on page two. AM agreed it should have a higher ranking automatically. CH explained the Commission

was aware of this and working with developers to find a solution and make the algorithm smarter and user friendly. AM suggested that PPP members receive correspondence or an email when any new guidance is issued. LE offered to take this away to consider the possibility for future ERO Performance Standards Consultation CW highlighted the Commission's open consultation on new performance standards for Electoral Registration Officers. He explained the proposed standards are focussed on the outcomes that should be delivered, rather than the processes that are followed, with the objective of helping EROs and their teams to understand the impact of their electoral registration activities. CW welcomed any feedback from parties and noted the consultation would close on 31 March. Commission Update Report Regarding policy development grants, CW explained the Cabinet Office had drafted an amendment Order, which will give effect to the Commission's recommendations for changes to the scheme. He confirmed work is on-going with the Cabinet Office to ensure this is completed by the required deadline. LE updated on the Codes of Practice on election spending and explained a final draft would go to the Minister for the Constitution and Devolution by March. She asked for input on how to share updated Codes with the parties. AM suggested it would make sense to take time to reflect on the 2019 UK Parliamentary general election before submitting the Codes. AW agreed. LE explained the Commission is currently planning to review the conference stand rate this year, and will consult with parties. LE asked if by end of summer was going to be viable and offered to send a more granular timetable to PPP members. AM raised the issue of defining parliamentary lounges, that were not a fixed stand. AW gave the example of how a LGA stand would factor into sponsorship and suggested parties need additional guidance. LE offered to take this away and report back with a timetable. Forward looking Commission activity CW explained the Commission had agreed with the Speakers' Committee to submit an interim corporate plan. CW highlighted the next six months would be spent producing a new five-year corporate plan, noting the welcome opportunity to take a fresh view of the challenges and opportunities ahead for the democratic processes. He suggested the September PPP meeting would be an opportunity to get parties' input into the plan. SM, AM, AW, GD all agreed. AM raised the issue of fixed thresholds and explained that the original legislation envisaged a single electoral register. LE noted the Commission has to use single registers to check donations. CW explained the benefits of modernising the registers would have for a number of stakeholders. Any other business SM noted the commitment to have an Association of s representative at the next meeting, after May local elections. AM asked for an update on the work on the Commission's new Enforcement Policy. LE confirmed the Commission planned to consult later this year and re-offered the PPP members the opportunity to meet once the consultation opens. LE highlighted Majella La Praik would be on maternity leave from March, and recruitment for her cover will begin shortly. Commission actions Status To put PPP members in touch with Deputy Chief Constable Gary Cann, lead for election related crime at the National Police Chief's Council. Ongoing: Louise has spoken to Gary Cann and will put parties in touch To invite a representative from the Association of s to attend the PPP meeting in June Completed: Peter Stanyon will attend the June meeting Provide a timetable for the review of Party conference stands Ongoing: update to be provided at meeting Provide detail on how many of the applications to register to vote at the 2019 UKPGE were duplicates. Completed To use the September meeting to discuss the Commission's next five year corporate plan with parties Ongoing: to be added to agenda for September meeting

Appendix 1A Third party regulatory framework - Governance implications for Commissioners | Electoral Commission Search Appendix 1A

Third party regulatory framework - Governance implications for Commissioners You are in the Code of Conduct for Electoral Commissioners section Home Commissioners Code of Conduct for Electoral Commissioners On this page Risk of ceasing to hold Office as a Commissioner, and Declaring an interest and conflict First published: 17 June 2023 Last updated: 23 June 2023 Risk of ceasing to hold Office as a

Commissioner, and Declaring an interest and conflict Risk of ceasing to hold Office as a Commissioner 1. Under the third party regulatory framework introduced by the Transparency of Lobbying, Non-party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014 (Transparency Act): When a third party organisation that is obliged to register with the Commission provides its financial return to the Commission, that return must include a statement of 'relevant donations' to it. Registered campaigners will be required to report donations every three months in the circa seven and a half month regulated period before polling day at UK Parliamentary general elections , and also (as at present) after the poll. Relevant donations are donations to the third party in respect of controlled spending that is used for specified campaigning activities during the regulated period. Donations can include non-financial support given to an organisation, but does not include the time of volunteers Both the number and type of third party organisations required to register with the Commission is likely to increase, with the scope of controlled expenditure expanding; and therefore potentially the incidence of relevant donations.

2. Under the Political Party Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) if a Commissioner were to be properly listed by a third party registered campaigner in its financial return to the Commission as a donor (of £7,500 or more), the Commissioner would be deemed to cease to hold office. 3. Accordingly in the context of the forthcoming UK Parliamentary general election (and the elections referred to in footnote 1), a gift or donation of £7,500 or over (including cumulatively by smaller payments) made to a registered third party organisation e.g. a charity - if the organisation reports it as relating to controlled spending – would trigger the Commissioner ceasing to hold office. This would apply even if the gift or donation were made without intent or knowledge that the receiving organisation may subsequently use it for campaigning purposes.

Frequently asked questions – risk of ceasing to hold office Q.1: I make donations (or they are made indirectly through another vehicle, such as a trust I have an interest in) from time to time to a third party organisation that I support e.g. a charity, a faith group, a trade union or a trade association. I do not stipulate how they may be used by the third party. These may cumulatively add up to £7,500 or more. Does this trigger the PPERA provision whereby I cease to be a Commissioner? A. Probably not. That is, if the donations you make are for the general purposes of the third party and there is no indication from you or the third party that they will use the donations for campaigning intended to influence voters. It would be unlikely that this could be properly concluded as you donating for such purposes. So, the risk of the PPERA trigger applying should be low. However, you do need to bear in mind that the PPERA trigger could apply in some circumstances e.g. if you made these donations in a context where their use for campaigning purposes (intended to influence voters) was a requirement or objectively possible or likely. Q.2: I am a trustee or on the board of a third party organisation and/or give them advice and expertise. The 'value' my time could amount to £7,500 or more. Does this trigger the PPERA provision whereby I cease to be a Commissioner? A. Probably not. The donations (whether in money or in kind), would only be regulated if they were directed towards campaigning

purposes intended to influence voters. Further, volunteering activities are not caught by the third party regulatory requirements. So, provided you are not being paid for the activity (apart from re-imbursement of expenses), it would be unlikely that this could properly be concluded as you donating for campaigning purposes intended to influence voters. The risk of the PPERA trigger applying should be low. However, you do need to bear in mind that the PPERA trigger could apply in some circumstances e.g. if your advice, expertise and time was given or paid for in a context where their application was clearly for or objectively possible or likely to be used for campaigning purposes intended to influence voters.

Q.3: In considering whether a number of donations cumulatively add up to £7,500 or more over what time period do I calculate this?

A. It is only necessary to add up separate donations given over a period of time if it could reasonably be concluded that they are part of a number of donations all linked to a particular purpose and this will properly flow through to reference to you as a donor named in a regulated third party report to the Commission on regulated expenditure in a particular election.

Declaring an interest and conflict

4. As reflected by the Commissioner Code of Conduct, the work of the Commission must be carried out free from any suggestion of improper influence, whether financial, personal, or political. This is integral to maintaining public confidence in the Commission generally, and especially in its role as a regulator.

5. It would be impracticable and unnecessary to register all personal involvement of a less direct or more minor kind with third parties, given the very wide part that for example organisations such as charities play in daily life. If a Commissioner makes a gift or donation (including in time or expertise) to a third party, the Commissioner should consider whether to report that to the Commission as a 'declaration of an interest'. At all times the key question to ask when assessing whether to record an interest, is - does it have an impact on the work of the Electoral Commission or reasonable public perception of my role as an Electoral Commissioner?

6. Payment of say an annual membership fee or the giving in the normal course of events of small donations and not linked to a particular live campaigning issue of potential or actual political relevance, should not be such as to require declaration of this to the Commission. However more active involvement in a third party such as volunteering, provision of advice/assistance generally, fundraising activities and so on, would all be indicators of it being prudent to declare an interest to the Commission. Making significant personal donations would clearly lead to the need to declare an interest (e.g. above £1,000 in a year).

7. If a third party could reasonably be expected to campaign on issues in the lead up to PPERA regulated elections, this is very likely to give rise to the need to declare an interest to the Commission and possibly - depending on the facts - a conflict of interest.

8. In the event of a conflict of interest, the Commissioner must withdraw from participating in or influencing any related Commission business.

9. Commissioners should also consider the relevance of the above requirements if a close family member or associate is making donations to or closely involved with a campaigning third party.

10. The guiding principle for Commissioners is to err on the side of caution. That is, if it appears that you could need to declare to the Commission that you have made a donation to, or are involved in, the activities of a third party, it is best to do so. This will place yourself and the Commission beyond reproach.

Frequently asked questions – declaring an interest and conflict

Q.1: I have made a donation of over £1,000 to a third party organisation that I support e.g. a charity, a faith group, a trade union or a trade association. Do I need to inform the Commission that I have done this?

A. Yes, if the donation is over £1,000 (including cumulative effect of

smaller donations in a 12 month period). Make the declaration regardless of the organisation to which you've made the donation. Q.2: What about the need to declare a donation of less than £1,000? A. If the donation is less than £1,000 you still need to consider whether to inform the Commission. You may well be inclined to err on the side of caution and declare the donation to the Commission. Consideration would include whether you are directly involved in the activities of the organisation; and whether the receiving organisation or individual is or is likely to be involved in live campaigning on issues of potential or actual political relevance, Q.3: What if I have made a donation in kind, rather than money e.g. giving advice or my time in voluntary activity? A. The same rules apply as in question 2, as if you had donated money. Q.4: I am a member or friend of a third party organisation e.g. the National Trust. Do I need to declare this? A. In the normal course of events, no, you do not have to declare this. However, if such an organisation were involved or subsequently became involved in live campaigning on issue(s) of potential or actual political relevance you should do so. Q.5: I'm involved with/have donated to an organisation that is campaigning, but I doubt at levels that would require it to register with the Commission as a third party – should I declare my involvement? A. Yes. The fact that they are campaigning may mean that they either should have or will need to register as a third party with the Commission.

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to challenge a sitting MP: review of the 2019 recall petitions section Home Recall
petitions The process to challenge a sitting MP: review of the 2019 recall petitions
On this page Running the petition Signing the petition Campaigning First published:
10 October 2019 Last updated: 10 October 2019 Running the petition Notification of
petition Thursday 24 April Petition open Thursday 9 May-Thursday 20 June Number of
signing places (maximum of 10) 6 Extended hours (outside 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday
Open from 8am on Tuesdays; closed 8pm on Wednesdays Count Took place at 9am on Friday
21 June Signing the petition For a recall petition to result in an MP being recalled
over 10% of people eligible to sign must do so within the six-week signing period. We
can see from petition data that the majority of those who signed did so within the
first two weeks of the petition opening. How many people were eligible to sign 53,032
How many signatures needed to recall MP 5,303 Number who signed 10,005 - this was 19%
of people eligible to sign Spoilt signing papers 41 We can also see from this data
how people chose to sign the petition. How people chose to sign the petition
Campaigning People or organisations wishing to campaign for or against the recall
petition and intending to spend over £500 were required to notify the PO that they
wished to be a registered campaigner. There were three registered campaigners in
Brecon and Radnorshire who have submitted donation and spending returns. Spending and
donation returns

Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal four | Electoral Commission Search

Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal four You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 On this page Key achievements Performance measures First published: 30 June 2020 Last updated: 17 September 2020 Goal four To provide value for money, making best use of our resources and expertise to deliver services that are attuned to what matters most to voters. This goal provides a focus to activities that support the organisation and ensure we have the appropriate skilled people and resources. The aim is to deliver services that are efficient, effective and economical. Key achievements To support our organisation, we:

- ran a programme of testing, upgrading and benchmarking against appropriate standards to protect our digital infrastructure against cyber threats
- developed our working practices to reflect the expectations on a modern employer and ensured our digital systems support these changes
- upgraded the information technology systems that support our regulatory and electoral administration functions
- continued working closely with the National Cyber Security Centre to improve how we monitor our networks and platforms
- launched a new website to meet users' needs more effectively and provide information in easy-to-use and more accessible ways
- implemented new online procurement, project management and governance systems to make our processes more efficient and transparent
- developed a new people strategy to support the best use of our resources
- enhanced our skills base through a comprehensive learning and development programme and investment in specialised technical resources
- worked with the Scottish and Welsh parliaments to develop an operational model that allows us to report and account to them
- provided guidance and tools to staff to help us improve our quality assurance processes

Performance measures

- Measure Performance Learn practical lessons from current home and remote working practices and design future accommodation accordingly
- Ongoing 1 Identify options, costs and benefits of e-procurement and implement a new system accordingly
- Not achieved 2 Stakeholder and staff satisfaction with IT tools
- Ongoing 3 Maintain high staff engagement scores in the annual staff survey and ensure indicators such as staff turnover are at appropriate levels
- Staff engagement score: 72% (2018-19: 65%.Civil Service average: 62%)
- Staff turnover: 13.19% (2018-19: 31.97%)
- Monitor significant variances on all budgets and, where appropriate, reduce these variances over the five years of our Corporate Plan
- Not achieved 4 Supporting the organisation In this last year, we have continued to transform the way we work through significant investments in our digital infrastructure, to improve its resilience and support flexible working practices. We have also continued working with the National Cyber Security Centre to improve how we monitor our networks and platforms, which helped with our focus on cyber security during the 2019 polls. Our new website provides a better service to our stakeholders. As our main communication channel, it was important for us to improve functionality and accessibility, to communicate our work in better ways. We have introduced other new digital tools to help us run our organisation. This includes an online procurement system, to make it easier for suppliers to participate in our tenders, and a planning system that enables us to report on our progress against our corporate goals and monitor risk more efficiently. Our new governance system gives us a more effective way to communicate with the Commission Board to give clear oversight of our performance. Our new people strategy includes actions to facilitate a culture where employees are able to perform their roles more effectively. We started this work by reviewing our performance management and development processes. We have moved away from evaluating and ranking employee performance at set times in the year and changed to a continuous approach, managed

through objectives. This addresses feedback from our 2018 staff survey and better fits with our culture. We focussed on initiatives to address staff turnover. This included changing our recruitment practices to presume all roles would be permanent, unless there is a strong case to justify a fixed-term contract. We also supported staff to re-locate to our other offices, where this fitted their circumstances and our business needs. We continued supporting staff groups that we set up to address particular areas, such as the staff engagement group, to ensure our employees have input into corporate policies and programmes. We also have groups dedicated to supporting staff with bullying, harassment and mental health issues and we have maintained strong links with our trade union, the Public and Commercial Services Union. We invested more in learning and development and ensured staff were aware of training opportunities. We also appointed a provider to deliver a leadership and management development programme for all managers, which will run throughout 2020. The Scottish and Welsh parliaments have been considering legislation that would ensure we are accountable to them for our work on devolved elections. We have always reported voluntarily to both parliaments for our policy work on devolved issues, but the new legislation will mean our formal accountability arrangements match those we have with the UK Parliament. Report navigation links Previous Next Performance analysis: Goal three Looking ahead to 2020/21 and using our resources to support the delivery of our goals 1. We implemented changes to working hours after piloting a new approach. ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. We completed our tender and signed a contract in February. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, we delayed implementation until the first quarter of 2020-21. ■ Back to content at footnote 2 3. We started significant projects to upgrade infrastructure, devices and applications, which we will evaluate once they are complete ■ Back to content at footnote 3 4. Due to exceptional factors. We explain this further under, “Using our financial resources efficiently”. ■ Back to content at footnote 4 Related content Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 Read our annual report and accounts for 2019/20, including key figures about the year at a glance. Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal one This is goal one of the performance analysis section of our annual report and accounts Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal two This is goal two of the performance analysis section of our annual report and accounts Performance analysis 2019/20: Goal three This is goal three of the performance analysis section of our annual report and accounts

Parliamentary Parties Panel minutes: 2 June 2015 | Electoral Commission Search
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section Home How we make decisions Party panels On this page Minutes, and actions of
the meeting and matters arising (ECPPP 03/03/2015) May 2015 polls IER EU Referendum
Policy Development Grants review May 2016 polls 'Hidden Cost of Elections' report
International observers at May 2015 polls Date of the next meeting Actions First
published: 2 June 2015 Last updated: 2 September 2019 Who was at the meeting Who was
at the meeting Conservative Party: Andrew Stedman, Compliance Manager (AS) Daisy
Woods (DW) Labour (Chair): Mike Creighton, Director of Audit and Risk (MC) Management
Margaret Lynch, Compliance Manager (ML) Liberal Democrats: David Allworthy, Head of
Compliance and Constitutional Support (DA) Darren Briddock (DB) Plaid Cymru: Emry
Williams, Plaid Cymru (EW) Scottish National Party: Scott Martin, Scottish National
Party (SM) Ulster Unionist Party: Colin McCusker, General Secretary (CM) Electoral
Commission: Peter Wardle, Chief Executive (PW) Andrew Scallan, Director of Electoral
Administration (AS2) Alex Robertson, Director of Communications (AR) Bob Posner,
Director of Party and Election Finance & Legal Counsel (BP) Mazda Khatun,
Communications Officer (MK) Minutes, and actions of the meeting and matters arising
(ECPPP 03/03/2015) The minutes from 03/03/2015 were agreed with no clarifications
sought or noted. There were no other matters arising from the minutes. ML queried
whether there could be a conflict of interest in BP's appointment as joint Editor of
Schofield's Election Law. PW confirmed that this had already been considered by the
Commission. May 2015 polls PW reported that the May 2015 polls had generally been
well-run, despite a few problems in areas where there were multiple elections on the
same day. DA commented that the Commission's guidance while helpful, was best
understood by more experienced party officials and thought that it would be
beneficial to have a master index of all guidance to which everyone could refer. BP
replied that the Commission recognises there is a need for something like this and
that it will be discussing plans on a one-to-one basis with parties in the coming
weeks. He also cautioned that it might be that not everything the Commission and
parties would like to achieve could be done so for the May 2016 polls. MC felt that
the principle about legislation for elections being clear six months before the date
of the poll should also be applied to guidance. BP and PW confirmed that the
Commission is conscious of this and has a high threshold for changing or issuing new
guidance close to a poll. EW reported that in Wales, some candidates, confused by
rules around commonly used names had decided to change their name by deed poll. AS2
replied that the Commission had not issued new guidance on this matter, but had
reissued existing guidance when it became clear that there was some confusion
surrounding the rules. AS2 noted however, that some Returning Officers had told
candidates and agents that this was new guidance. ML concurred, saying that previous
guidance to candidates, agents and political parties had not been clear enough on
this matter. MC noted that he did not know of any instances when candidates'
nomination forms had been rejected due to confusion on this point. Action: Commission
to ensure that guidance for candidates, agents and Returning Officers about commonly
used names is consistent. SM also requested that guidance on whether candidates could
include the title 'Dr' on the ballot paper be clarified. Action: Commission
to clarify whether the title 'Dr' can be included on the ballot paper. ML also raised
concerns that Returning Officers and electoral services teams in some areas did not
realise that the party name could be on the ballot paper and were also unwilling to
accept bankers' drafts as they did not recognise them. Action: Commission to
reinforce guidance on ballot papers and acceptable forms of payment. CM also stated

that the process of uploading a new logo to the Commission's website had been very frustrating and drawn-out. Meeting the specifications for the logo was difficult, and it was unclear how the quality of the logo could be maximised. DA also remarked that logo resolution would decrease once uploaded to the website and that old logos were being stored in the cache, which could cause confusion. Action: Commission to look into improving logo uploads. AS2 added that sometimes printers had been eager to print ballot papers early, thus missing updates made to logos afterwards. The Commission will explore whether the time between the deadline for logo changes and the close of nominations should be revised in a report on the May 2015 polls. Action: Commission to look at processes around logo change in its report on May 2015 polls, to be published in July. AR reported on the Commission's public awareness campaign, which exceeded the Commission's target for reaching one million online applications to register to vote, by reaching two and half million applications. The Commission also had a target of one million additions to the register, and the result of the progress on this would be included in a report about public awareness at the May 2015 polls. IER MC requested that parties once again be given access to see the IER flags next to confirmed electors, to support efforts to encourage voter registration. PW responded that while the Commission was happy to have the support of parties on registration efforts, there was still no conclusion from the Cabinet Office as to whether having this information had had any effect on registration. He suggested that the PPP discuss this with Cabinet Office officials. AS2 informed the PPP that those unconfirmed on the new IER registers would be contacted by Electoral Registration Officers from summer 2015, using Household Enquiry Forms and also Invitations to Register. AS noted that it was very difficult for parties to keep up to date with the changes to the register and that they found it especially challenging to analyse over 360 registers in different formats. He added that where donors had dropped off the register because they were unconfirmed under IER, there should be discretion to accept their donations. MC was very concerned that students living in halls and attainers had been particularly adversely affected by IER, with large drop-off rates emerging. PW said that the December 2014 registers had confirmed what the Commission and others believed would happen to the number of students registered, but added that Electoral Registration Transformation Programme had funded EROs to issue Household Notification Letters. He also noted that work by the Commission, partners and EROs to register as many people as possible would continue beyond the end of the transition to IER. The Commission is looking at ways to further modernise registration EU Referendum MC suggested that the EU Referendum stay as a standing item on the PPP meeting agenda for the foreseeable future. Action: Keep EU Referendum on PPP meeting agendas. PW informed the PPP that before Committee Stage of the Bill, the Commission would put together a guide on some of the fundamental aspects of how referendums work, which would be shared with parties. Policy Development Grants review BP noted that all parties represented at the PPP had received letters from the Commission about the review of Policy Development Grants. The Commission's conclusion was that, having considered alternative schemes, none proved to be better than the current one. May 2016 polls MC asked whether the Commission would produce a voter information booklet for the Police and Crime Commissioner elections in 2016. AS2 responded that this was under review. AS2 reported that the Commission had suggested some changes to the ballot papers for the Mayoral elections in an effort to reduce the ballot paper rejection rate. ML also asked whether, with the franchise extension to 16 and 17 year olds in Scotland, there would be any child safeguarding issues that parties should be aware of. AS2 confirmed that this change would mean that 14 and 15 year olds were the

new attainers in Scotland, there would be some child safeguarding measures such as these attainers not being included in the open register. However, political parties would still have access to their details. BP added that this change in franchise meant there was a concurrent reduction in the age of permissible donors, although this was not expected to be a significant issue. 'Hidden Cost of Elections' report BP reported that the Commission would be publishing a report on the 'hidden costs of elections' in the coming weeks. This would illustrate the economic benefit of electoral law reform, so supporting the legal and practical case being put forward by the Law Commissions' project. This would be circulated to PPP. International observers at May 2015 polls PW stated that some reports from international observers at the May 2015 polls had been published and were generally positive. Date of the next meeting The date of the next meeting is 1 September 2015 – Liberal Democrats to Chair Actions Actions from June 2015 PPP meeting Action Owner Commission to ensure that guidance for candidates, agents and Returning Officers about commonly used names is consistent. AS2 Commission to clarify whether the title 'Dr' can be included on the ballot paper. AS2 Commission to reinforce guidance on ballot papers and acceptable forms of payment. AS2 Commission to look into improving logo uploads. BP Commission to look at processes around logo change in its report on May 2015 polls, to be published in July. AS2 Keep EU Referendum on PPP meeting agendas. MK Related content Party registration decisions View our decisions on political party names, descriptions and emblems View current applications View the political party names, descriptions and emblems which we are currently considering as part of our assessment process Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Registers of unincorporated associations Download and view the registers of unincorporated associations

2019 electoral fraud data | Electoral Commission Search 2019
electoral fraud data You are in the Electoral fraud data section Home Our research Electoral fraud data On this page Convictions and cautions Election petitions Types of electoral fraud allegations First published: 31 March 2020 Last updated: 31 March 2021 Electoral fraud in 2019 The UK has low levels of proven electoral fraud. There remains no evidence of large-scale electoral fraud in 2019. Overview 595 cases of alleged electoral fraud were investigated by the police. Of these, four led to a conviction and two individuals were given a police caution. This table shows the number of cases of alleged fraud the police reported to us, for each election held in 2019.

Election	Number of cases
Local elections	362
UK Parliamentary general election	164
European Parliamentary election	21
Non-election specific (for example, electoral registration)	21
Local by-election	12
UK Parliamentary by-election	7
Mayoral election	6
Combined authority mayoral election	1
Police and Crime Commissioner by-election	1

Cases where the suspect was convicted, or accepted a police caution A caution for false information on a nomination paper The Police Service of Northern Ireland received a report that a Democratic Unionist Party candidate had submitted a local government election nomination form that included an address that they had previously lived at and not their current one. Once contacted by the police, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council confirmed that the nomination papers had been accepted for this candidate, and it was too late for the address to be removed from the notice of poll or from the ballot papers for the election. The candidate was not elected, but following a police investigation, they accepted a caution from police. A conviction for false information on a nomination paper South Wales Police received a report that a candidate for a local council by-election (Neath Port Talbot Council) submitted a nomination form that included forged signatures. This was not discovered until after the close of nominations, and so the candidate remained on the ballot paper. The candidate was not elected. Following a police investigation the suspect pleaded guilty on the first day of the trial and was: sentenced to 6 months in prison, suspended for 12 months given a 15 days rehabilitation requirement ordered to complete 180 hours of community service ordered to pay costs of £2,366 A conviction for false information on a nomination paper Norfolk Police received a report that an independent candidate submitted a local government election nomination form that included a signature from a supporter that he knew was false. The candidate was elected, but following a police investigation he stood down and was: fined £3,300 not allowed to stand for election for five years A conviction for using someone else's vote at a polling station West Yorkshire police received a report from polling station staff that a man had voted twice in the European Parliamentary election. A polling station staff member became suspicious and went to the police. The police then arrested and interviewed the voter. He admitted to voting twice, once using his own name and once using his son's name. He was: sentenced to 8 weeks in prison, suspended for 12 months given a fine of £50 not allowed to vote for five years A conviction for tampering with ballot papers The Metropolitan Police received a report of a disruption at a polling station within the Erith and Thamesmead constituency at the UK Parliamentary general election. Someone entered a polling station and after being told that they were not entitled to vote, took hold of the ballot box to stop anyone else from casting their vote. Owing to the individual's disruptive behaviour, police arrested the offender and took them away from the polling station. Following a police investigation the individual was charged with taking or interfering with a ballot box and pleaded guilty at court. He was sentenced to a 24 month rehabilitation activity programme and ordered to pay £620 in

costs. A caution for using someone else's vote at a polling station West Mercia police received a report that someone had voted at a polling station in the European Parliamentary election, but they weren't on the electoral register. The suspect knew that he was not on the electoral register and could not vote. Instead, he gave his father's name to polling station staff and was given a ballot paper and cast his vote. A polling station staff member suspected the voter was not who he said he was. They raised their concerns with the police who interviewed him under caution. He fully accepted that he had voted using his father's name. He accepted a caution from the police.

Election petitions

An election petition is a legal challenge to the result and/or the delivery of an election. There were eight petitions following elections in 2019. Six of these were made after the 2 May elections. Only two of these were successful. One petition was made following the 6 June 2019 Peterborough parliamentary by-election. Another petition was made following the 12 December 2019 UK Parliamentary general election in the East Ham Parliamentary constituency. Both petitions were unsuccessful.

Outcome	Number of cases	Percentage of total
No further action	384	65%
Locally resolved	200	34%
Conviction	4	0%
Caution	2	0%
Other	2	0%
Acquitted	1	0%
Court proceedings initiated	1	0%
Court proceedings discontinued	1	0%

Two thirds of all cases resulted in the police taking no further action. This means that the cases were not investigated further by the police because there was no evidence (or there wasn't enough evidence), or no offence was found.

Types of electoral fraud allegations

More than half of all reported cases were about campaigning offences. Most of these were: campaigners not including details about the printer, promotor or publisher on election material - an 'imprint' someone making false statements about the personal character or conduct of a candidate

Category	Number of cases	Percentage of total
Campaigning	320	54%
Voting	142	24%
Nomination	71	12%
Registration	58	10%
Administration	4	1%

Accessible information Download this table to search for data from specific police forces, by category of offence or outcome.

2019 electoral fraud data from police forces Please contact us if you require the allegations data by police force in another format.

Types of electoral fraud reported since 2010

Description	Category	Percentage of total
Campaigning	54%	
Voting	24%	
Nomination	12%	
Registration	10%	
Administration	1%	

2018

Category	Percentage of total
Campaigning	48%
Voting	21%
Nomination	15%
Registration	15%
Administration	0%

2017

Category	Percentage of total
Campaigning	49%
Voting	31%
Registration	11%
Nomination	7%
Administration	1%
Miscellaneous	1%

2016

Category	Percentage of total
Voting	43%
Campaigning	37%
Nomination	9%
Registration	8%
Administration	2%

2015

Category	Percentage of total
Campaigning	56%
Voting	26%
Nomination	10%
Registration	8%
Administration	1%

2014

Category	Percentage of total
Campaigning	38%
Voting	27%
Registration	15%
Nomination	14%
Miscellaneous	3%
Administration	3%

2013

Category	Percentage of total
Campaigning	54%
Registration	18%
Voting	13%
Nomination	8%
Miscellaneous	5%
Administration	1%

2012

Category	Percentage of total
Campaigning	41%
Voting	25%
Registration	23%
Nomination	6%
Miscellaneous	3%
Administration	1%

2011

Category	Percentage of total
Campaigning	52%
Registration	22%
Voting	14%
Nomination	7%
Miscellaneous	4%
Administration	2%

2010

Category	Percentage of total
Voting	32%
Campaigning	31%
Registration	28%
Nomination	6%
Miscellaneous	2%
Administration	1%

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Public attitudes Read our reports about public attitudes towards voting

Analysis of electoral registration data about electoral registration data

Modernising elections research This qualitative research looks at public attitudes to voting and the information available around elections.

Feasibility studies: scope and approach This is part of our modernising electoral registration studies. Read about the scope and approach of the studies

updated: 2 February 2023 Summary From late 2022, the rules about candidate and agent notional spending changed, as well as the rules about making payments. Changes

Notional spending occurs when services or goods are given to a candidate for free or at a discount. The legal test for when candidates need to record notional spending against their own spending limit has now changed. Someone will now only count as

using the item on the candidate's behalf if the candidate or their agent 'authorises, directs or encourages' that use. This change also applies to notional expenditure on behalf of parties, non-party campaigners, referendum campaigners and recall petition campaigners. The rules for making payments for spending have also changed. Now, if the agent has given written authorisation to someone to incur spending on behalf of the candidate, then the person authorised to incur the spending is also able to make the payment for that spending.

Our role We have updated our generic guidance documents on spending to reflect the new rules, and have published a specific page of guidance on the changes . We will publish updated election-specific guidance for candidates, parties and non-party campaigners as and when elections are held, to help them understand and support compliance with the new legal requirements. Related

content Elections Act about the UK Government's Elections Act and what it means for voting and campaigning About the Elections Act about the Elections Bill, including the measures it contains and which elections it applies to. Preventing candidate intimidation Read about the proposals for a new penalty for intimidating candidates, campaigners or elected representatives. Changes to legal requirements for parties and non-party campaigners about proposals to change the law affecting parties and non-party campaigners.

Results and turnout at the May 2017 England local elections | Electoral Commission Search Results and turnout at the May 2017 England local elections You are in the England local council elections section Home England local council elections On this page Introduction Electorate Turnout Rejected ballot papers Postal voting Rejected postal ballots Proxies and waivers First published: 5 July 2019 Last updated: 5 July 2019 Download You can download our: full dataset as an XLS full dataset as a CSV (zip file) Introduction This report provides analysis on participation in and the administration of the local government elections in England, held on 4 May 2017. For this, data were collected from Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers. This comprised the Form K 'Statement as to Postal Ballot Papers' and an additional data form, specified by the Commission, which included data relating to electoral registration, turnout, absent voting and rejected ballots. Local elections were scheduled in 27 counties and seven unitary and metropolitan authorities on 4 May 2017. There were also city mayoral elections in Doncaster and North Tyneside. In just four wards and divisions were candidates elected unopposed 1 . Electorate 18.6 million Turnout Ballot box: 35.1% (6.5 million votes) Postal vote: 68.7% In-person: 28.8% Rejected ballots Ballots at the count: 0.3% Postal votes: 2.3% Proxies appointed 22,029 (0.1% of the electorate) 641 emergency proxies Electorate The elections gave 18.6 million registered electors the opportunity to vote 2 ; 16.4 million in county councils, 2.0 million in unitary and metropolitan authorities, and 376,295 in city mayoral elections 3 . A total of 174,238 electors (0.9% of the electorate in contested wards) were added to the electoral register during the weeks leading up to the election. As a proportion of the electorate, this was highest in Shropshire where additions represented 2.0% of the electorate in contested wards, and lowest in Norfolk, where additions represented 0.5% of the electorate in contested wards. A total of 204,845 applications to register were received in the weeks leading up to the election. Almost a quarter (22.3%) of these was recorded as duplicates 4 . In addition, 332,004 individuals applied to register to vote after the registration deadline. This is likely to be attributable to the announcement of the UK parliamentary general election which came after the deadline for registration for the council elections. Based on data from 155 local authorities, 1,288 individuals were recorded as trying to vote on election day despite not being registered 5 . Votes were cast at 16,977 polling stations as well as by post. Turnout The measure of turnout referred to in this report, 'ballot box turnout', includes all valid votes cast ('valid vote turnout') and votes rejected at the count. Total turnout refers to valid votes cast, votes rejected at the count, and those rejected at the postal ballot verification stage before the count. Table 3.1 confirms that only a small fraction of the total votes cast are not valid Table 3.1: Turnout Electorate Valid vote turnout Ballot box turnout Total turnout Difference valid vote - total (pp) 2017 18.6m 35.0% 35.1% 35.3% 0.4 County 16.4m 34.8% 35.0% 35.2% 0.3 Unitary / Met 2.0m 36.4% 36.6% 36.9% 0.5 City mayoral 376,295 31.0% 31.4% 32.0% 0.9 2013 18.4m 30.8% 30.9% 31.2% 0.5 County 16.4m 30.7% 30.8% 31.1% 0.4 Unitary / Met 2.0m 31.6% 31.9% 32.3% 0.6 City mayoral 380,832 29.3% 29.6% 30.0% 0.7 Ballot box turnout was 35.1%, which is higher than turnout at the comparable stage in the electoral cycle in 2013, but still lower than turnout at the 2009 elections (39.3%), when European Parliament elections were held on the same day. Turnout increased across all counties, unitary and metropolitan authorities, and city mayoral elections. At a division/ward level, turnout ranged from 18.1 in Tidworth, Wiltshire to 60.1 in Hexham West, Northumberland. In five divisions/wards, turnout was less than 20%. Table 3.2: Ballot box turnout 2013 – 2017 Area 2013 2017 Change (pp)

Buckinghamshire 30.3% 34.8% 4.5 Cambridgeshire 31.0% 36.2% 5.2 Cumbria 32.0% 37.2%
5.2 Derbyshire 33.3% 35.3% 2.0 Devon 33.3% 37.9% 4.5 Dorset 34.1% 38.0% 3.8 East
Sussex 33.4% 37.8% 4.4 Essex 27.8% 31.1% 3.4 Gloucestershire 31.9% 37.1% 5.2
Hampshire 30.8% 36.1% 5.3 Hertfordshire 29.0% 34.1% 5.0 Kent 29.4% 32.2% 2.8
Lancashire 31.3% 35.9% 4.6 Leicestershire 30.0% 32.7% 2.7 Lincolnshire 29.4% 32.1%
2.7 Norfolk 32.3% 34.6% 2.4 North Yorkshire 31.5% 35.3% 3.8 Northamptonshire 30.9%
33.4% 2.5 Nottinghamshire 33.3% 36.8% 3.6 Oxfordshire 29.4% 38.4% 9.0 Somerset 34.5%
38.6% 4.1 Staffordshire 28.0% 31.5% 3.6 Suffolk 31.7% 35.2% 3.5 Surrey 30.0% 35.8%
5.8 Warwickshire 31.3% 36.4% 5.1 West Sussex 30.1% 34.3% 4.2 Worcestershire 30.7%
34.8% 4.1 Total counties 30.8% 35.0% 4.2 Area 2013 2017 Change (pp) Cornwall 33.3%
39.9% 6.6 Durham 27.8% 31.3% 3.4 Isle of Wight 35.6% 38.7% 3.2 Northumberland 34.1%
40.7% 6.6 Shropshire 33.3% 36.4% 3.1 Wiltshire 34.3% 39.6% 5.3 Total unitaries/mets
31.9% 36.6% 4.7 Area 2013 2017 Change (pp) Doncaster 27.8% 29.4% 1.6 North Tyneside
32.1% 34.3% 2.2 Total city mayoral 29.6% 31.4% 1.8 Rejected ballot papers The
proportion of ballots rejected at official counts was 0.3%. This compares with 0.5%
at the 2013 local elections. The rejection rate at unitary and metropolitan elections
was higher than at county elections (0.5% compared with 0.2%). Table 3.3: Proportion
of ballots rejected at the count Counties Proportion Kent 0.17% Hampshire 0.19% Essex
0.19% Somerset 0.19% Derbyshire 0.19% Gloucestershire 0.20% West Sussex 0.20% Devon
0.22% Surrey 0.22% Warwickshire 0.22% Worcestershire 0.22% Hertfordshire 0.22%
Buckinghamshire 0.22% Cumbria 0.22% East Sussex 0.22% Northamptonshire 0.22%
Leicestershire 0.23% Dorset 0.24% Suffolk 0.24% Nottinghamshire 0.24% Oxfordshire
0.25% Lancashire 0.27% Norfolk 0.27% Staffordshire 0.27% North Yorkshire 0.28%
Lincolnshire 0.30% Cambridgeshire 0.51% Total 0.23% In six county divisions, the rate
of rejected ballots was more than 1%. Three of these were in county Cambridgeshire,
where Combined Authority Mayoral elections were held on the same day. In unitary and
metropolitan authorities, 32 wards had a rejection rate higher than 1%. One authority
in Cornwall rejected 3.8% of ballots at the count. The majority of rejected ballots
(69.6%) were rejected due to being unmarked or wholly void for uncertainty. More than
a quarter (26.5%) were rejected due to voting for more than one candidate. Table 3.4:
Reasons for rejected ballots No official mark Voting more than once Mark by which the
voter could be identified Unmarked Rejected in part 2017 County 1.3% 25.5% 1.6% 70.7%
0.8% Unitary / Met 2.1% 26.4% 2.2% 68.7% 0.5% City mayoral 0.0% 54.7% 1.8% 43.5% 0.0%
2013 County 1.3% 22.0% 2.7% 71.4% 2.5% Unitary / Met 2.1% 17.9% 0.9% 69.8% 0.1% City
mayoral 1.5% 21.1% 2.4% 71.1% 2.0% Postal voting The total number of postal votes
issued for these elections was 3.1 million, representing 16.6% of all electors with a
contested election in their division/ward. This compares with 14.9% at the 2013 local
elections. At a division/ward level, electors registered for a postal vote ranged
from 2.8% in University Parks, Oxford, to 39.2% in Cramlington South East,
Northumberland. Postal voting remains more common in unitary and metropolitan
authorities. 19.5% of the electorate (384,079 electors) in unitary and metropolitan
authorities were issued with a postal ballot paper compared with 16.2% in county
districts (2.7 million electors). At the City Mayoral elections in Doncaster and
North Tyneside, more than a quarter of electors (26.0% or 98,001 electors) had a
postal vote. Table 4.1: Highest and lowest proportions of postal voters Fewer than
10% postal voters Fewer than 10% postal voters Percentage Barrow-in-Furness 7.4%
Oxford 9.4% Epping Forest 9.5% Higher than 25% postal voters Percentage Doncaster
27.0% Rushcliffe 28.4% Chorley 28.7% Stevenage 34.6% The proportion of postal voters
returning their ballot papers always exceeds the turnout among 'in person' voters.
This year, 68.4% postal electors used their postal vote compared with 29.1% who

turned up to vote in person 6 . Table 4.2: Postal vote vs in-person turnout Postal vote turnout In-person turnout 2017 68.7% 28.8% 2013 67.1% 25.0% 2009 68.7% 35.2% Postal votes accounted for 31.7% of all votes included at the count. This compares with 31.3% in 2013 and 22.7% in 2009. Rejected postal ballots Postal voting packs (PV) require voters to provide their signature and date of birth (DOB). These identifiers are then matched against those provided at the time of application. If the signature or date of birth is missing or does not match, the postal vote is rejected and is not included at the count. Since 2014, Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) have been required to notify electors if their postal vote has been rejected and give the reason(s) for rejection. They can also request the elector to provide an up-to-date signature. Table 4.3: Rejected postal ballots Rejected postal ballots as % of envelopes returned 2017 2.3% County 2.3% Unitary / Met 2.4% City mayoral 3.5% 2013 3.1% County 3.1% Unitary / Met 3.0% City mayoral 2.6% 2009 3.2% The total rate of rejection across elections was 2.3%, which represents a decrease from 3.1% in 2013 and 3.2% in 2009 7 . The overall fall in levels of rejected postal votes suggests that the new policy may be having a positive impact overall. More than half (51.6%) of rejected ballots were rejected due to mismatched information. In almost a quarter of cases (24.6% and 23.8% respectively), postal ballots were rejected due to missing information, or because voters returned their postal voting envelopes but failed to include either the ballot paper itself or the verification statement or both. Table 4.4: Reasons for postal vote statement rejection 2013 2017 Change (pp)

	2013	2017	Change (pp)
Missing information Signature	6.8%	7.3%	0.5
DoB	4.7%	5.4%	0.7
Both	9.5%	11.9%	2.4
Mismatched information Signature	24.2%	20.3%	-3.9
DoB	20.8%	23.6%	2.8
Both	9.5%	7.7%	-1.8
Missing forms Ballot paper	8.5%	11.0%	2.5
PV statement	16.0%	12.8%	-3.2

These figures are percentages of the total, small number of rejected ballots. For example, although 51.6% of rejected postal votes were rejected due to mismatched information, this represents 1.1% of covering envelopes received and 0.4% of all votes cast. The vast majority of postal voters did cast their vote correctly. Proxies and waivers A total of 22,029 electors appointed a proxy (0.1% of the electorate). This is consistent with levels in 2013 and 2009. The number of emergency proxies issued was 641. This is more than nine times higher than in 2013, when emergency proxies were granted only on disability grounds resulting in 67 being issued. The provision has since been extended to occupation or military service. A concession granted under the terms of the EAA 2006 was that postal electors who either had a disability, or were illiterate, or were unable to furnish a consistent signature could apply for a waiver to use their date of birth as their sole identifier. A total of 19,583 waivers were granted, representing 0.6% of postal electors. The proportion of postal electors granted such a waiver ranged from 0.3% in Doncaster to 1.3% in West Sussex. 1. Stillington (Hambleton), Thirsk (Hambleton), Much Wenlock (Shropshire), Bulford Allington & Fiheldean (Wiltshire) ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. Excluding 20,441 in four uncontested wards/divisions. ■ Back to content at footnote 2 3. Doncaster held both county council and city mayor elections. Doncaster is captured under both unitary and metropolitan authorities, and city mayoral, but counted only once in the total figures. ■ Back to content at footnote 3 4. Three local authorities were unable to provide information on applications. Eight were unable to provide information on duplicate applications. ■ Back to content at footnote 4 5. 53 local authorities were not able to provide this information. ■ Back to content at footnote 5 6. There is no statutory field that captures the number of postal voting statements received by the Returning Officer. In practice, we use field B6, 'Number of covering envelopes received by the Returning Officer or at a polling station before the close of poll'

as a surrogate but we know that, as mentioned, electors can return multiple postal ballots in one envelope or return envelopes without any ballots. ■ Back to content at footnote 6 7. As figures reported for field C19 were inconsistent, we used a calculation of field B6 minus field C18 as a surrogate for the total number of postal votes rejected. This approach is consistent with previous years. ■ Back to content at footnote 7 Related content Past elections and referendums Read our reports and view data about past elections and referendums Local councils Find out about local councils and how to vote in local council elections. Types of elections about the types of elections in the UK. Results and turnout at the 2018 May England local elections View the results and turnout at the 2018 local elections in England

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meeting Apologies and introductions Declarations of interest Public Opinion: Findings

from the Winter Tracker Using research to support our work Policy priorities of the

Commission Business items by electronic means First published: 26 June 2020 Last

updated: 21 June 2021 Meeting overview Date: Wednesday 20 May 2020 Time: 9:30am to

12:20pm Location: By video conference to Boothroyd Room, 3 Bunhill Row, London Date

of next scheduled meeting: Wednesday 24 June Who was at the meeting Who was at the

meeting John Holmes, Chair Alasdair Morgan Anna Carragher Elan Closs Stephens Joan

Walley Sarah Chambers Stephen Gilbert Sue Bruce Bob Posner, Chief Executive Craig

Westwood, Director, Communications, Policy and Research Louise Edwards, Director,

Regulation Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Amanda

Kelly, Interim General Counsel Tom Hawthorn, Head of Policy Phil Thompson, Head of

Research Niki Nixon, Head of External Communications David Bailey, Head of Strategic

Planning and Performance Katharine Sparrow, Senior Executive Assistant Isabella

Coventry, Acting Board Secretary Madeleine Spink, Senior Advisor, Governance Sheelagh

Duffield, Advanced Boardroom Excellence (observing) Apologies and introductions

Apologies from Rob Vincent and Kieran Rix, Director of Finance and Corporate

Services, were noted. The Chair welcomed Sheelagh Duffield, from Advanced Boardroom

Excellence, to the meeting. Sheelagh was observing the meeting as part of the

external Board effectiveness review. Declarations of interest There were no new

declarations of interest. Public Opinion: Findings from the Winter Tracker (EC 39/20)

The Head of Research gave the Board an overview of the main findings from the

Commission's annual public opinion survey. Overall, confidence in the key aspects of

the administration of elections remained high, although an increase in concerns

around the regulation of social media and intimidation of candidates was recorded. In

the area of political finance, perceptions of the transparency of the spending and

funding of parties remained low, and confidence that authorities would take

appropriate action if a party was caught breaking the rules continued to fall. The

survey found a high level of reported interest in politics. However, three quarters

of people asked felt they did not have influence on politics, although these findings

were significantly affected by age. The Board discussed the findings in detail. It

Board noted that further qualitative research might be valuable to fully understand

the implications of some of the statistics, as they related to different demographic

groups, particularly Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities and

different age groups. The Board agreed it would be useful to see further demographic

break down of the findings, where these were available from the survey. The Board

noted the consistency of much of the data over time, and discussed the need to ensure

we got value for money from the survey. The Director of Communications, Policy and

Research said the frequency of the survey could be considered, but that it was

important we regularly tested what people were thinking to understand what voters

wanted and found important. The Director noted that the findings were used by many

teams across the Commission to inform their work, as well as by external

stakeholders. It might also be possible to supplement a core group of annual

questions with others, drilling down for more detail in areas of particular interest

at the time, on a less frequent basis. Resolved: That the paper be noted. Using

research to support our work (EC 40/20) The Director of Communications, Policy and

Research introduced discussion, saying this was an opportunity for the Board to take

a strategic look at the principles, purpose and approach of our research, which would

help inform the approach we took in developing the new corporate plan. The Head of Research said the aim of the paper was to give an overview on how and why we carried out and used our research. The questions for the Board to consider were whether the principles were right, whether there were any gaps in our understanding of our external environment that could be addressed by our research strategy, and whether we should be more proactive in engaging in partnership working. The Board noted the value of our tracker and event related research work, but also expressed a desire for more research around particular electoral issues, which could help inform or influence policy decisions. In discussion, the importance of horizon scanning and the need to think about the changing nature of the environment we operate in were also flagged. More qualitative research into communities which participated less in the electoral system could be worthwhile, as well as a further look at accessibility issues.

The Board was supportive of the proposal to be more proactive in looking at partnership working in this area, especially with academics, and to cast our net widely. They were also interested in ensuring that the Commission looked proactively at what comparable countries were doing in the electoral field, to help inform our own decision-making. The Board noted that potential budgetary pressures in future years would make prioritisation, and value for money, even more important considerations.

Resolved: That the paper be agreed, noting the Board's comments above.

Policy priorities of the Commission (EC 41/20)

The Director of Communications, Policy and Research introduced the discussion by reminding the Board that the specific shortlist of policy priorities was relatively new for the Commission, but had proved to be a positive step, while obviously not covering all the Commission's priorities. The Director noted that the circumstances of the past two years meant that the scale of work planned originally to help put these priorities into action had not been possible, but progress in some areas had nevertheless been registered.

The Director said that, for the future, the aim was to set an ambitious five-year agenda, but to check in every 18 months to enable the Board to assess whether the priorities were still correct, and to reflect on any changes in the external environment. The Head of Policy gave a brief overview of our approach to setting the priorities, highlighting the need to balance ambition with being realistic about the circumstances in which we operated. The Head of External Communications went on to describe the plans to engage with our stakeholders on each of the priorities. The Board discussed the need to strike a balance between highlighting our priorities for change and the risk of undermining people's faith in the system by suggesting it was not sound. The Board noted that while we continued to push for electoral modernisation and a consolidation of electoral legislation, we still needed to manage our engagement with governments on their priorities and legislative proposals. One problem was how to manage incremental change, if that was what governments preferred, as that would make the system still more complex. The Board noted that it was important for us to be able to come forward with workable, credible solutions, rather than just highlighting problems that needed to be addressed. We also needed to be sensitive to the huge pressures on local and central governments during the coronavirus pandemic, as well as the difficulties it was creating for political parties. The Board noted there was a significant and challenging agenda around social media and digital campaigning extending beyond the Commission's remit. We would not have the solutions on our own in these areas, and it would be important to work with other regulators in the field, including leading that conversation as necessary. The Board was content to continue with the current priorities, but would welcome opportunities to continue to review these as we developed the new corporate plan, and

also wanted to make sure that any opportunities for constructive change arising from the coronavirus lockdown were fully seized. Resolved: That the paper be agreed.

Business items by electronic means The Chief Executive updated the Board on how the organisation continued to respond to the coronavirus lockdown. The Director of Electoral Administration and Guidance gave the Board an overview of the work that was underway to plan for the significant range of polls now scheduled for 2021. The Director noted that not only were the different scenarios of combination being taken in to account, but also the implications of the public health environment, and that we were seeking to learn lessons from recent international experience to inform our approach where appropriate. The General Counsel updated the Board on an issue that had arisen around a party registration. The Director of Regulation noted that learning from this experience was being built into the decision making process. The Chair acknowledged the new process to deal with electronic business items had probably been too complicated. Commissioners' feedback would be taken on board and amendments made.

Impact on security You are in the May 2019 voter identification pilot schemes section Home Our research Voter identification pilots May 2019 voter identification pilot schemes First published: 12 July 2019 Last updated: 12 July 2019 Contents Overview Our findings Impact on voters: experience Impact on voters: confidence Impact on security Impact of administration of the polls Background to our evaluation Key findings There were no allegations of electoral fraud at polling stations in the pilot scheme at the May 2019 elections. Each of the 2019 pilot models had security strengths and weaknesses, but the photo ID only model has the greatest security strengths compared with the other models. The security of the mixed and poll card models could be further improved with some changes to the process and requirements. Allegations of electoral fraud at polling stations The local police forces covering the pilots informed us that there were no allegations of electoral fraud at polling stations for the May 2019 elections. In other areas where local elections took place in May 2019, police forces have informed us that there were a total of nine allegations of electoral fraud at polling stations. Eight of these were still under investigation at the time we published this evaluation, and one needed no further action following police investigation as there was no evidence an offence had been committed. It is not possible to assess whether the identification requirement prevented any actual attempts to commit impersonation fraud. There is no evidence to suggest that the absence of allegations in the pilots was because of the ID requirements. Security assessment We asked an experienced identity verification expert to review the three ID models that were piloted in 2019. This review looked at the strengths and weaknesses of the security of each model, using well-established common standards and guidance for identity verification. It took into account the processes for issuing ID documents and how polling station staff could check the documents that voters showed. Key findings from security evaluation of acceptable ID documents Photo ID only model Strengths Includes only documents considered high or medium strength, including locally issued photo ID Officially issued documents with security features that uniquely identify the individual Both high and medium strength documents can be reasonably checked by non-experts in polling station Documents can be checked by non-experts in a polling station for a reasonable photo likeness and obvious signs of tampering as well as the registered name Locally issued ID with a photo would provide strong evidence that it was issued to the person showing it Weaknesses Polling station staff would not be able to carry out specialist document checking Mixed photo and non-photo ID model Strengths Includes the same high or medium strength documents, as in photo ID only model Some documents may show voter's current registered address Officially issued non-photo documents are harder to forge than other paper documents Weaknesses Other non-photo documents (not officially issued) are considered low strength unless presented together with an officially issued document Polling station staff would not be able to carry out specialist document checking Difficult for polling station staff to differentiate between original and home-printed documents Bank cards or national insurance number cards cannot be validated or verified by polling station staff Poll card model Strengths Returning Officers control the issuing process, linked to individually verified identities through the electoral registration process Poll card shows the voter's current address Additional security features (e.g. scannable QR code or other printed features) could make it harder to forge Weaknesses Poll card is a non-photo document, which is normally considered low strength unless presented together with an officially issued document Final bit The review also indicated that

the security of the mixed and poll card models could be further improved with some changes to the process and requirements. This could include, for example: requiring locally-issued ID or poll cards to include the holder's photo; requiring at least one officially-issued non-photo document to be presented in the mixed model; adding printed security features to make it harder to forge poll cards; and improving polling station processes to require all voters to state their full name and address without referring to their ID.

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Northern Ireland Assembly Parties Panel minutes: 11 June 2019 | Electoral Commission Search Northern Ireland Assembly Parties Panel minutes: 11 June 2019 You are in the Party panels section Home How we make decisions Party panels First published: 16 October 2019 Last updated: 27 July 2021 Meeting overview Date: 11 June 2019 Time: 2pm Location: Training room, Oremoan Business Park, Belfast Date of next scheduled meeting: 1 October 2019 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Alliance Party: Sharon Lowry DUP: George Dorrian Green Party: Kate Barry Sinn Féin: Gary Fleming SDLP: Catherine Matthews UUP: Barbara Knox The Electoral Commission: Anna Carragher, Commissioner Ann Watt, Head of Electoral Commission, Northern Ireland Cahir Hughes, Manager, Electoral Commission, Northern Ireland Roisin McDaid, Senior Officer (Political Parties Liaison) Caralyn Morton, Business Support Officer Electoral Office for Northern Ireland: Virginia McVea, Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland Royal Mail: Rachel Winham, Head of Elections and Political Parties Scott Forsyth, Special Events Planning Manager NI Claire Connolly, Elections Manager NI Welcome and introductions The Chair, Anna Carragher, welcomed everyone to the meeting and round table introductions were made. The meeting planned for 14 May 2019 had been postponed due to the announcement of a European Parliamentary election. Notes of previous meeting on 19 March 2019 The Panel agreed the notes of the previous meeting. There were no matters arising. Issues raised by the political parties No items had been raised by the parties in advance of the meeting. May 2019 post-election review – 2 May local government elections and 23 May European Parliamentary election The Chair invited feedback from the Panel on all aspects of the recent elections. Although the Commission has no formal statutory obligation for the Commission to report on local government elections, it would be writing to the Secretary of State to raise a number of legal issues including feedback from today's meeting, summarised below. The Commission would be reporting formally on the European Parliamentary election and planned to publish its report in the autumn. Registration At the local government election there had been a problem affecting some electors, who as late additions to the register, had not appeared on addendum lists at polling stations. One party noted their concern that when polling station staff had not been able to clarify the position with EONI Head Office, these electors were not able to vote. The CEO reported that due to a clerical error the addendum lists at polling stations had some omissions. The telephone helpline had been staffed to 7pm but unfortunately, phone lines had been very busy and staff had difficulty handling calls. The CEO accepted the criticism that some electors had consequently left polling stations without voting. She had subsequently reviewed registers and telephone system to see what improvements could be made. Separate telephone numbers for staff and public enquiries had been introduced ahead of the European election. Nominations There was concern that current legislation for local government elections required candidates to record their home address, resulting in the withdrawal of one candidate's nomination. The Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) noted a couple of points of confusion relating to spelling of names, "commonly used name" and logos. She had subsequently met with SOLACE and Council Chief Executives to improve clarity. Campaign Issues An issue of poor conduct at a polling station witnessed by one Panel member had been effectively handled by the Presiding Officer. She asked that parties should take responsibility for emphasising the code of conduct to all their members, to prevent such instances of intimidation. The CEO agreed, noting the majority of candidates/agents remained outside polling station gates, but there had been some issues where there were inner and outer gated entrances. Candidate mailing Rachel Winham reminded the Panel of recent changes to the candidate

mailings process: namely, art checks prior to submission, booking-in system and submissions sorted by street order. This process had revised as necessary when all mailings going via one contact, Claire Connolly, had created a bottleneck. She reported that staff on the Royal Mail 24 hours helpline had noted how pleasant Northern Ireland candidates had been. Two parties reported issues with delayed mailings delivered late on election day or the day before. Rachel Winham asked the parties to email her details of the areas in which this happened, and any similar instances. A system change via a third party provider had resulted in polling cards for the European election having to be manually sorted by Royal Mail staff at a slower rate of 1,000 an hour. This had to be done in operatives' spare time, and had led to considerable delays. Royal Mail would not accommodate this 1400 Sort in future. Polling cards had been delivered late or had not arrived in East Belfast due to the above. The much shorter deadlines for the European election meant some parties dropped off literature after the recommended date, so some items were not delivered. There was a wider discussion on the reference to absent/proxy voting deadlines that had already passed on the European poll card, which had added to voter confusion. Rachel had asked Returning Officers via an insert in the AEA newsletter to inform her about problems relating to poll cards. The CEO had also been concerned about reports of inconsistent delivery in Mid Ulster and delays at Post Office locations. She asked for ongoing feedback from both party representatives and Royal Mail if future issues arose, to allow fuller investigation. Public awareness In a wide ranging discussion the Panel covered various points which had contributed to public confusion in relation to the European Parliamentary election. These included: Some media and party literature featuring visuals showed an "X" to vote. It was however recognised that polling station staff explained the STV numeric voting procedure to individual voters. People were unaware of the two distinct electoral timetables for the separate elections. The deadline for applying for a proxy or postal vote for the European election was the same date as the local government election day. Although the CEO had written a briefing paper for the media and covered this herself in interviews, the complexities of this message had not been widely covered. It was noted that due to different sets of legislation, the Northern Ireland absent voting deadline was earlier than that in England. Of the 34,000 requests for registered EU citizens to return a UCI form, approximately 4,000 had been returned. The CEO asked for the parties' support in re-emphasising the importance of retaining the Digital Registration Number (DRN) issued when registering online. This is a lifelong number, similar to a National Insurance Number. If online applicants registered a personal email address with their original application, a reminder of their DRN could be emailed to this initial address. Polling Stations Some confusion had arisen when a venue which had not been used for the local poll, had initially been advised for use at the European election and then withdrawn. The CEO explained the reasons for this and the issues the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland (EONI) were currently experiencing with the impact of fewer available caretakers to open/close buildings and insurance implications. EONI was working internally to check the accuracy of its data. There had also been some resistance from schools to the increased exceptional closure days. The Count It was noted that most count centres except Newtownabbey had followed the recommended layout. There had been some complaints that agents were not close enough to tally. The CEO planned to carry out future training with council staff to keep them updated. She asked party representatives whether they would have an interest in a half-day STV counting training session to help demystify the process. Given the positive level of interest, she would gauge a possible date

subject to future election dates. The Panel congratulated EONI staff on how well the European election count had gone. The Chairman agreed and highlighted that candidate speeches had also reflected this. The difficulty of recruiting staff for the European election (3,500 for polling stations plus 800 for verification/count) so soon after the local election was discussed. The CEO asked for guidance from the Electoral Commission regarding how to improve transparency in recording any discrepancy in numbers between the verification and count. Ann Watt would review. The CEO reported that the effect of two elections not being held on a combined date, and the resultant two distinct timetables had had a much greater impact in Northern Ireland than elsewhere. She felt factors such as the high number of candidates (800) at local elections had not been sufficiently taken account of. The CEO considered that the exceptional circumstances when the European elections were called, had led to confusion amongst the electorate. The CEO emphasised that EONI had very good working relations with partners Royal Mail, Whistl and its printers. Unfortunately the lack of notice for the European election had brought unrealistic deadlines resulting in a service delivery that was outside "the norm". The lack of notice had been the key impacting factor. Royal Mail noted it usually operated a 5 month lead time for planned elections. They considered the recent 6 week timetable had been challenging.

The Panel recorded its thanks to Claire Connolly and Royal Mail for their assistance at all hours during the recent elections. Update from Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland The CEO informed the Panel that EONI were working on an issue regarding the way addresses had been grouped on registers supplied to parties. She also made the Panel aware that EONI would be making contingency plans for a possible autumn poll. As discussed at previous Panel meetings, the Derry/Londonderry and Omagh offices would relocate to Belfast at the end of June. Kiosks for online registration would be piloted at two Council venues where broadband coverage was limited. The CEO would be in contact with party representatives regarding the Northern Ireland canvass in 2020. The Chair noted that the Panel had a good appreciation of the difficult circumstances of the recent election and recorded thanks to all EONI staff. Electoral Commission updates Recent Commission publications Codes of Practice on election spending Updated drafts of two codes of practice on campaign spending: one on candidate spending and one on party spending, were tabled. These incorporated significant redrafting following wide-scale consultation. We are very grateful to those who provided feedback. The draft Codes had also been shared with parties at the recent Westminster PPP. If parties had urgent comments, they should let the Commission know as soon as possible. The Codes were due to be finalised in July and would be circulated to the parties. PACAC response The Chair informed the Panel of the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee's (PACAC) new inquiry to examine the case for comprehensive reform of electoral law. The Committee is looking at how urgently comprehensive electoral reform is required, and whether there is a need to go beyond the Law Commission's proposals outlined in their 2016 interim report. The Electoral Commission welcomed the inquiry and responded to the call for written evidence, highlighting the urgent need to simplify and modernise electoral law, together with the real costs and consequences for voters, campaigners and election officials. Political finance – statutory return deadlines Parties were reminded of the following deadlines: Quarter 2 - 2019 donation and loan returns to be submitted by 30 July 2019. Statement of accounts for the year ending 31 December 2018 for parties with income and expenditure over £250,000 must be audited and delivered to the Commission (with the auditor's certificate) by 7 July 2019. Candidate and Party campaign spending returns Candidate spending returns and declarations for the

European Parliamentary election must be submitted to the Chief Electoral Officer by 16 July. Parties were reminded that both the candidate and agent declarations have to be witnessed by a Justice of the Peace or equivalent. Party spending returns for the Local Government and European Parliamentary elections must be delivered to the Electoral Commission by Friday 23 August 2019. Next meeting date – 1 October 2019 The next Panel meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 1 October 2019 at 9.30am. The Electoral Commission would advise Panel members of the venue. List of agreed actions Action Responsible Finalised Codes of Practice on election spending to be circulated Electoral Commission Submit returns by following deadlines: • Quarter 2 donation and loan returns by 30 July • Statement of Accounts income/exp over £250k • Candidate spending returns for European Parliamentary election to Chief Electoral Officer by 16 July. • Party spending returns for the Local Government and European Parliamentary elections to the Electoral Commission by 23 August. Party representatives

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National totals Remain Leave 16,141,241 17,410,742 Total electorate: 46,500,001 Turnout: 72.2% Rejected ballots: 25,359 Results by region East Remain Leave 1,448,616 1,880,367 Electorate: 4,398,796 Turnout: 75.7% Valid votes: 3,328,983 Verified ballot papers: 3,331,459 Ballot papers counted : 3,331,312 Rejected ballots: 2,329 View the East results by counting area . East Midlands Remain Leave 1,033,036 1,475,479 Electorate: 3,384,299 Turnout: 74.2% Valid votes: 2,508,515 Verified ballot papers: 2,510,561 Ballot papers counted: 2,510,496 Rejected ballots: 1,981 View the East Midlands results by counting area . London Remain Leave 2,263,519 1,513,232 Electorate: 5,424,768 Turnout: 69.7% Valid votes: 3,776,751 Verified ballot papers: 3,781,234 Ballot papers counted : 3,781,204 Rejected ballots: 4,453 View the London results by counting area . North East Remain Leave 562,595 778,103 Electorate: 1,934,341 Turnout: 69.3% Valid votes: 1,340,698 Verified ballot papers: 1,341,387 Ballot papers counted: 1,341,387 Rejected ballots: 689 View the North East results by counting area . North West Remain Leave 1,699,020 1,966,925 Electorate: 5,241,568 Turnout: 70% Valid votes: 3,665,945 Verified ballot papers: 3,668,629 Ballot papers counted: 3,668,627 Rejected ballots: 2,682 View the North West results by counting area . Northern Ireland Remain Leave 440,707 349,442 Electorate: 1,260,955 Turnout: 62.7% Valid votes: 790,149 Verified ballot papers: 790,523 Ballot papers counted: 790,523 Rejected ballots: 374 Scotland Remain Leave 1,661,191 1,018,322 Electorate: 3,987,112 Turnout: 67.2% Valid votes: 2,679,513 Verified ballot papers: 2,681,179 Ballot papers counted: 2,681,179 Rejected ballots: 1,666 View the Scotland results by counting area . South East Remain Leave 2,391,718 2,567,965 Electorate: 6,465,404 Turnout: 76.8% Valid votes: 4,959,683 Verified ballot papers: 4,963,182 Ballot papers counted: 4,963,110 Rejected ballots: 3,427 View the South East results by counting area . South West Remain Leave 1,503,019 1,669,711 Electorate: 4,138,134 Turnout: 76.7% Valid votes: 3,172,730 Verified ballot papers: 3,175,003 Ballot papers counted: 3,174,909 Rejected ballots: 2,179 View the South West results by counting area . Wales Remain Leave 772,347 854,572 Electorate: 2,270,272 Turnout: 71.7% Valid votes: 1,626,919 Verified ballot papers: 1,628,075 Ballot papers counted: 1,628,054 Rejected ballots: 1,135 View the Wales results by counting area . West Midlands Remain Leave 1,207,175 1,755,687 Electorate: 4,116,572 Turnout: 72% Valid votes: 2,962,862 Verified ballot papers: 2,965,411 Ballot papers counted: 2,965,36 Rejected ballots: 2,507 View the West Midlands results by counting area . Yorkshire and the Humber Remain Leave 1,158,298 1,580,937 Electorate: 3,877,780 Turnout: 70.7% Valid votes: 2,739,235 Verified ballot papers: 2,741,394 Ballot papers counted : 2,741,172 Rejected ballots: 1,937 View the Yorkshire and the Humber results by counting area . Result data Related content Testing the EU referendum question Find out about our testing of the EU referendum question Report: 23 June 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union Read our report on the 2016 EU referendum Report:

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Survey of the electoral register in England You are in the section Home On this page What's next Your privacy Further information What we mean by accuracy and completeness First published: 8 February 2023 Last updated: 21 February 2023 Summary We are carrying out research into the accuracy and completeness of the electoral register across the country. You may have received a letter from Ipsos stating that your household has been selected to take part in a survey about the electoral register. We would like to interview one person in your household aged 16 or over. We want to speak to people from all walks of life, of all ages, with all sorts of interests, whether or not they care about electoral issues. What's next If you have been selected to participate in the study, an Ipsos interviewer will visit your home to conduct a short survey. This will take around 10 minutes to complete. They carry a photo ID, so you know who they are. Your privacy Taking part in the study is voluntary. Everything you tell us will be treated as confidential. The data collected will be used for research purposes only, in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations and the Market Research Society Code of Conduct. The results and published reports are anonymised and will not be in a form which could reveal your identity. You will not receive any 'junk mail' as a result of taking part. Read the full Privacy Notice from Ipsos, which sets out your rights. Read our privacy notice Further information If you have received a letter and you would like to arrange a convenient time, or have any questions please email ECRegisters2023@ipsos.com or call 0800 124 4878. Please quote your full address and the reference number at the top of the letter. What we mean by accuracy and completeness Since 2004, we have been carrying out research on the electoral registers. This includes conducting a study into the accuracy and completeness of the electoral registers every few years. The long-term aims of this research are to: provide an overview of the accuracy and completeness of the registers in Great Britain and Northern Ireland provide up-to-date information on those groups which are more likely to be under-registered as this helps us refine our public awareness activity track the impact of legislative, administrative and population change on the quality of the registers. We use this to inform our scrutiny of proposals and policies relating to registration system reforms Accuracy An accurate register would be one on which there are no false entries. The accuracy of the electoral registers is the percentage of entries on the registers which relate to verified and eligible voters who are resident at the given address. Completeness A complete register would be one on which every person who is entitled to register is registered. The completeness of the electoral registers is the percentage of eligible people who are registered at their current address.

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September 2019 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Conservative Party: Andrew Stedman (AStedman) Democratic Unionist Party: Christopher Montgomery (CM) Labour (Chair): Mike Creighton (MC) Liberal Democrats: David Allworthy (DA) Social Democratic and Labour Party: Claire Tighe (CT) Scottish National Party: Scott Martin (SM) Electoral Commission: Bob Posner, Director of Party and Election Finance & Legal Counsel (BP) Andrew Scallan CBE, Director of Electoral Administration (AS) Craig Westwood, Director of Communications (CW) Karim Aziz, Deputy Head of Media and Public Affairs (KA) Minutes, and actions of the meeting and matters arising (ECPPP 23/02/2016) The minutes from 23/02/2016 were agreed. It was noted that the meeting that had been scheduled for 5 July 2016 did not take place. MC asked about the Commission's Strategic Review. AS replied that the findings of the review will go to the Commission's Board in October and the findings will be part of the Corporate Plan to be published next year. May 2016 polls AS informed the group that reports on the May polls were being published this week and that the Commission had found the polls had been well run. BP added that a lot of the recommendations made by the Commission were a restatement of previous ones and that they tie in with Law Commission recommendations. AS informed the group that the Cabinet Office had yesterday (05/09/16) published its response to the Commission's recommendations following the polls in 2015. MC enquired what had been the biggest problem at the May polls. AS said that the biggest issue to impact on voters was what happened in Barnet where incomplete registers were printed for use in polling stations. AS remarked that the Commission received its first call from a voter in Barnet about the issue at 07.03 and that Barnet had been quick to respond and get new registers printed and distributed by 10.30. AStedman asked if the Commission had assessed what impact this issue had on turnout in Barnet. AS replied that it wasn't possible to assess the impact on turnout. We know that Barnet had been good at explaining the emergency proxy vote provision made available to voters that had been wrongly turned away and that people were able to return with their poll card to vote. What the Commission doesn't know is how many voters had been affected by the issue. MC said that the Commission had made some recommendations about the polls scheduled to take place in 2020 but wanted to know about the polls scheduled in 2017 and when guidance would be made available. AS confirmed that the PPP would receive information about candidates and agents guidance for the 2017 polls next week. EU Referendum AS informed the group that the report would be published next week. BP added that it would refer to Section 125 and make recommendations in that area. CW added that on the same day, the Commission would publish an evaluation of its public awareness campaign activities to drive registrations at both the May polls and the EU Referendum. AStedman asked if it would contain information on new registrations. CW confirmed that it would. CM asked if it would mention the extension to the registration deadline. AS said that the Commission had expected the extended registration deadline at the EU Referendum to include Northern Ireland but it was the UK Government's decision not to do that. SM asked about overseas voters. AS referred to the challenge within the existing timetable for getting postal votes out to overseas voters with sufficient time for them to be returned and that if franchise changes for overseas voters were

introduced, the UK Government would need to consider the electoral timetable. DA noted the impact TV debates have on driving registration and whether it was possible for TV debates to be planned earlier. AS remarked that the nature of these debates tended to mean they take place close to the registration deadline. MC referred to the up-coming Boundary Review and registrations since the 1 December 2015. AS commented that the Commission has said that using 1 December registers for boundary reviews meant that registers that were most accurate and complete were not used. Commission update report SM asked if there will be a process for the new Chair of the Commission to meet the parties including the members of the PPP. BP confirmed that a meeting would be included in the induction programme. Proposed dates for meetings in 2017 The group confirmed that they were happy with the proposed dates for meetings in 2017. Any other business AStedman said a common data proposal had been supplied to the Commission's Tom Hawthorn. AS said that we would help in taking this forward and that the Cabinet Office had a key role to play. MC asked about the potential for a single electoral register for the UK. AS said that a piece of work should be undertaken by the UK Government that would enable people to test if they are registered to vote at their current address. SM commented that there was the risk of people 'fishing' for information about a person. AS said it was a question about what level of detail a person would be required to input in order to be able check their registration status. MC mentioned the issue of anonymous registration. DA commented on the story in Bristol about the difficulties of registering to vote anonymously and whether the Commission was aware of the issue. AS confirmed that the Commission was looking into the issue. MC mentioned the publication of Sir Eric Pickles report into electoral fraud. There was a general discussion about the report and its voter ID recommendation. AS said the Commission welcomed the report and was pleased it supported a lot of its previous recommendations, including the need for voter ID. There was discussion about whether this recommendation could be a 'back door for ID cards'. AS explained that Commission proposals had recommended a proportionate approach and had made recommendations for what could be done for those people without photo ID. The group also discussed how the system works in Northern Ireland where voters are required to show ID. MC referred to the Commission's guidance notes. Both MC and DA said it would be helpful if they were indexed and in one place. AS said that the Commission was in the process of implementing a change to its structure so that there would be one overall Guidance team. As part of this change, the new overall Head of Guidance would meet with the group to hear their experiences of using Commission guidance. This change was still only in its early stages. AStedman said a short term improvement would be to hyperlink to straight to forms which the group concurred would be a good idea. MC asked about ways to share best practice. MC said a roundtable discussion would be useful to discuss these guidance issues and also that it would be useful to have a joint Commission – Information Commissioner's Office meeting to discuss issues around the use of the electoral register. Action: Commission to organise. AS noted that he would be stepping down from his role at the end of the year. The group commented that it would be useful to have an organisational structure. Action: Commission to send organisational structure. SM mentioned it would be useful to have publication dates. Action: Commission to send through publication dates noting that dates are subject to change. The next PPP meeting will take place on Tuesday 6 December at 11am – Liberal Democrats to chair. Actions Actions from September 2016 PPP meeting Action Owner Status EC to organise roundtable meeting discussing its guidance and also joint session with ICO KA Confirmed 29 November EC to send organisational structure KA Sent 29 November EC to

send forthcoming publication dates KA Sent 12 September Related content Party registration decisions View our decisions on political party names, descriptions and emblems View current applications View the political party names, descriptions and emblems which we are currently considering as part of our assessment process Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Registers of unincorporated associations Download and view the registers of unincorporated associations

parties, campaigners and other groups have to report their finances to us. They must report: what they've spent on their campaign after an election or referendum donations they've been given and loans they've entered into their annual accounts Candidates must also submit spending returns after major contests, such as UK Parliamentary general elections. We publish data from political parties, campaigners and other groups, as well as candidate spending returns after major contests. We publish all of the information we receive from political parties, campaigners and other groups on Political Finance Online . Explore the data Campaign spending: Candidates Find out about how candidates spend money on election campaigns Financial data of political parties, campaigners and other groups Find out about campaign spending for political parties and non-party campaigners, donations and loans, and annual accounts. Northern Ireland legislation The rules for publishing this information are different in Northern Ireland. At the moment, the legislation doesn't allow us to publish any information about donations and loans from before 1 July 2017. Our guidance You can read our guidance if you are a: candidate or agent political party campaigner regulated individual or organisation

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Actions First published: 4 December 2018 Last updated: 2 September 2019 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Liberal Democrats: Darren Briddock (DB), Chair of meeting Natalia Villazan (NV) Labour: Andrew Whyte (AW) Scottish National Party:

Scott Martin (SM) Conservative Party: Alan Mabbatt (AM) Daisy Woods (DW) Megan Tucker (MT) Plaid Cymru: Geraint Day (GD) Information Commissioner's Amanda Williams (AWi) Office (For item 1): Oliver O'Callaghan (OC) Electoral Commission: Craig Westwood, Director of Communications & Research (CW) Bob Posner, Director of Political Finance and Regulation & Legal Counsel (BP) Katy Knock, Policy Manager (KK) Kate Engles, Policy Manager (KE) Ellen Wilkie, Communications Officer (EW) ICO presentation AWi outlined the recent work of the ICO relevant to political parties, highlighting

recommendations from their report 'Democracy Disrupted?' including the development of a Code of Practice for the use of data in political campaigning. She invited the PPP to contribute to a call for views on this matter. AWi invited the PPP to attend a workshop on the Code of Practice taking place on 17 December. AW requested that the meeting could be rearranged for after Christmas due to staffing concerns. SM added that the PPP would like to all attend the same meeting. AWi committed to feeding back the PPP's requests and added that arranging a second meeting may be possible. AWi highlighted a recommendation on providing information processing information, for instance on how commonly held data such as the electoral register is used. DB suggested that the ICO could support political parties' calls for the electoral registers to have a common format. AWi asked DB to write to the ICO on this matter.

DB explained that voters often incorrectly believe that political parties are not entitled to use their data if they do not appear on the open register. AW suggested that this should be clarified at the point of collection of the data in the annual canvass. He added that changes in this area should be led by the ICO, government and EROs. AWi outlined plans for information audits of political parties in the New Year, referring to a letter the ICO had sent. NV asked how political parties can prepare for these audits. AWi responded that parties should demonstrate that they are on the path towards meeting the requirements of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

DB raised concerns about how parties can demonstrate this if their plans are not in place yet. AWi said that this would be clarified as the audits are arranged. DB thanked the ICO for attending. Minutes of the last meeting and actions arising (ECPPP 04/09/2018) The minutes were agreed. Codes of Practice on election spending by candidates and political parties – consultation and next steps BP highlighted that the consultation on codes of practice on election spending by candidates and political parties formally closed on the day of the meeting and thanked the PPP for their contributions. He committed to returning to the PPP with the updated Codes in due course. AM noted his view that the draft Codes would require further amendment and added that campaigners on the ground would have important perspectives on the usefulness of the codes. NV mentioned that she would appreciate the inclusion of some examples of how the Codes would work. AM cautioned that examples included may become outdated as technology moves on, suggesting that they should be broad instead of specific. BP added that the Codes should have longevity as they will not be easily

changed. BP reminded the panel that the Codes of Practice can only work to clarify the existing law, and cannot change the law. DB responded that the existing law is not fit for purpose, adding that when the Liberal Democrats met with the Commission he outlined real world scenarios where the Codes did not help. AM said that parties are facing an increase in overheads and would not want the Codes to add to the law or increase their regulatory burden. BP reassured him that the Cabinet Office are helping the Commission to ensure the Codes remain within the scope of the law and do not extend it. DB suggested that once the Commission has a further draft of the Codes a session could be held to stress test them. BP responded that the Commission would be open to that. Accessible information on parties, candidates and their policies for disabled voters KK gave an outline of the work the Commission is doing to help make elections more accessible to disabled people, referring to the Commission's findings in the report 'Elections for Everyone' and the subsequent work of the Cabinet Office of Elections Working Group. She highlighted the recommendations in the report which apply to political parties: to publish accessible manifestos in good time before the election and to hold hustings where voters can hear directly from the candidates. AW stated his support but highlighted that translating party manifestos into accessible versions has to be included in party spending returns. AW stated his support for an amendment to make the cost of translating election materials exempt from campaign spend and DB agreed. KE explained that the Commission has also made recommendations for changes to the law in this area. DB highlighted that parties have faced delays in translating their braille versions due to the limited capacity of the RNIB. GD stated that access to areas such as nursing homes can be difficult for parties to access during election times. DB and AW expressed similar experiences with gated retirement homes and care homes. AW added that clear guidance expressing what parties are allowed to do would be helpful. It was agreed that KK's contact details would be circulated with the PPP minutes to enable direct contact with party officers responsible for accessibility. Commission update report BP alerted the PPP that EW had sent them the Commission's response to the UK, Welsh and Scottish consultation on the annual canvass that morning. NV offered congratulations to BP on his appointment as Interim Chief Executive of the Commission. AM stated his concerns that the Commission was going beyond its remit in its review of party descriptions. BP responded that the review was only to remove or change party descriptions which mislead the voter and the Commission were conscious not to go too far. DB highlighted that party logos can identify a party on the ballot paper. AW questioned whether Labour's 'For the many not the few' slogan identified the party closely enough even though it does not refer to the party name. BP specified that it is important that voters know who they are voting for on the ballot paper and explained that the Commission is leading on this work in the absence of legislative reform, which had been requested of the government. GD stated that the Commission needs to be transparent about its decisions. BP responded that the party database is already online and searchable and that parties should specify if they have any issues going forward. Any other business BP referred to the South Thanet case currently in the courts. He added that if the PPP have concerns then a discussion could be scheduled. AW noted that it would be on the agenda for the PPP meeting with the Cabinet Office later that day. AM outlined political parties concerns about the case, specifically around how national campaign activity can impact on candidate spending limits. AW, SM and AM raised the contradictions in the law which make compliance challenging for agents. AM noted that agents are often in post on a volunteer basis. Actions Action Status KK contact details to be shared with the PPP Complete EW distributed with PPP

minutes Related content Party registration decisions View our decisions on political party names, descriptions and emblems View current applications View the political party names, descriptions and emblems which we are currently considering as part of our assessment process Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Registers of unincorporated associations Download and view the registers of unincorporated associations

Board minutes: 23 November 2022 | Electoral Commission Search

Board minutes: 23 November 2022 You are in the Electoral Commission Board section Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Declarations of interests Minutes Commission Board action tracker Chief Executive's update including, the performance report quarter two 2022/23 Forward Plan of Board business 2022/23 Supplementary Estimate for 2022/23 Returning Officer (RO) and Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) performance standards Draft Enforcement Policy review Revised Commission Board and Committee meeting dates for 2023/24 Update from the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) Chair Update from the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo) Chair Annual review of schedule of internal policies and codes Annual declarations of interests Risk appetite workshop First published: 28 January 2023 Last updated: 3 February 2023 Meeting summary Date: Wednesday 23 November 2022 Time: 9:30am to 1:00pm Location: Bunhill Row, London, and by Video conference Date of next scheduled meeting: Tuesday 17 January 2023 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Present John Pullinger Chair Rob Vincent Sue Bruce Alex Attwood Sarah Chambers Stephen Gilbert Roseanna Cunningham [until item 14] Chris Ruane Katy Radford Elan Closs Stephens In attendance Shaun McNally, Chief Executive Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services Craig Westwood, Director, Communications, Policy and Research Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation Binnie Goh, General Counsel Zena Khan, Senior Adviser, Governance Sal Naseem, Independent Adviser to the Commission Board on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Matt Pledger, Senior Adviser, Governance, observing Helen Fleck, Senior Professionals and Systems Regulation Lawyer, [external], observing [items 1-14] Dan Adamson, Head of Monitoring and Performance [items 1 and 9] Josh Dunne, Senior Adviser, Registration [item 1] Freya Flavin, Senior Adviser, Guidance [item 1] Laura Tettmar-Saleh, Lawyer [item 1] Mel Davidson, Head of Support and Improvement [item 8] Lindsey Pack, Senior Adviser, Performance Standards [item 8] Phil Thompson, Head of Research [item 8] David Bailey, Head of Strategic Planning and Performance [item 15] Welcomes and apologies The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, in particular Chris Ruane, who attended his first Board meeting in his capacity as a full Board member. The Chair also welcomed Matt Pledger, Senior Adviser, Governance, who joined the Commission last week and would be observing the meeting. The Chair introduced Helen Fleck, Senior Professionals and Systems Regulation Lawyer at the General Pharmaceutical Council, who attended as an observer as part of promoting cross-regulator development and learning. The Board welcomed the team who joined the meeting to talk about the work on delivering the Elections Act campaigner provisions, noting that today sees the commencement of the first provisions of the Elections Act on the launch of the assets and liabilities report (ALR). This particular provision is one that the Commission had recommended. The Board thanked the team for their time and updates and welcomed further updates in the future. Declarations of interests The Board noted updated declarations of interests from various Commissioners as set out below: Sarah Chambers – Member of the Consumer Advisory Group of the Association of British Insurers Stephen Gilbert: Ceased as Chair of the Digital and Communication Select Committee as of 20 January 2022 Ceased as Member of the Select Committee on the Fraud Act and Digital as of October 2022 Rob Vincent - Member of two of Hospital Board Trusts Roseanna Cunningham – Member of the Scottish National Party (SNP) The Board noted that declarations would be included in the Commissioners' register of interests and published onto the Commission's external website in line with the Commissioners' Code of Conduct.

Minutes Resolved: That the minutes of the Board meeting on 18 October 2022 be agreed.

Commission Board action tracker Resolved: That the Board noted the progress against actions requested by the Board. Chief Executive's update including, the performance report quarter two 2022/23 The Chief Executive provided an oral update on operations and matters arising, advising on the various Parliamentary hearings held in recent weeks. It was noted that the Board meeting in March would be used as a strategic planning session for setting the forward agendas including agreeing priorities within the corporate plan. The Board noted that the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo) met during the week and were presented with an update on the people strategy, noting key milestones for the organisation. RemCo advised that they would like to meet four times a year, in order to cover a range of business topics coming through for future years and as a way of tracking progress against the People Strategy It was noted that the Forward Plan of Board and Committee business for 2023/24 would be worked through for Board and Committee meetings from April 2023 onwards, considering our plans and utilising the agenda for upcoming meetings accordingly. Our teams are working on substantial projects right now and it would be important to be realistic. The Board noted an update on the scheduled Board meeting in February, around travel arrangements, logistics and looking at inviting local stakeholders such as representatives from local parties and community groups. Actions from the previous Board event in October would be circulated to Commissioners for information. The Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance provided an update covering contingency planning for a Northern Ireland Assembly election, secondary legislation on voter ID and new draft guidance on accessibility. The proposed timings for subsequent tranches of Elections Act changes, including those relating to overseas voters and online absent vote applications, were also highlighted, with the challenges these are likely to present for our implementation activities being noted. The Director, Communications, Policy and Research provided an update covering preparations for the new public awareness campaign on voter ID, ahead of its launch in January, and in relation to the UK Government's proposed strategy and policy statement, covering the ongoing consultation, process and preparations for the final agreed statement. The Director, Regulation provided an update outlining the latest position on the implementation of the campaigner provisions in the Elections Act, including the provisions for party registration and notional spending coming into force later this month, the consultation underway on the digital imprint regime, and a consultation due to open shortly on a code of practice for third party campaigners. There was also an update on innovations in regulatory support, and on digital projects. It was noted that an announcement had just come through during the meeting, on the Judgement from the Supreme Court case on whether a proposed Scottish Independence Referendum Bill related to reserved matters. A note on this judgement would be circulated to Commissioners following this meeting. The Board received and noted the quarterly finance and performance report quarter two 2022/23. Resolved: That the Board noted the oral updates on operations and matters arising. Resolved: That the Board noted the quarterly finance and performance report quarter two 2022/23. Forward Plan of Board business 2022/23 Resolved: That the Board noted the report. Supplementary Estimate for 2022/23 The Director, Finance and Corporate Services introduced the report advising the Board on whether to submit a Supplementary Estimate to the Speaker's Committee. It was noted that supplementary estimates had been submitted to the Scottish Parliament and Senedd Cymru, to adjust contributions for pay awards and campaigns expenditure. Resolved: That the Board agreed the Accounting Officer's recommendation not to submit a Supplementary Estimate for the UK Parliament. Resolved: That the Board agreed with the virement of funding

from Event to Elections Act with the final amount to be determined at year-end by the Accounting Officer. Returning Officer (RO) and Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) performance standards The Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance introduced the report setting out new performance standards for Returning Officers (ROs) and updated standards for Electoral Registration Officers (EROs), which had been discussed previously with the Board in May and widely consulted on subsequent to that. It was noted that the consultation process had been positive and received widespread support for the proposed approach, with broad agreement that the new frameworks will provide a robust basis for the delivery of well-run elections covering the range of RO and ERO functions, support the effective and consistent implementation of legislative changes, and enable transparent reporting on the delivery of elections at a local level and across Great Britain. The different legislative position in Northern Ireland was also noted, with no equivalent power existing for setting, monitoring and reporting on standards. The Board discussed ensuring we take opportunities to highlight and celebrate best practice and to engage Parliamentarians and support them to use the available data to challenge locally and help drive improvements. The Board also discussed the importance of measuring outputs, including levels of registration. The Board welcomed the report, thanking the team for the update. Resolved: That the Board agreed the new RO and updated ERO performance standards as detailed within the report, to enable them to be laid before the UK, Scottish and Welsh Parliaments in December 2022. Draft Enforcement Policy review The Director, Regulation introduced the report, advising the Board on the Commission's enforcement policy, which is periodically reviewed. Resolved: That the Board agreed areas of the policy proposed to amend or expand, noting that a statutory public consultation would follow early in 2023, with formal approval from the Board on the new policy. Resolved: That the Board agreed to delegate agreement of the final policy subject to the above, to two or three Commissioners. Revised Commission Board and Committee meeting dates for 2023/24 Resolved: That the Board agreed the revised Commission Board and Committee meeting dates for 2023/24, incorporating an extra meeting of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee into their annual meeting cycle. Update from the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) Chair The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee updated the Board on the work of the Committee at its meeting in September. The draft minutes of the meeting would be circulated to members of the Commission Board separately. Update from the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo) Chair The Chair of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee updated the Board on the work of the Committee at its meetings in July and November. The Board noted that progress had been made in relation to the people strategy and the Committee would now be meeting four times a year in order to fulfil its remit. Annual review of schedule of internal policies and codes Resolved: That the Board noted the annual review of schedule of internal policies and codes. Annual declarations of interests Resolved: That the Board noted the annual declarations of interests for Commissioners, Executive Team and the Independent Advisers to the Audit and Risk Committee and the Commission Board. Risk appetite workshop The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee and the Independent Adviser to this Committee, chaired a session on risk appetite, looking at a revised version of the Commission's strategic risks. The Board discussed and provided a steer as to its risk appetite in relation to each of the areas outlined in the paper. Resolved: That the Board agreed for a risk register template to be developed, demonstrating the residual risk scores as agreed, and brought back to a future Board meeting.

Parliamentary Parties Panel minutes: 5 June 2018 | Electoral Commission Search
Parliamentary Parties Panel minutes: 5 June 2018 You are in the Party panels section Home How we make decisions Party panels On this page Minutes of the last meeting and actions arising pilots and evaluation May 2018 local elections public awareness campaigns and Tower Hamlets count CSPL review – intimidation of candidates Donation checking for bequests Commission update report Any other business Actions First published: 5 June 2018 Last updated: 2 September 2019 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Scottish National Party: Scott Martin (SM), Chair of meeting Conservative Party: Alan Mabbutt (AM) Andrew Stedman (AS) Labour: Monique Shockness (MS) Liberal Democrats: David Allworthy (DA) Darren Briddock (DB) Natalia Villazan (NV) The Electoral Commission: Claire Bassett, Chief Executive (CB) Craig Westwood, Director of Communications & Research (CW) Bob Posner, Director of Political Finance and Regulation & Legal Counsel (BP) Carol Sweetenham, Guidance and Strategy Leader (CS) Niki Nixon, Head of External Communications (NN) Minutes of the last meeting and actions arising There were further questions on the Codes of Practice, as covered in the minutes from the previous meeting. DB asked for clarity on spending when a snap election is called. SM raised questions about spending limits. CB explained that any decision on spending limits would be for the UK Government to take. AM raised concerns in relation to a current legal action and the impact on Commission guidance. CB reminded the meeting that the case was subject to reporting restrictions and that it was therefore not appropriate to discuss it. BP offered to pick up the issue separately if necessary. SM asked if there was an update on the integrity roundtables. CB stated that the next roundtable will take place in November/December and that the panel's feedback on the changes to the last roundtables will be considered. SM pressed the Commission on the feasibility of sharing spending returns in PDF format, as had been done up until 2010. BP replied that the Commission has investigated this but would not be taking this forward. pilots and evaluation CW outlined that the Commission has a statutory duty to evaluate the pilots. A briefing paper on the evaluation criteria was shared with parliamentarians before the pilots took place and many were invited to attend a briefing meeting. As part of the evaluation, interviews will be carried out with polling station staff, candidates and organisations representing the interests of specific demographic groups (such as Stonewall and Age UK) about evidence of their experiences of the pilots. The Commission intends to publish the evaluation before summer recess. CW stressed that the Commission is keen to hear from parties about their experience of the pilots, particularly in terms of candidates in the relevant areas. DA noted that the Liberal Democrats are still opposed to the concept of voter ID and will remain so. GW asked if the Commission will be sharing the evaluation findings with the Welsh government to ensure there is coordination. CB confirmed that the report would be shared. DB requested that the voter ID evaluation be brought to the next meeting in September. May 2018 local elections public awareness campaigns and Tower Hamlets count CW talked through the outcome of the Commission's registration campaign for the local elections, which exceeded its registration applications target by 26%. Initial anecdotal evidence suggests many of these applications are new registrations, though the Commission awaits exact numbers. CW ran through the performance of the "Your vote is yours alone" campaign, used to raise awareness of electoral fraud during the local elections. The campaign, developed with the support of local authorities and in partnership with Crimestoppers, was widely used by local authorities; CW noted that Tower Hamlets had made particularly active use of the resources available to raise awareness. The media coverage of the campaign was of a positive sentiment.

Crimestoppers is doing its own evaluation of the campaign, focusing on calls received and engagement with digital advertising. AS raised the report he received from Cllr Peter Golds on irregularities during the local elections in Tower Hamlets. Cllr Golds reported that he was unaware that Electoral Commission representatives were present at the count to whom he could make representations. Cllr Golds' report also raised concerns about the location of polling stations. AS stated that the report quoted other stakeholders who shared some of Cllr Golds' concerns. CB noted that four Commission representatives were present at the Tower Hamlets count, herself included. While CB noted that the count was slow, she did not think this should be criticised in the circumstances. On the matter of polling station locations, CB noted that the Returning Officer (RO) for Tower Hamlets had gone above and beyond, at considerable expense, to accommodate a new location when concerns were raised about one of the polling stations. CB visited a number of polling stations in Tower Hamlets on the day and was pleased to see actively engaged polling station staff and police. A lot of thought went into policing on the day; annual leave was cancelled, police officers with specialist language skills were deployed; and there was at least one uniformed police officer in every polling station. CB confirmed that Cllr Golds' report would be considered by both the Commission and the RO. However she stated that some assertions had not been fully evidenced and that it was important not to undermine public confidence unnecessarily. AS noted that the 2018 elections were one of the better run elections in the borough. DA raised concerns about incorrect postal vote forms in Haringey. CB confirmed the Commission was aware and that the issue was rectified quickly. It was noted that printing errors on postal votes pose a recurring challenge. CB said this may be linked to the fact that there are fewer printing suppliers, coupled with a high number of electoral events in recent years. The Commission has raised this issue, as has the AEA. Reduced resources for local authorities also pose a challenge. Experienced electoral staff are leaving the profession and it is increasingly difficult to replace them. CB noted this is often discussed at the advisory board. It was confirmed that the Commission still uses a traffic light rating system for local authorities. In the run up to the May polls, any authority rated red was met face-to-face by a Commission representative, while those rated amber and green were supported by phone or in person. This level of engagement has led to a reduced number of authorities rated as red. DB raised the issue of Harborough Council, reporting that it is declining to publish the recent election results, citing Commission advice. CB said that this would be followed up.

CSPL review – intimidation of candidates BP stated that the Cabinet Office is looking at the offence of intimidation. The current legislation works in so far as some prosecutions are taking place, however a review of the offences is welcome. CSPL has said that political parties should develop codes of conduct that cover intimidation. It was agreed that the topic would stay on the agenda to be revisited and be raised with Cabinet Office later in the meeting.

Donation checking for bequests AS expressed disappointment that parties cannot easily check bequests against the register as EROs don't have a power to release old registers to them. BP said the Commission agrees with this concern. The Commission guidance directs parties to other sources such as the British Library. DB confirmed that the register held by the British Library cannot be copied or photographed which is problematic and that the register is not updated monthly. AS has written to Chloe Smith about this, he believes access to the register should be enabled by amending the regulations. BP indicated that the Commission would likely support access changes and asked AS to report back on the Minister's response.

Commission update report CS thanked panel members for attending

the modern guidance user group and said there would be a follow up meeting in October. A new contractor has been appointed to redevelop the corporate website and an intro meeting will be arranged shortly. Prototypes of the new-style guidance will be developed over summer, rewriting of the guidance will begin in September and the first tranche of rewritten guidance should be available next spring after the May polls. SM requested that in addition to updating the format of the guidance, the content also be reviewed, for example guidance on imprints. DB requested that the relevant item of law be added to the guidance for ease of reference. CS confirmed that updates would largely affect format, rather than content, but that a content "spring clean" would take place as part of the rewriting. It was planned that legal references should be included. A contractor is now in place for the delivery of the new PFR system. CS would like to introduce the panel to the contractor in the next few weeks and share progress. BP added that a key success measure for this project is the satisfaction of the panel members as end users of the system. It was agreed that a dedicated meeting would be set up to review the progress of the PFR system and that this would be held the day immediately before or after the next PPP meeting for ease. BP reminded the panel that a review of party descriptions will be carried out.

Currently, new party applications are subject to tight rules around the party descriptor, which must sufficiently identify the party for the voter to know it is of that party. Otherwise it is not a description of the party name. The review of pre-existing registered party descriptions would be commencing soon. It was confirmed that this did not require a change to legislation as this falls with the Commission's role of maintaining the register. SM asked if guidance on statements of accounts would appear soon. DB stated that if the guidance on this changes, treasurers need to be notified by January. BP confirmed that the Commission is looking at this and it is a live project, however draft regulations are not imminent. Any other business NV asked if there is a timeframe to link the Commission's work to Brexit. CB confirmed this is something the Commission is already working on but that most decisions on this are for the Cabinet Office. Actions Action Owner Status evaluation to be brought to the next meeting in September. CW Complete Report back on access to the register for the purpose of checking bequests. AS AS to update on Minister's response Set up meeting to demo progress of PFR system, to immediately follow or precede the next PPP meeting. CS Complete CS will contact panel members to set up meeting. Report back on Harborough Council's decision not to publish recent election results. CB Complete Published on website Related content Our Commissioners Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Our Executive Team Meet our Executive Team, and find out more about them Donations accepted View data about donations accepted by parties and campaigners

Better detection and management of duplicate registration applications | Electoral Commission Search Better detection and management of duplicate registration applications You are in the Modernising electoral registration: feasibility studies section Home A modern electoral register

Modernising electoral registration: feasibility studies First published: 26 July 2019 Last updated: 8 June 2021 Summary We identified two main ways in which duplicates could be identified and managed through the development of a “look up” tool. “Voter-focused” approaches would take the form of an online “look up” facility for electors to check whether they were already registered. They could be local authority devised solutions, or more centralised (national or UK-wide) lookup tools. “ERO-focused” approaches would involve either developing systems to allow EROs to identify and manage duplicates within their respective local EMS systems, or through a more centralised process enabling the identification and management of duplicates across multiple registers.

Summary The key to all solutions is the creation of a unique identifier for each elector. This would enable the identification of duplicates either within local registers, or across registers, depending on the particular solution implemented. Unique identifier as prerequisite for managing duplicate records The key to identifying duplicate records in one register, as well as across multiple registers, is a unique identifier. Although it would seem to be a simple solution, implementing a unique identifier per elector across the 372 registers would require several issues to be addressed first.

Solutions We identified two main ways in which duplicate registration applications might be better identified and managed within the electoral registration system:

- “Voter-focused” approaches These would take the form of an online “look up” facility for electors to check whether they were already registered.
- “ERO-focused” approaches These would involve either developing systems to allow EROs to identify and manage duplicates within their respective EMS systems, without altering the current system of decentralised, local authority-based registers (in Great Britain), or moving towards more centralised registers allowing EROs to identify and manage duplicates across multiple registers.

Voter-focused solutions Local lookup tool Under this scenario, each local authority would have its own lookup function that citizens could use to check if they were registered to vote within the local authority, obtaining access through their local authority online account.

National lookup tool Each nation (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) would have its own lookup tool accessible from a central location, e.g. the Register to Vote website. The lookup tool could be built into the electoral registration process. The system would not allow a citizen to continue with a registration application if it detected that the elector was already registered at the address provided. Alternatively, it could be a stand-alone tool that a citizen could use to check whether they were registered, based on information provided.

UK-wide lookup tool A single lookup tool would be developed for citizens to check if they were registered to vote. It would be accessible from a central location, e.g. the Register to Vote website and linked to all registers across the UK. This model could be integrated into the current electoral registration process and automatically detect instances where citizens were already registered.

ERO-focused solutions Decentralised registers with unique identifiers EMS systems would provide the tools to identify duplicates within a single, local register, facilitated by the allocation of unique identifiers.

Single view of all registers with unique identifiers Under this scenario EROs would continue to maintain separate registers, but be able to view (read-only) all entries on all 372 registers. This would enable the comparison of all registers to identify possible duplicates.

Four national registers with unique

identifiers Northern Ireland already has a single national register and the Welsh Government is considering this as an option for Wales. National registers would also be created for England and Scotland, with national keepers of the registers assigned. Duplicates could be identified and managed across multiple registers within each nation. Single, UK wide register with unique identifiers This would require restructuring the electoral registration process so that there is one UK-wide register, rather than 372 separate registers. This would enable the identification of duplicates across all UK registers. It could also facilitate a UK-wide lookup function. A keeper of the register would need to be designated. Related content Reforming electoral law Find out about electoral law and the changes we want to see A modern electoral register Find out about the changes we want to see to the electoral registration system in the UK Transparent digital campaigning Find out about digital campaigning and the changes we want to see of elections Find out about the accessibility of elections and the changes we want to see

Committee on Standards in Public Life review of electoral regulation: Response to consultation | Electoral Commission Search Committee on Standards in Public Life review of electoral regulation: Response to consultation You are in the Our responses to consultations section Home Our responses to consultations On this page Overview Rationalising the current regulatory framework Improving regulation and enforcement of PPERA Improving regulation and enforcement of the RPA First published: 31 July 2020 Last updated: 3 August 2020 Overview of response This response sets out our views on the Committee on Standards in Public Life's review into electoral regulation. Overview The Electoral Commission is the independent statutory body which oversees elections and referendums and has regulated political finance in the UK since 2000. . We welcome this review, which provides an important opportunity to learn from the experiences of campaigners, the police, prosecutors and the Commission, and identify recommendations to improve regulation of the UK's political finance laws. The current regulatory framework broadly works well to support public confidence in the integrity of elections and referendums in the UK. There are generally high levels of compliance with the law, and the framework has been updated over time. There is still room for significant improvement, however. This response sets out our suggested priorities for reform in three main areas: Important recommendations to modernise electoral law have already been made in government-commissioned reports, by parliamentary select committees and by the Commission. Accordingly there are opportunities for governments to achieve a more transparent, fair and sustainable regime that is clearer and more consistent for different campaigners, to support the democratic system across the UK. The current dual jurisdiction for the party and campaigner regime offences between the Commission and the police has created some uncertainties for those we regulate, and for voters. This can be readily addressed by the police and the Commission, with the CPS, bringing more transparency and clarity on which body will lead on the different prosecutorial aspects of the offences regime. This would be a normal and common step for regulation and retain the most serious matters still being taken before the courts by the police and the CPS. The civil fines system administered by the Commission has supported compliance by parties and campaigners and has improved transparency of political finance. A similar regime across election finance laws for candidates and agents would be fairer to them and can equally be administered by the Commission. Rationalising the current regulatory framework This section responds to the Committee's questions 1, 4, 5 and 6 Question 1: What values do you think should underpin the regulation of donations and loans, and campaign expenditure by candidates, political parties and non-party campaigners in the UK, and why? Such values may include, though are not limited to, concepts such as transparency, fairness and accountability. Political finance regulation in the UK is underpinned by transparency. The law requires timely and accurate reporting of information about campaigner funding and spending, to give voters confidence that funding comes from permissible sources and spending does not exceed the limits agreed by Parliament. We publish this information and use it to identify whether we need to take enforcement action against those who may have broken the law. There is still scope to improve transparency about the money that is spent on campaigning by political parties, candidates and other campaigners, particularly in relation to digital campaign activity. The UK regime currently reflects two important principles less effectively: proportionality and enforceability. Political finance laws should be easy to understand and apply without imposing unnecessary bureaucracy on those involved. Enforcement tools should also be proportionate and unambiguous, with clear and

effective sanctions for any breaches. Our response explains how and why this should be improved. The law and the approach to regulation should also promote sustainability and fairness for campaigners. It needs to be financially viable, so that parties can function effectively in government or in opposition, and so that voters can continue to receive relevant information and arguments from a broad range of perspectives. Future reforms should recognise the different types of campaigners and should not unduly restrict particular candidates, political parties or other campaigners from participating.

Question 4: Are there aspects of the Electoral Commission's role which detract from its function as a regulator of election finance?

The Commission has two main statutory roles: overseeing the delivery of elections and electoral registration (and directly delivering most UK referendums); and regulating political finance. This dual role enhances our institutional knowledge, and how we act as a regulator. We are able to regulate political finance more effectively because of our wider knowledge and experience of how elections are run. The UK's model is admired internationally and reflected in similar ways in certain countries, including Australia and Canada for example, as best fits their particular needs. We also have a responsibility to advise the UK's governments and legislatures on improvements to the system, and importantly our dual role enables us to do this effectively.

Question 5: Are there aspects of the rules which affect or detract from effective regulation of election finance? The rules for regulating candidate spending and donations in the Representation of the People Act 1983 (RPA) are little changed from the late nineteenth century. The additional regime established by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) regulates the funding and spending of political parties and others, and has broadly worked well to improve transparency of political finance in the UK. Rationalising these two separate legal frameworks, including considering the balance between different spending limits and controls, would achieve a regime that is clearer and more consistent for different campaigners. Based on our experience of monitoring compliance and enforcing the PPERA rules since 2000, we have identified a number of areas where the framework could be improved. This includes recommendations from a wide-ranging regulatory review that we published in 2013, and a focused review of digital campaign regulation in 2018. Other reviews have also identified significant areas for improvement, including Lord Hodgson's third party election campaigning review in 2016, the Law Commissions' recent review of electoral law and Parliamentary select committee reports on disinformation and 'fake news' and democracy and digital technologies. Our key recommendations are highlighted below in response to the Committee's questions.

Question 6: What are the Electoral Commission's strengths and weaknesses as a regulator of election finance? The fact that the UK has an independent Electoral Commission that is accountable to legislators in all three Parliaments of the UK is a significant strength. A genuinely independent regulator is an essential element to ensure confidence in the integrity of the political finance regime. We have been accountable to the Speaker's Committee of the UK Parliament since 2000, and we are now also becoming accountable to the Scottish Parliament and the Senedd Cymru/Welsh Parliament. The Northern Ireland Assembly does not have legislative responsibility for political finance regulation. Another strength is our decision to approach regulation by working to ensure compliance before an electoral event rather than having to take enforcement action afterwards. Our guidance on the law is welcomed by candidates and agents as clear and helpful, parties rely on it, and its value and authority has also been recognised by the courts. We are currently developing new ways of supporting regulated entities, which we explain below. We have established

our role as a specialist expert regulator, and also developed strong relationships with other regulators that work across the wider area of democracy and public life. We also use our expertise to work constructively with Ministers and civil servants from all of the UK's governments to ensure their policy priorities are effective and workable. The Commission has 20 years' worth of knowledge and experience of election law and regulating the UK's political finance regime. We have ten years' experience of investigating and applying civil sanctions to offences under that regime. But the regime is still being tested, by digital and other new campaign techniques, by cases brought before the courts, and by the growing consequences of the historic development, outlined above and expanded below, of multiple regimes and dual regulatory responsibilities. Our regulated community generally has a culture of compliance, and works with us to find a way through these challenges. But with complex and out of date rules, not all those regulated welcome or accept the way the regime works or our application of it, and translate that view into criticism of us as the regulator. Improving regulation and enforcement of PPERA This section responds to the Committee's questions 2, 3, 7, 8 and 9 Question 2: Does the Electoral Commission have the powers it needs to fulfil its role as a regulator of election finance under PPERA? It would be helpful if responses would consider the Commission's role in a) monitoring and b) investigating those it regulates. There are several areas where improved powers would help the Commission to ensure compliance with political finance law. Our previous reviews of the regulatory framework identified a range of recommendations, and we highlight two priority areas below. We would welcome the ability to resolve regulatory matters swiftly and effectively outside a formal investigation where one is not warranted. If we were able to obtain information outside a formal investigation (from social media companies or other suppliers to campaigners, for example), we could assess allegations more quickly and determine whether an investigation is in fact necessary. We would also welcome explicit powers to share information with the police or other regulators such as the Information Commissioner, for example. We currently rely on general powers and data protection law which makes working with partner agencies complex and, at times, slow. These improvements would help the Commission to respond more quickly and proportionately when dealing with allegations. This would be better for anyone who could be subject to investigation, for anyone making an allegation, and for the wider public in terms of reaching swift conclusions and providing timely reassurances. Question 3: What could the Electoral Commission do differently to allow it to perform its role as a regulator of election finance more effectively? We believe that a successful regulator should be able to rely more heavily on encouraging compliance to prevent wrong-doing than on taking enforcement action after wrong-doing has occurred. We support those who wish to comply, but there should be effective deterrent sanctions for those who do not. Our current corporate plan, which was approved by the UK Parliament Speaker's Committee earlier this year, sets out two new actions to further develop our approach. First, we are investing in supporting compliance through a user-friendly online tool and a more responsive regulatory service. We will bring the high quality advice and guidance we already produce for parties, candidates and campaigners under a new strategy that offers new and impactful tools to support compliance with the law. Second, to deter people from deliberately committing offences, and to make sure we can respond proportionately if they do, we will build the capacity to prosecute lower order suspected offences, while more serious offences will still be a matter for the police. We say more on this below. Question 7: Are the Electoral Commission's civil sanctions powers to fine up to £20,000 adequate? The

current maximum fine that has been available since 2009 as a civil penalty for offences under PPERA is not proportionate for the most serious instances. A maximum fine of £20,000 is unlikely to act as a deterrent for inadequate compliance by campaigners dealing with donations and spending which can involve tens of millions of pounds. The maximum fine should be raised to give greater flexibility to respond proportionately to the range of offences we regulate. We only impose the maximum fine in serious cases that would impact on public confidence, such as a breach of spending limit or omissions of tens or hundreds of thousands of pounds of spending from a campaigner's report. But a maximum £20,000 fine is not a proportionate deterrent for serious offences, and does not incentivise all campaigners to invest in robust compliance procedures. Recent research indicates that the public believe that fines for breaking political finance laws are too lenient, given the amount of money that could be spent on campaigning. More than half of the respondents (52%) in our regular tracking research carried out in early 2020 said that a £20,000 maximum fine was not high enough. Only 27% felt that it was about the right amount. The maximum fine should be set at a credible level for all elections and referendums across the UK, as has been recommended by several Parliamentary select committees. The Scottish Parliament recently raised the maximum fine to £500,000 for Scottish referendums, and we believe this would be a reasonable benchmark for the maximum fine in relation to the other parts of the UK's political finance regulations.

Question 8: Does the Commission's civil sanctions regime interact with the police criminal prosecution regime to form an effective and coherent system for deterring and punishing breaches of election finance laws? The civil sanctions regime works well, but it doesn't interact with the criminal prosecution regime. In practice the two regimes function separately. The civil sanctions regime is only in place for certain legal requirements and offences that apply to political parties, non-party campaigners and referendum campaigners. The police and criminal prosecution regime can be used for all election offences, and is the only enforcement option for offences involving deliberate dishonesty. This means it is a shared jurisdiction system between the Commission and the police, working with the existing prosecution authorities: the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) in England and Wales; the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service in Scotland; and the Public Prosecution Service in Northern Ireland.

We can ask the police to consider evidence we hold, or any police force can decide to investigate of its own accord most often following complaint by anyone to them. We maintain good working relationships with the main police bodies, the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), the Metropolitan Police Service and the prosecution authorities. We also work with the NPCC and the City of London Police to provide support and training to a network of police specialists in election crimes. In practice, however, the overall system is not coherent and does not provide an effective deterrent. For offences which involve intent or recklessness, the only option is police investigation and then criminal prosecution. This means there is still an 'enforcement gap' for cases which are intentional but which are not, from a police perspective, in the public interest to take forward. Police forces' pressured resources are understandably commonly prioritised to both more traditional police work and importantly serious victim-based crimes. The PPERA regime includes over 100 offences. To our knowledge, no prosecutions have been brought forward by the police or the CPS during the twenty years since 2000. Voters and campaigners should be able to know that non-compliance will be identified and dealt with proportionately and swiftly. The absence of any criminal prosecutions undermines the ability to deter or punish offences.

Question 9: In what circumstances would the regulatory regime be

strengthened by the Commission bringing prosecutions before the courts for potential offences under election finance laws? The UK Parliament gave the Commission powers to investigate breaches of PPERA in 2009 via the Political Parties and Elections Act.

The civil sanctions regime was created in 2010 as an alternative to criminal prosecution. Ten years on, we are building a prosecution function to address a remaining gap between the civil sanctions regime and the current criminal investigation and prosecution regime of the police. We will consult on the factors we would consider when deciding whether to prosecute, and it will be a limited aspect of our future regulatory work. We will continue to use civil sanctions to deal with the vast majority of the offences that we find, and that were not reckless or deliberate. Putting prosecutions before the court would enable us to deal with lower complexity offences that involve recklessness or deliberate dishonesty and cannot be subject to the civil sanctions regime. For example, where a campaigner knowingly does not comply with an order for disclosure, or where repeated failures which have been dealt with using civil sanctions have not led to compliance. These cases would typically be brought before a magistrate's court rather than at crown court level. It is normal and common for specialist regulators to bring prosecutions. They bring expertise to the subject matter; and having the power to prosecute enables the regulator to demonstrate the consequences of non-compliance. It also relieves police and public prosecutors of the burden of bringing offences to court which do not necessarily have identifiable victims and which understandably may not be a priority for them. Where more significant or complex criminal offences are suspected, prosecutions will rightly continue to be a matter for the police and the prosecution authorities.

Improving regulation and enforcement of the RPA Question 10: Should the Electoral Commission's regulatory powers be expanded to include the enforcement of candidate finance laws? Expanding our role to include enforcement of candidate finance laws would bring more proportionate enforcement to this half of the political finance system, with benefits for campaigners, voters and public confidence. We have seen that the prospect of a swift civil fine has incentivised compliance by parties and campaigners and been a success in delivering transparency of political finance since 2010. The current rules for candidates and agents do not offer any flexibility or any alternative from police investigation and criminal prosecution. Criminal investigation is a significant step and is disproportionate for many breaches such as late delivery of a spending return or minor missing items. This can be described as an 'enforcement gap' for administrative or careless breaches, and introducing a civil sanctions regime for candidates would address that gap. Police investigation and criminal prosecution would still be the only route for dealing with serious breaches with intent to break the rules. Criminal prosecutions for serious breaches committed by candidates and agents would be out of scope for the Commission, with these powers reserved to the Director of Public Prosecutions. If the Commission had powers to investigate both halves of the party and candidate regime, we could provide more joined-up oversight over the co-existing regimes in the RPA and PPERA. We could look in more detail at whether campaigners correctly allocate spending according to the key test of whose electoral success is being promoted, and ensure that spending limits serve their purpose. The police could focus on the most serious breaches that involve intent to break the law, and we could ensure that there is a proportionate deterrent for all other breaches. The overall result would be a simpler system to explain to voters and campaigners. It would still be a shared jurisdiction system between the regulator and the police, but the factors that determine who has the power or responsibility to address allegations would be much clearer than at present.

Results and turnout at the May 2017 Wales local elections | Electoral Commission

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Results and turnout at the May 2017 Wales local elections

You are in the Wales local council elections section Home Wales local council elections On this page Introduction Electorate Turnout Rejected ballot papers Postal voting Rejected postal ballots Proxies and waivers First published: 5 July 2019 Last updated: 25 July 2022 Download You can download the: full dataset as a XLS full dataset as a CSV (zip file) Introduction This report provides analysis on the participation and administration of the local government elections in Wales, held on 4 May 2017. For this, data was collected from Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers in Wales. This comprised the Form K 'Statement as to Postal Ballot Papers' and an additional data form, which included data relating to electoral registration, turnout, absent voting and rejected ballots. Local elections were scheduled in 852 wards across all 22 local authority areas in Wales. Of the 1,254 seats available, 1,161 were contested and 92 candidates were returned unopposed. Elections were postponed in two wards and one seat in Powys had no candidates standing for election. 1 Electorate 2.3 million Turnout Ballot box: 42.0% (895,943 votes) Postal vote: 69.7% In-person: 36.3% Rejected ballots Ballots at the count: 0.5% Postal votes: 3.2% Proxies appointed 2,873 (0.1% of the electorate) 167 emergency proxies Electorate The elections gave over 2.1 million registered electors the opportunity to vote. 2 Since December 2016, this is an increase in electorate size of 1.0% across Wales, ranging from an increase of 4.2% in Flintshire to a decrease of 3.2% in Wrexham. More than 20,000 electors (0.94% of the electorate in contested wards) were added to the electoral register during the weeks leading up to the election. As a proportion of the electorate, this was highest in Gwynedd, where additions represented 2.6% of the electorate in contested wards, and lowest in Rhondda Cyon Taf, where additions represented 0.3% of the electorate in contested wards. A total of 25,587 applications to register were received in the weeks leading up to the election. 3 Almost a quarter of these (22.5%) were recorded as duplicates. At a local authority level, duplicates were reportedly as high as 43% in Denbighshire and 41.4% in Swansea. In addition, 31,003 individuals applied to register to vote after the registration deadline. This is likely to be attributable to the announcement of the general election, which came after the deadline for registration for the council elections. Based on data from 14 local authorities, 187 individuals were recorded as trying to vote on election day despite not being registered. 4 Votes were cast at 2,254 polling stations as well as by post. Turnout The measure of turnout referred to in this report, 'ballot box turnout', includes all valid votes cast ('valid vote turnout') and votes rejected at the count. 'Total turnout' refers to valid votes cast, votes rejected at the count, and those rejected at the postal ballot verification stage before the count. Table 3.1 confirms that only a small fraction of voters try to vote but fail to do so successfully. Table 3.1: Turnout

Electorate	Valid vote turnout	Ballot box turnout	Total turnout	Difference	valid vote – total (pp)
2017	2.28 m	41.8%	42.0%	42.4%	0.6
2012/13	5.2.31 m	38.7%	38.9%	39.4%	0.7
2008	2.11 m	43.7%	44.0%	44.5%	0.8

Ballot box turnout was 42.0%, which is higher than the 38.9% turnout at the 2012/2013 local government elections in Wales but still lower than the 2008 elections. Turnout ranged from 36.3% in Caerphilly and Newport to 53.0% in Ceredigion, and increased across all local authorities with the exception of Anglesey. At a ward level, turnout ranged from 17.2% in Treforest (Rhondda Cynon Taff) to 69.6% in Bethel (Gwynedd). Table 3.2: Turnout 2012/2013 – 2017 Local authority

2012/13	2017	Change (pp)
Blaenau Gwent	37.7%	40.0%
2.3 Bridgend	34.4%	39.9%
5.5 Caerphilly	36.0%	36.3%
0.3 Cardiff	38.0%	42.8%
4.8 Carmarthenshire	44.5%	46.8%

2.3 Ceredigion 46.8% 53.0% 6.2 Conwy 38.0% 41.5% 3.5 Denbighshire 39.1% 42.4% 3.3 Flintshire 36.9% 38.5% 1.6 Gwynedd 48.3% 52.1% 3.8 Isle of Anglesey 50.5% 45.9% -4.6 Merthyr Tydfil 37.3% 37.7% 0.4 Monmouthshire 38.1% 46.7% 8.6 Neath Port Talbot 39.4% 42.3% 2.9 Newport 33.9% 36.3% 2.4 Pembrokeshire 45.8% 47.5% 1.7 Powys 46.7% 47.2% 0.5 Rhondda Cynon Taf 36.1% 39.9% 3.9 Swansea 36.5% 38.1% 1.7 Torfaen 37.2% 37.5% 0.4 Vale of Glamorgan 39.3% 46.1% 6.8 Wrexham 34.2% 40.0% 5.9 Rejected ballot papers The proportion of ballot papers rejected at the count was 0.5%. This compares with 0.6% in the 2012/2013 local government elections. At a local authority level, this ranged from 0.2% in Newport to 0.8% in Neath Port Talbot. At a ward level, two wards rejected more than 3% of ballots at the count and 52 wards rejected none. The vast majority of ballots (70.6%) were rejected for reasons of being unmarked or wholly void for uncertainty. More than a quarter (26.5%) were rejected due to voting for more than one candidate. Postal voting The total number of postal votes issued for these elections was 387,909, representing 18.2% of all electors with a contested election in their ward. This compares with 17.4% at the 2012/2013 elections. At a ward level, this ranged from 6.3% in Cathays (Cardiff) and Treforest (Rhondda Cynon Taff) to 31.5% in Llandrindod East/Llandrindod West (Powys). The proportion of postal voters returning their ballot papers always exceeds the turnout among 'in person' voters. This year, 69.7% postal electors used their postal vote compared with 36.3% who turned up to vote in person. Table 4.1: Postal vote turnout vs in-person turnout

Year	In-person	Postal
2017	69.7%	36.3%
2012/13	68.3%	33.3%
2008	71.4%	40.0%

Postal votes accounted for 29.2% of all votes included at the count. This compares with 29.3% in 2012/13 and 22.2% in 2008. Rejected postal ballots Postal voting packs require voters to provide their signature and date of birth. These identifiers are then matched against those provided at the time of application. If the signature or date of birth does not match, the postal vote is rejected and is not included at the count. Since 2014, Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) have been required to notify electors if their postal vote has been rejected. They can also request the elector to provide an up-to-date signature. Table 4.2: Rejected postal Year Rejected ballots as % of envelopes returned 2017 3.2% 2012/13 4.4% 2008 4.8% A total of 8,695 postal votes were rejected by Returning Officers across Wales. This represents a rejection rate of 3.2%, down from 4.4% in 2012/13 and 4.8% in 2008. The fall in the levels of rejected postal votes suggests that the new policy may be having a positive impact. The most common reason for postal vote rejection, accounting for 43.3% of rejected postal ballots, is mismatched information. In almost a third of cases of rejection (31.8%), voters returned their postal voting envelopes but failed to include either the ballot paper itself or the verification statement or both. Table 4.3: Reasons for postal vote statement rejection 2017 2012/13 Change (pp)

Reason	2017 (%)	2012/13 (%)	Change (pp)
Missing information	9.4%	5.2%	-4.3
Signature	9.6%	4.3%	-5.3
Date of birth	5.9%	15.7%	-9.8
Both	15.7%	15.4%	-0.3
Mismatched information	14.5%	19.1%	-4.6
Date of birth	7.1%	22.5%	-15.4
Both	15.4%	6.4%	-8.5
Missing forms	8.5%	2.1%	-6.4
Ballot paper	14.4%	13.4%	-0.9
PV statement	26.8%	17.4%	-9.4
Proxies and waivers	2.1%	0.9%	-1.2

The number of electors in Wales who appointed a proxy was 2,873 (0.1% of the electorate). This is consistent with 2012/13 and 2008. The number of emergency proxies issued was 167. This is more than five times higher than in 2012/13 when 30 emergency proxies were issued. A concession granted under the terms of the EAA 2006 was that postal electors who either had a disability, or were illiterate, or were unable to furnish a consistent signature could apply for a waiver to use their date of birth as their sole identifier. A total of 2,717 voters were granted such a waiver for this election, representing 0.7% of postal electors.

Appendices Appendix A There remain inconsistencies in the ways in which local

authorities record and report information. We continue to notice differences in the coding of information by different electoral management software. For example, customers of one electoral management software supplier consistently report a higher proportion of 'mismatching' than others. Inconsistencies relating to the reasons for and total number of postal vote rejections on the Form K appear to result from the potential for differences in interpretation and treatment. For example, in the treatment of the numbers of covering envelopes and ballot papers returned, covering envelopes may be sent in without the A envelope or postal voting statement enclosed, while the missing document may or may not be sent in a separate covering envelope later, or multiple ballots may be returned in one envelope. When local authorities are contacted about such anomalies they are often unable to provide revised figures or clarify why the data were coded in that way. In practice, we use a calculation of field B6 minus field C18 as a surrogate for the total number of postal votes rejected regardless of whether or not it is the same as recorded in field C19. The different breakdown of reasons for rejection collected on the additional data form does not always match this B6 minus C18 calculation. However, the discrepancies seem less severe and the categories have the advantage of being embedded in software and of having greater 'common sense' meaning. It would seem sensible to consider replacing fields B15-17 on Form K with three other aggregated categories: rejections for mismatching; rejections for missing identifier information; rejections for absent documentation. As it is, field B15 is largely redundant given that almost all authorities now verify 100% of postal vote returns. There is no field that captures the number of postal voting statements received by the Returning Officer or at a polling station before the close of poll. In practice, we use field B6, 'Number of covering envelopes received by the Returning Officer or at a polling station before the close of poll' as a surrogate but we know that, as mentioned, electors can return multiple postal ballots in one envelope or return envelopes without any ballots.

Appendix B Form K: STATEMENT AS TO POSTAL BALLOT PAPERS LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Issue of postal ballot papers 1. Total number of postal ballot papers issued under regulation 71 2. Total number of postal ballot papers issued under regulation 77 (spoilt and returned for cancellation), regulation 78 (lost or not received) and regulation 78A (cancelled due to change of address) 3. Total number of postal ballot papers cancelled under regulation 86A (where the first ballot paper was cancelled and retrieved) 4. Total number of postal ballot papers issued (1 to 3) 5. Total number of ballot papers cancelled under regulation 78A B (1). Receipt of and replacement postal ballot papers 6. Number of covering envelopes received by the Returning Officer or at a polling station before the close of poll (excluding any undelivered or returned under regulation 77(1) (spoilt), regulation 78(1) (lost) and regulation 86A (cancelled ballot papers) 7. Number of covering envelopes received by the returning officer after the close of poll, excluding any returned as undelivered 8. Number of postal ballot papers returned spoilt for cancellation in time for another ballot paper to be issued 9. Number of postal ballot papers identified as lost or not received in time for another ballot paper to be issued 10. Number of ballot papers cancelled and retrieved in time for another ballot paper to be issued 11. Number of postal ballot papers returned as spoilt too late for another ballot paper to be issued 12. Number of covering envelopes returned as undelivered (up to the 25th day after the date of poll) 13. Number of covering envelopes not received by the Returning Officer (by the 25th day after the date of poll) 14. Total numbers 6 to 13 (this should be the same as that in 4 above) B (2). Receipt of postal ballot papers – Personal Identifiers 15. Number of covering envelopes set aside for the verification

of personal identifiers on postal voting statements 16. Number of postal voting statements subject to verification procedure rejected as not completed (excluding prior cancellations) 17. Number of postal voting statements rejected following verification procedures due to the personal identifiers on the postal voting statement not matching those in the personal identifiers record (excluding prior cancellations) C. Count of postal ballot papers 18. Number of ballot papers returned by postal voters which were included in the count of ballot papers 19. Number of cases in which a covering envelope or its contents were marked "Rejected" (cancellations under regulations 77, 78, 78A and 86A are not rejections and should be included in items 2, 3, 5, 8, 9 and 10 above) Additional data form 1) How many proxies were appointed for these elections? 2) How many emergency proxies were appointed for these elections? 3) How many waivers were granted for these elections? 4) How many postal votes were rejected for: a) Want of a signature b) Want of a date of birth c) Want of both d) Mismatched signature e) Mismatched DoB f) Both mismatched g) Ballot paper unreturned h) Postal voting statement unreturned 5) What was the total number of polling stations used? 6) How many covering envelopes were returned on polling day before 10pm? 7) How many covering envelopes were returned on the day after polling day before 10pm? 8) Total number of new electors added to the register after the publication of the revised register up to and including those added via the first interim notice of alteration 9) Total number of new electors added to the register via the second and final notices of alteration 10) Total number of applications to register received after the registration deadline. 11) Total number of applications received between the last date for applications to be included on the December 2016 revised register and the last date for applications for the first interim notice of alteration 12) Total number of duplicate applications received between the last date for applications to be included on the December 2016 revised register and the registration deadline for the first interim notice of alteration 13) Total number of applications received between the day after the last date for applications for the first interim notice of alteration and last date for applications for the final notice of alteration 14) Total number of duplicate applications received between the day after the last date for applications for the first notice of alteration and last date for applications for the final notice of alteration 15) How many people tried to vote on polling day and were found not to be registered? 1. The elections in the two wards that were postponed, Merthyr and Ceredigion, were held on 8 June 2017. The election in Powys was held on 22 June 2017.

■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. Excludes 144,598 in uncontested wards. ■ Back to content at footnote 2 3. Based on data from 21 local authorities. Merthyr Tydfil was unable to provide this information. ■ Back to content at footnote 3 4. Eight local authorities were unable to provide this information. ■ Back to content at footnote 4 5. In May 2012 there were local elections in 21 of the 22 local authorities in Wales. Elections for the Isle of Anglesey were deferred until May 2013. For this report, figures from the 2012 elections in Wales have been combined with the 2013 local elections in Anglesey. ■ Back to content at footnote 5 Related content Report: How the 2017 Welsh local elections were run Read our report about how the 2017 Welsh local elections were run Report on the May 2022 elections in Wales Read our report on the May 2022 elections in Wales. Report on the May 2021 elections in Wales Read our report about how the 2021 elections in Wales were run Past elections and referendums Read our reports and view data about past elections and referendums

You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23 First published: 4 July 2023 Last updated: 27 September 2023 Use of our powers and sanctions between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023 We encourage those we regulate to comply with the law by providing support and guidance. However, where proportionate to do so, we take action when they do not follow the law. PPERA provides us with investigation powers, including the ability to: require information (through an investigation notice) from anyone where we suspect there has been a breach of the law or (through a disclosure notice) where we do not suspect an offence but require information in order to fulfil our functions require suspects or witnesses to attend for interview take action if people do not co-operate with our requirements in certain circumstances, enter premises (through an inspection warrant from a Justice of the Peace) We also have a range of sanctions, including: Fines ranging from £200 to £20,000 Compliance and restoration notices, by which we can require people to take particular actions to achieve compliance or rectify non-compliance Stop notices, by which we can require people to take a particular action or stop an intended action These sanctions apply to most, but not all, PPERA offences. There are some offences – generally those involving an element of deliberate dishonesty – for which we cannot issue fines, but we can notify the police or relevant public prosecutor. We are also able to consider ‘enforcement undertakings’ from those we regulate, where for example a party may report an offence voluntarily and propose actions it will take to put things right, avoiding the need for the party and us to go through potentially time-consuming investigations. Use of investigatory powers Use of investigatory powers We are required to report on our use of investigatory powers, specifically cases in which: we issued a disclosure or investigation notice premises were entered using an inspection warrant issued by a Justice of the Peace we applied to a court for an order for disclosure We are not required to include information where, in our opinion, to do so would or might be unlawful, or might adversely affect any current investigation or proceedings. We did not issue any disclosure or investigation notices during 2022/23. We did not use our powers to apply for an inspection warrant to enter premises or apply for any court orders for disclosure. Concluded investigations We concluded 34 investigations during 2022/23, compared with 42 in the previous year. We continued to regulate and take enforcement action where it was reasonable and in the public interest to do so. Our work to support parties and campaigners comply with electoral law, and an absence of significant regulated elections were all factors in this reduced number of cases. Use of civil sanctions We are required to report on our use of civil sanctions, specifically cases in which: a fixed monetary penalty or discretionary requirement was imposed or a stop notice served (other than cases in which the penalty, requirement or notice was overturned on appeal) liability for a fixed monetary penalty was paid before a notice imposing it was issued an enforcement undertaking was accepted 25 investigations led to considerations of sanctions, and we imposed 20 penalties, across seven cases. In total, £16,130 of sanctions were imposed. That figure includes one case involving two fixed penalties which were paid early so we did not have to issue notices to impose payments. This does not take account of 17 cases where we found an offence but decided not to impose a sanction. We take a proportionate approach and do not automatically impose a sanction where an offence has taken place. Details of all penalties imposed during 2022/23 are available on our website. No enforcement undertakings were offered to us during 2022/23. We did not serve any stop notices up

to and including 31 March 2023. No appeals were made against decisions to impose civil sanctions. Navigation Previous Next Using our resources to support the delivery of our goals Northern Ireland annual report

Consultation: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy | Electoral Commission

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Consultation: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

You are in the Our consultations section Home Our consultations On this page About the strategy How to respond to this consultation What the strategy covers Action plan Submit your feedback First published: 5 November 2021 Last updated: 5 November 2021 About the strategy We are in the process of drafting a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, and changing our approach to producing Equality Impact

Assessments. We have to meet a range of obligations to ensure we promote equality, diversity and inclusion, and our strategy explains what these are and how we comply with them. But equality, diversity and inclusion are not just matters of compliance, so our strategy also sets out our aspirations to go further than our obligations. We have built our strategy around the objectives of: ensuring that everyone who is eligible is able to participate in the electoral processes, whether as a voter, campaigner or candidate, by identifying barriers, making recommendations and working with others to remove them ensuring that we embed equality, diversity and inclusion in the delivery of all of our work, treating all our stakeholders and partners fairly and with respect, and being transparent in the decisions we make ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion for everyone here and that all our staff are treated fairly and with respect Our strategy covers the whole of the UK. We are accountable to the UK Parliament, the Scottish Parliament and the Senedd, and will be sharing this strategy with them. Different legislation applies in Northern Ireland, and this strategy includes how we will fulfil our duties as required under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. We are also changing our approach to producing Equality Impact Assessments. We have new guidance, a screening form, and an updated EIA template. These assessments are important, as they help us to assess the impact of proposed changes on different groups and ensure that we are promoting equality, diversity and inclusion. What we're consulting on We're consulting on our draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, and our new Equality Impact Assessment documents. We want to make sure that our strategy demonstrates our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, and that it clearly shows the actions we are going to take to meet our obligations and aspirations. Download the documents Equality, Diversion and Inclusion Strategy Download the Equality Impact Assessment documentation: Equality, Inclusion and Diversity EIA Guidance Equality, Diversity and Inclusion EIA Screening Equality, Diversity and Inclusion EIA template How to respond to this consultation How to respond to this consultation This consultation closed on 14 February 2022. We will consider the responses we received and publish our response soon. What the strategy covers Chapter 1: What we do, the electorate we serve and who we are In 'Chapter 1: What we do, the electorate we serve and who we are', we explain the role of the Commission in promoting and supporting democracy. We give an overview of the diversity of the society we serve: the electorate and of those campaigning and seeking office. And we talk about the diversity of our own workforce. Chapter 2: Our vision for a diverse Commission serving a diverse democracy In 'Chapter 2: Our vision for a diverse Commission serving a diverse democracy', we explain the importance of diversity to the democratic agenda. We know there is more to do. So we have set ourselves three objectives: to ensure that everyone who is eligible is able to participate in the democratic process - whether as a voter, a campaigner or by standing for office – by identifying barriers, making recommendations and working with others to remove them to ensure that we embed equality, diversity and inclusion in all our work, treat all our stakeholders and partners fairly and with respect, and are transparent in the decisions we make to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion

for everyone at the Commission and ensure that all our staff are treated fairly and with respect Chapter 3: Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in the democratic process ‘Chapter 3: Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in the democratic process’ sets out how we will deliver the first of these objectives, through: gathering evidence: understanding the issues through research and consultation accessibility: ensuring we understand the issues faced by voters, campaigners and those standing for office and ensuring we meet best practice in accessibility communications: ensuring that all voters are aware of their right to vote and know how to exercise it, and targeting demographics we know are least likely to be registered to vote; ensuring that we communicate across all parts of the regulated community Chapter 4: Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion in our processes and decisions ‘Chapter 4: Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion in our processes and decision making’ sets out how we will deliver the second of these objectives through ensuring that all our processes treat stakeholders equally whether they are people we regulate, partners we work with on the administration of elections or businesses we buy services from. That means putting equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of our processes and ensuring that we follow those processes to a high standard. Chapter 5: Ensuring equality, recognition of diversity and inclusion for all those who work at the Commission ‘Chapter 5: Ensuring equality, recognition of diversity and inclusion for all those who work at the Commission’ sets out how we will deliver the third of these objectives through: ensuring equality and compliance with our legal responsibilities increasing the diversity of our workforce through recruitment and career progression working with our EDI Lead to look at how we further promote inclusion our learning and development offering employee performance improving our collection of data Chapter 6: Communicating our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion ‘Chapter 6: Communicating our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion’ explains how we will communicate our commitment and our plans to improve equality, diversity and inclusion. Chapter 7: Making it happen In ‘Chapter 7: Making it happen’, we explain how we will deliver and report progress on the actions set out in the Action Plan. Action plan This action plan sets out what we will do to deliver against the objectives identified in this Strategy. It reflects the priorities and objectives identified in the Corporate Plan for 2022-27. These will be reviewed annually as part of our Business Planning cycle. We will report on progress as part of our Annual Report. Action plan Objective 1: Equality, diversity and inclusion in the democratic process Action When we will do it Measure of success Who is responsible Continue to improve our research data to enhance our evidence base, ensuring we carry out screening and if appropriate an EIA for research proposals Ongoing Evidence base gives us clear data to support our aims for equality, diversity and inclusion Head of Research Continue to ensure that campaigns to raise public awareness about the electoral system are inclusive and take account of different groups Ongoing; to form part of each campaign Our messages feature in targeted media; good response from targeted groups Head of Campaigns Continue to ensure that our guidance is available in a variety of formats Ongoing Our stakeholders are supported with compliance Head of Regulatory Support Take further steps to ensure our website and our publications are as accessible as possible Ongoing: our website already meets best practice AA standards Best practice maintained and enhanced through regular testing and feedback Head of Digital Communications Build on the success of the partnership work we have already done in ensuring we continue to identify the needs of diverse groups and respond to them Continue initiatives to identify groups less likely to vote and work to find ways to

respond to their needs Good levels of awareness from specific groups Head of Campaigns working with the Commission's offices in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland Objective 2: Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion in our processes and decision making Action When we will do it Measure of success Who is responsible Ensure that the guidance, support and challenge we provide for Electoral Registration Officers supports them to encourage registration from typically under-registered groups in their areas (based on their demographics Ongoing: we have laid the new Standards before Parliament We provide the right guidance and support to EROs and quality assure that we have done so Head of Guidance, Head of Support and Improvement, Heads of Electoral Commission in Wales and Scotland Ensure that our guidance, support and challenge to Returning Officers promote the provision of equality of access and experience for all at the polls Ongoing: we constantly update and improve our guidance We provide the right guidance and support to ROs Head of Guidance; Head of Support and Improvement, Heads of Electoral Commission in Wales and Scotland Introduce new processes for carrying out and reviewing Equality Impact Assessments New EIA process rolled out by the end of 2021 Enhanced ability to assess the impact of proposed changes on equalities Head of Planning and Performance; all staff responsible for areas where screening and if necessary a full EIA may be required Ensure that the Commission's procurement strategy includes clear EDI outcomes for contractors, and that effective monitoring of these contractors is done to ensure they comply Ongoing Contractors have equalities policies in place Financial Controller Ensure through our Quality Assurance initiative that equality is embedded as appropriate in all our processes Ongoing All processes pay due regard to equalities Head of Projects and all managers Continue to keep our internal regulatory procedures under review for best practice and to ensure that consistency, fairness and quality underpin all our regulatory activities Ongoing Decisions seen to be made transparently and fairly in a way which treats all stakeholders equally Head of Registration and Reporting; Head of Monitoring and Enforcement Ensure that equality is included as appropriate in our policies including our Enforcement Policy as they are reviewed in line with our normal cycle Ongoing All policies pay due regard to equalities All Heads responsible for organisational policies Implement a Welsh Language Action Plan to enhance our service to Welsh speakers, building on the appointment of a permanent senior adviser on Welsh language and a permanent translator All parts of the organisation are aware of and meet the Welsh language standards Head of Electoral Commission in Wales; all Heads Objective 3: Ensure equality, recognition of diversity and inclusion for everyone at the Commission Action When we will do it Measure of success Who is responsible Meet the commitments and actions stated in our people strategy Ongoing Progress demonstrated (update report to each RemCo) Head of HR and others We will continue using anonymous recruiting for employed roles (our e-recruitment system does not share name or other demographic info with recruiting) Ongoing The diversity of whom we recruit Head of HR and all recruiting managers We will consider the design of our roles including through the lens of being open to all Ongoing The diversity of whom we recruit Recruiting managers (with support from HR) We will tender for an e-recruitment system that meets our data needs 31 December 2021 Diversity data reports on job applicants for employed roles HR Team We will aim to create an environment where all staff can be themselves at work Ongoing Positive findings in all staff surveys and feedback from staff groups Work led by Anti Bullying champion Updated Dignity at Work policy for 2021/22 By 2022 Updated policy reflecting Commission needs and priorities HR, DARE, EDI Group, Anti Bullying champion, PCS We will work to deliver on our

commitment to 'Zero Tolerance' of bullying and harassment. Ongoing with annual review Levels of bullying and harassment experienced and witnessed fall Anti-Bullying Champion working with Dignity and Respect Group; all managers and colleagues We will build on the learnings from relevant impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic 2020/21 – including hybrid ways of working, dependence on electronic communication; virtual leadership – to help us shape a new and inclusive workplace culture Ongoing as the pandemic recedes Continued balance of high staff engagement with delivery of business All managers and staff We will work through our Race at Work Champion and our Race at Work Taskforce to give effect to our Race at Work Charter Ongoing Actions agreed with Task Force and carried through according to plan Race at Work Champion working with the Task Force We will work with and support a new permanent EDI Lead for the Commission Summer 2021 EDI lead delivers against agreed outcomes Head of Planning and Performance We will continue to seek views and promote EDI through our EDI group Ongoing EDI considered in Commission decisions and processes All Heads Through continuing to provide induction to employees and workers, we will let them know of the EDI agenda and priorities Ongoing All new employees, temporary or permanent, understand the Commission's expectations on EDI HR, SLG and recruiting managers We will continue to discuss the results of all staff surveys and seek feedback both through teams and through the Commission's groupings such as the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion group, the Staff Engagement Group and with PCS After each full all staff survey Staff feel confident to speak up and share views to enhance the all staff survey process Head of HR working with relevant groups We will encourage employees to self-declare their diversity in our HR system to improve our organisational EDI data Spring 2021 Levels of self-declaration rise Head of HR We will continue to track the diversity of applicants and of leavers Ongoing Levels of diversity rise HR and managers Communicating our commitment to diversity Action When we will do it Measure of success Who is responsible We will draw up and implement a strategy for internal communications to make sure all staff are aware of our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion By the end of 2021 All staff aware of Strategy and their responsibilities under it EDI lead working with Head of Internal Communications Submit your feedback Related content Statutory consultation on guidance for Returning Officers: Assistance with voting for disabled people Draft guidance for Returning Officers: Assistance with voting for disabled voters (statutory consultation) Our response to the Assembly Commission's consultation 'Creating a Parliament for Wales' Read our response to Assembly Commission's consultation from April 2018 Cabinet Office consultation: The Wales Act 2017 (Consequential and Saving Provisions) Regulations 2018 Read our response to the Cabinet Office consultation from February 2019

Report: The March 2017 Northern Ireland Assembly election | Electoral Commission Search Report: The March 2017 Northern Ireland Assembly election

You are in the Northern Ireland Assembly elections section Home Northern Ireland Assembly elections On this page Introduction The March 2017 Northern Ireland Assembly election: key findings and recommendations About the elections The experience of voters Our public awareness campaign The administration of the poll Candidates and campaigners Looking ahead First published: 7 September 2019 Last updated: 13 August 2019 Introduction On 2 March 2017 an election to the Northern Ireland Assembly was held. As with previous Assembly elections we sought the views and experience of voters, based on public opinion research and electoral data provided by the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland, as well as feedback and views about the administration of the election from candidates and agents, those responsible for delivering the poll, and other participants. We published our report on the May 2016 Northern Ireland Assembly election in September 2016¹, making a number of recommendations to the UK Government and the Chief Electoral Officer. Since then, in addition to the Northern Ireland Assembly election which took place in March, a UK Parliamentary General Election will take place on 8 June 2017 and it is possible that another Assembly election may take place later this year. This paper provides a summary of the issues that emerged at the March 2017 election and an update on the progress on recommendations that we made last September. The March 2017 Northern Ireland Assembly election: key findings and recommendations Our research with voters and campaigners found high levels of confidence that the Northern Ireland Assembly election held on 2 March 2017 was well-run: More than 812,000 votes were cast at the election, representing a turnout of 64.8% - the highest level of turnout since the first Assembly election in 1998. More than 8 in 10 people (82%) said they were very or fairly satisfied with the process of registering to vote. Nearly 9 in 10 people (86%) said they were satisfied that the elections were well-run. Nearly all those voters who responded to our survey (95%) said that they found it easy to fill in their ballot paper. More than 9 in 10 candidates and election agents (91%) said that they were satisfied with the overall administration of the election. People in Northern Ireland cannot yet apply to register to vote online, although legislation allowing online registration has been passed. We want to see progress by the Chief Electoral Officer towards implementing this important change after the June 2017 UK Parliamentary general election, to make it easier for people in Northern Ireland to maintain and update their registration details. As also outlined in our report on the May 2016 Northern Ireland Assembly election we continue to want to see increased transparency on how political parties are funded in Northern Ireland, to help increase public confidence in the democratic process. We look forward to progress being made on this issue and are ready to work closely with the UK Government to support their development of the necessary legislation.

About the elections On 9 January Martin McGuinness resigned as deputy First Minister. As required by law the Assembly needed to elect a new First Minister and deputy First Minister within seven days. By 16 January the Assembly had not elected a First Minister and deputy First Minister and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland was therefore required by law to call an Assembly election, which he did for Thursday 2 March 2017. The Assembly Members (Reduction of Numbers) Act 2016 reduced the number of Assembly members returned from each of the 18 constituencies from six to five. Although the next scheduled Assembly election had been due to be held in May 2021, the 2016 Act required that the changes would come into effect at the first election after the May 2016 poll. This meant that there was an overall reduction from 108 to 90 MLAs to be

elected at the March 2017 election. Registration and turnout A total of 1,254,709 people were registered to vote in the Northern Ireland Assembly election on 2 March 2017. 2 812,783 votes were included in the count, representing an overall turnout of 64.8%. 3 This was a 10 percentage point increase compared with May 2016 and was the highest turnout since the first Northern Ireland Assembly election in 1998. Figure

1.1: Turnout at Northern Ireland Assembly elections 1998-2017 The Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland The Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland is the registration officer and returning officer for all elections in Northern Ireland.

Virginia McVea took up this position on 1 February 2017. Her predecessor Graham Shields began planning for the election before his departure, largely replicating the model that was used for the May 2016 election. This transition worked well and no issues emerged with the leadership of the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland during this busy period. Overall the Chief Electoral Officer delivered a well-run poll, particularly in light of the short notice. As outlined in our report in 2016 we will continue to work with the Chief Electoral Officer to look at how further improvements can be made to the delivery of elections in Northern Ireland. To assist in the successful delivery of the election the Chief Electoral Officer established a Strategic Election Planning Group to oversee the management of the election. The group consisted of senior staff from the Electoral Office and representatives from the Northern Ireland Office and the Electoral Commission. The group monitored and reviewed progress made on all aspects of the election planning. The experience of voters Overall the evidence from our public opinion research suggests that most voters had a positive view of the electoral process and most were confident that the election was well-run. Most of the views expressed were consistent with those received after the May 2016 election. More detailed analysis of the research is available to view on our website. Registering to vote Our research shows that there is clearly an appetite from the public to move to the online electoral registration system that operates across the rest of the UK, with 77% of respondents agreeing you should be able to register to vote online. However in spite of this there still continues to be high levels of satisfaction with the current process for registering to vote. Only 3% of those surveyed expressed dissatisfaction with getting their name on the electoral register compared to 83% who said they were very or fairly satisfied. Why did people vote? As was the case at the May 2016 Northern Ireland Assembly election, the most common reason given for voting at the March 2017 election related to civic duty (68% in 2017 and 67% in 2016). However there was a significant increase in the number of people who said they voted to 'get a change', rising from 7% in May 2016 to 25% in March 2017. It is possible that this may have contributed to the higher turnout at the March election. As was the case in May 2016 many of those who didn't vote in March 2017 gave circumstantial reasons for not making it to the polling station, such as not having the time or having been too busy (51%). However there was an increase in the number of people who claimed they didn't vote in March 2017 because they were not registered to vote (16% compared to 5% in May 2016). This may have related to the number of people removed from the electoral register in December 2016. We address this issue in the administration of the poll section . People's experience of voting Voters continue to remain very positive about their experience of voting, whether in person at a polling station or by post. Nearly all (97%) of those respondents who voted in person at a polling station reported that they were very or fairly satisfied with the voting process. All respondents who voted by post (100%) reported that they were satisfied with voting in this way. The majority of voters at the Northern Ireland Assembly election were also satisfied that

the elections were well-run; 86% of respondents to our survey said they were confident that the election was well run. This was a slight decrease on the 2016 Assembly election (when 93% of respondents said they were confident). The ballot paper As was the case in May 2016, almost all respondents to our survey (95%) said it was easy to fill in the ballot paper with 79% saying it was ‘very easy’. Only 2% said they found it difficult. A total of 9,450 ballot papers were rejected at the count by the Deputy Returning Officers, representing 1.2% of all votes cast. This is almost the same as the number of rejected ballot papers at the May 2016 election (9,425 representing 1.3%). A total of 6,836 ballot papers were rejected because there was a first preference for more than one candidate. Based on our observations at count venues this is because the voter had marked the ballot paper with multiple ‘x’s rather than using numbers. Whilst a single ‘x’ on a ballot paper could be considered as a valid first preference, once a second ‘x’ is placed on the ballot paper the voter’s intention becomes unclear. We will consider what more can be done through our future public awareness activity to raise awareness amongst the public on how to correctly complete the ballot paper. Electoral integrity Over a quarter of respondents to our public opinion research thought that fraud took place at the election (28%), including 9% who said they thought that a lot of fraud took place. This was largely consistent with findings from our research following the 2015 UK Parliamentary General Election and the 2016 Northern Ireland Assembly election. There no complaints or reports of electoral fraud made before or after polling day to the Commission. Those respondents who said that they thought electoral fraud had taken place at the election on 2 March were asked which, out of a list of options, described why they thought this. 4 The main reason given by people who thought that fraud had taken place was that this was due to a general impression that fraud was a problem (46%). Overall however 84% of respondents saw voting in general as being safe from fraud and abuse. The Police Service for Northern Ireland provide data to the Commission on alleged cases of electoral fraud on an annual basis, which we then report on. We will report on any alleged cases at the Northern Ireland Assembly election in early 2018, when we will also report on any alleged cases relating to the UK Parliamentary election and other elections that took place across the UK in 2017.

Our public awareness campaign We ran a campaign to increase people’s awareness of the Northern Ireland Assembly election and how to take part, including ensuring people knew they needed to be registered to vote by the 14 February deadline for registration applications. We updated our advertising from our 2016 Northern Ireland Assembly election campaign. This included our TV, radio, press, out of home and digital adverts. We also produced a suite of resources including a toolkit with examples of messages to share via websites, emails and social media channels, as well as poster templates and factsheets for use by other organisations to help promote electoral registration. On 1 February Facebook promoted a message in the newsfeeds of all Facebook users in Northern Ireland reminding them to register to vote before the deadline. In addition to this they also created an ‘I voted’ tag on polling day.

Public information We continued our long standing partnership with the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland in the provision of a public helpline throughout the duration of our public awareness campaign. In total the helpline handled over 27,000 calls from 23 January until polling day. This was an increase of almost 10,000 calls compared to the May 2016 campaign. Over 11,000 calls related to electoral registration queries and a total of 3,981 registration forms were sent out as a result. A further 7,686 registration forms were downloaded from our aboutmyvote.co.uk website. Other common queries to the helpline related to absent voting (6,699 calls)

and electoral ID (1,303 calls). In addition to this there were almost 80,000 visits to our public information website aboutmyvote.co.uk and a total of 20,375 registration forms downloaded. The administration of the poll By its very nature an unscheduled election creates an unexpected workload for electoral administrators. However both the Commission and the Electoral Office have contingency plans in place in the event that such a poll is called, and so were able to respond quickly to the announcement of the Assembly election. In this section we cover some of the issues that arose during the preparations for polling day, on polling day and at the count.

The electoral register In autumn 2013 a full canvass of electors took place across Northern Ireland. The canvass was called following a decline in both the accuracy and completeness of the electoral register in previous years. The legislation that allowed for the canvass to take place included a provision to allow the names of those who did not return a canvass form be to retained on the register for a period of two years, if the Chief Electoral Officer was satisfied that they were entitled to be on the electoral register. The purpose of this provision was to ensure that eligible electors could take part in elections in 2014 and 2015. This provision was extended for a further year as the Northern Ireland Assembly election was moved from 2015 to 2016. Following this canvass in 2013, a total of 112,013 names were retained on the register despite not returning a registration form. Over the following years the Electoral Office contacted these people to advise them to update their details on the electoral register. The last letter sent in September 2016 advised that they would be removed from the register, as required by law, if they did not respond.

Following this a total of 60,433 names were removed from the electoral register on 1 December 2016. Following the announcement of the March 2017 Northern Ireland Assembly election on 16 January 2017, representations were made to the Electoral Commission, the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Office that all of these names should be brought back onto the electoral register for the Assembly election. There were also concerns over the fact that the 'late registration' period came into effect as soon as the election was called. Anyone registering 'late' is required to provide additional documentation to support their registration as there is insufficient time for applications to be checked against other public data available to the Chief Electoral Officer, such as from the Department of Works and Pensions. However, there was no legislative tool available to allow for such changes. In our public awareness activity we continued to encourage people to make sure that they were registered to vote before the deadline of 14 February if they wanted to vote at the Assembly election. We are also promoting electoral registration ahead of the UK Parliamentary General Election on 8 June 2017. On 23 February the total electorate for the March 2017 Northern Ireland Assembly election was confirmed as 1,254,709. This was 26,886 fewer than the electorate for the May 2016 Assembly election. However there had been an increase in the total electorate of 20,606 compared to the previous register published on 1 February 2017. By a means of comparison, in 2016 the total electorate increased by 8,899 from the 1 April electoral register to the register published for the election on 27 April 2016. Although this put greater pressure on the EONI, the 'late registration' process was completed successfully. On polling day a total of 3,475 people attended polling stations in order to vote but were found to be not registered. The constituency with the highest number was Belfast West with 425 and the lowest was Lagan Valley with 109. As already highlighted we will continue to promote electoral registration as part of our future public awareness activity. Absent voting A total of 19,666 postal ballot papers were issued by the Electoral Office, an increase of 2,093 from May

2016. 86% of these ballot papers (16,186) were returned before the close of poll, of which 709 were rejected and therefore not included in the count. A total of 9,920 proxy voters were appointed at the Assembly election. This was an increase of almost 50% compared to 2016 when 6,644 proxies were appointed. Although the increased number of applications for absent votes did place significant pressure on the EONI, the overall process ran well. However the Chief Electoral Officer did express some frustration, as in previous elections that a large number of application forms were hand delivered by political parties on the day of the deadline. Whilst such applications are processed, should any errors be identified on the forms then it is not possible for a new or amended application to be made as the statutory deadline has passed. We will continue to monitor this process, particularly ahead of the June 2017 UK Parliamentary General Election.

Polling day

As was the case in May 2016, 619 polling places were used on polling day with a total of 1,380 polling stations used. No major issues were reported on polling day although there were some complaints received by the Commission and the EONI about the behaviour of both political party canvassers and non-party campaigners outside some polling places. All of the main political parties in Northern Ireland have agreed to a voluntary Code of Conduct produced by the Chief Electoral Officer on canvassing in the vicinity of polling stations, which is provided to all candidates. All campaigners should be mindful of and comply with this Code at future electoral events in Northern Ireland.

The count was held at eight venues across Northern Ireland, with verification of the used ballot papers beginning at 8am on Friday 3 March. The approach to the management of the count replicated that used at the May 2016 election. In particular this included the continuation of a new approach to the verification and primary sort of ballot papers. As was the case in May 2016 this worked well with verification completed in all but one constituency by 11:15am (South Down was completed shortly after midday). For the first time at a Northern Ireland Assembly election, all of the counts were completed without the need for a second day. By 11:00pm on 3 March, 11 counts were fully completed, while the last count to finish was Belfast South at 3:00am. Whilst it may be the case that the reduced number of candidates to be elected played some part in this, as well as the way the votes transferred in the later stages, it is clear that the overall management of the count continues to benefit from the changes made in 2016. Feedback from candidates on the count was very positive. 89% of respondents to our candidate survey reported overall satisfaction that the verification and count process were efficiently run. As we previously recommended in May 2016 we would encourage the Chief Electoral Officer to build on this success and to consider further ways to improve the overall efficiency and management of the count. This should include looking at what more can be done to improve the latter stages of the count, given the changes already made at verification and at the first stage of the count.

Electoral observers

In our report on the May 2016 Northern Ireland Assembly election, we expressed our concern and disappointment that the Commission's accredited electoral observer scheme was being abused. At the time we identified a number of applicants who were clearly supporting a political party or candidate and were seeking entry to the count. As a result, a number of accreditations were rejected or revoked. Following this we advised all of the main political parties that the observer scheme should not be used by party supporters as a means to access the count; instead party supporters should seek to attend as a counting agent for a candidate they support. Unfortunately a number of applicants for accreditation at the March 2017 Assembly election did not meet the political impartiality requirement set out in our Code of Conduct for electoral

observers. In total we rejected 11 applications and revoked five accreditations. In total 40 of the 120 UK accredited electoral observers at that time were based in Northern Ireland. As outlined in our 2016 report we will be conducting a full review of how we accredit electoral observers in the UK. We expect this to commence in early 2018, with any revisions to the process to be in place before the next scheduled elections in Northern Ireland in 2019. Candidates and campaigners A total of 228 candidates contested the 2017 Northern Ireland Assembly election, down from 276 at the 2016 election. A total of 21 candidates stood as an independent and 14 political parties put forward candidates (down from 21 in May 2016). Overall feedback from candidates and their election agents was very positive. 91% of candidates who responded to our survey were satisfied with the overall administration of the election (compared to 94% in May 2016). All of those who responded to the survey found the nomination process to be straightforward and well run. Royal Mail Royal Mail delivered over 1.2 million poll cards and over 6.6 million items of candidate literature, a decrease from 8.3 million at the May 2016 Northern Ireland Assembly election. This was to be expected given that fewer candidates were standing.

Monitoring and compliance As was the case in May 2016, we took a proactive approach in raising awareness about the rules for candidates and agents, political parties and non-party campaigners. This included sending the guidance to parties and non-party campaigners, including information in nomination packs and a pre-election seminar for candidates and agents. We also continued to carry out desk-based monitoring of party and non-party campaigns at the Assembly election. The purpose of this work was to promote compliance by gathering information on campaigns and taking action if necessary at the time, and also to assist us to when checking statutory returns. It also helped identify non-party campaigners who appeared to be working together, or who were supporting or campaigning against particular parties, or categories of candidates. In the summer we will publish details of what political parties spent where their spending was below £250,000. Parties that spent over £250,000 have longer to make their returns to us but no party spent over this amount at the May 2016 election. Candidate returns were made to the Chief Electoral Officer and are available for public inspection at the Electoral Office upon request.

Campaign issues, trends and developments During the run up to the 2017 Northern Ireland Assembly election we identified a number of compliance issues that also arose at the May 2016 election. These covered issues such as imprints, social media and online campaigning. Given the short space of time between the elections in May 2016 and March 2017, little progress was made on the legislative framework on these issues but we will continue to work towards such changes being made ahead of future elections.

Looking ahead In our report on the 2016 Northern Ireland Assembly election, we made ten recommendations for the Chief Electoral Officer, the UK Government and the Commission itself, which covered issues such as online electoral registration, the introduction of performance standards for the Chief Electoral Officer, and changes to the regulatory framework for political finance. Given the short time that has elapsed since the May 2016 election and the March 2017 election, we will continue to prioritise these recommendations during the next five years until the next scheduled Assembly elections. However in this section of the report we have provided an update on some progress that has been made since our previous report in September 2016.

Donations and loans to political parties in Northern Ireland On 5 January 2017, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland announced that he had written to the political parties in Northern Ireland seeking their views on whether the time was now right to move towards full transparency of donations and loans to political parties.

The response to this consultation has not yet been published given the ongoing political talks around the restoration of the devolved institutions. Increased transparency of donations and loans emerged as a significant issue during the 2017 Assembly election campaign and all of the main political parties in Northern Ireland expressed a commitment to move towards full transparency. As outlined in our 2016 report we have consistently called for increased transparency on how political parties are funded in Northern Ireland. We are clear that such a move will only help to increase public confidence in the democratic process. For our part we look forward to progress being made on this issue and are ready to work closely with the UK Government to support them with developing the necessary legislation. Online electoral registration On 12 December 2016 the Representation of the People (Electronic Communications and Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2016 passed both Houses of Parliament. The Regulations allow for the introduction of digital electoral registration and will come into force once the necessary technical requirements are in place for the system to operate in Northern Ireland. The Chief Electoral Officer had originally intended for online registration to be launched by the end of 2016. However a number of technical difficulties began to emerge during testing of the system and how it would work in collaboration with the current online portal that exists in Great Britain. As such the launch was delayed until early 2017. Following the announcement in January 2017 that a Northern Ireland Assembly election would be held in March 2017, the Chief Electoral Officer postponed the scheduled introduction of online registration. There remain a number of technical difficulties that need to be addressed, and it is now likely that online registration will be introduced in autumn 2017. Future electoral events On 18 April, following a vote by the House of Commons in support of a motion for an early UK Parliamentary General Election, the Prime Minister confirmed that an election will take place on 8 June 2017. We have already produced guidance documents for the election and have launched another public awareness campaign to encourage people to check that they are registered to vote. We will also be reporting on the election which will give us the opportunity to return to some of our longer term recommendations in Northern Ireland and across the rest of the UK. We are also conscious that there is the possibility of another Northern Ireland Assembly election taking place later in the year. Should this be the case we will continue to work on the lessons learnt at the last two Assembly elections to support the delivery of an election should one be called by the Secretary of State. 1.

https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0013/215041/2016-NI-Assembly-election-report.pdf ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. To vote in a Northern Ireland Assembly election a person must be registered to vote and also be one of the following: a British, Irish, qualifying Commonwealth or EU citizen living in Northern Ireland. ■ Back to content at footnote 2 3. Turnout figure includes valid votes and those rejected at the count. ■ Back to content at footnote 3 4. Respondents were able to select more than one answer ■ Back to content at footnote 4 5. A detailed explanation of the count process is included in our report on the May 2016 Northern Ireland Assembly election. ■ Back to content at footnote 5 Related content Report on the May 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election Read our report on the May 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly election Report: Voting in 2017 Read our report about voting at the general election in 2017 Report: How the 2016 Northern Ireland Assembly election was run Read our report about how the 2016 Northern Ireland Assembly election was run Report: How the 2011 Northern Ireland Assembly election was run Read our report about how the 2011 Northern Ireland Assembly election was run

imprints You are in the Our consultations section Home Our consultations Draft statutory guidance on digital imprints On this page Summary How to respond How we developed the draft guidance Questionnaire Background First published: 31 October 2022 Last updated: 31 October 2022 Summary Summary 'Imprints' are added to certain political or election-related material to show who is responsible for the material.

This helps to deliver transparency for voters about who is spending money to influence them. The Elections Act 2022 includes provisions requiring imprints on digital campaign material. The Act introduces a new duty on the Commission to prepare statutory guidance explaining the digital imprints regime and how the Commission and the police will exercise their enforcement functions under it. The guidance, once prepared, will be presented to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The Minister may then modify the guidance, before laying it for parliamentary approval. Parties and campaigners will need to understand and comply with the new digital imprint laws across the UK, regardless of their size or experience. Your views will help us make the guidance we present to the Secretary of State as clear and helpful as possible. Once the statutory guidance comes into force in November 2023, the Commission and the police must have regard to the guidance as they enforce the regime. For campaigners, showing that they have complied with the guidance will be a statutory defence to any offence under the new laws.

How to respond The consultation is open from 31 October 2022 until 20 December 2022. You can respond by: filling in our online form emailing your views to imprintsconsultation@electoralcommission.org.uk or writing to us at: Regulatory Support Team The Electoral Commission 3 Bunhill Row London EC1Y 8YZ

Throughout the consultation period, we will continue to engage with the electoral and campaigning community. We are happy to meet with any groups or interested individuals on request. If you have any questions, please do get in touch on 0207 271 0527.

How we developed the draft guidance We talked to a range of political parties and non-party campaigners from across the UK to inform the draft guidance. We asked them about: their understanding of the provisions how they use digital material in their political campaigning what digital platforms they use to reach voters how they see digital campaigning evolving in the future Opens in new window View the draft guidance. Questionnaire Background Existing imprint legislation There are well-established laws requiring imprints on printed material relating to elections, referendums and recall petitions in the UK. In 2020 the Scottish government introduced imprint requirements on digital election material used at Scottish Parliamentary elections and council elections in Scotland. For more information on these laws, please see our existing guidance . Elections Act 2022 The UK Elections Act 2022 includes provisions to require imprints on some kinds of digital material. The new digital imprints laws will apply: across the UK to all reserved elections Section 54 of the Elections Act 2022 contains a specific duty on the Commission to produce statutory guidance on the new digital imprint regime that comes into force in November 2023. Statutory guidance, unlike most of the Commission's guidance, must be approved by the relevant Minister, and Parliament.

Impact on voters | Electoral Commission Search Impact on voters You are in the May 2018 voter identification pilot schemes section Home Our research Voter identification pilots May 2018 voter identification pilot schemes First published: 24 July 2019 Last updated: 24 July 2019 Impact on voters The evidence we have collected suggests that nearly everyone who wanted to was able to vote in the pilot scheme areas: Nearly nine in ten of people who voted in polling stations were aware that they had to take identification with them to the polling station to vote Nearly everyone who went to vote at their polling station was able to show the right identification The number of people who wanted to vote at their polling station who did not have the right identification was very small; many of them came back with the right identification, but some did not There is no evidence that levels of turnout in the pilot scheme areas were significantly affected by the requirement for polling station voters to show identification Impact on voters There were a small number of people who were unable to vote because they did not have, or did not bring with them, the right type of identification. It was not possible to collect demographic data on these people and so we have no evidence to suggest particular demographics were more affected than others. More work is needed to make sure that an identification requirement doesn't stop people who are eligible and want to vote in future elections. Overall findings from the pilot schemes Awareness of the identification requirements Most people in the pilot scheme areas knew about the identification requirements. Our research found that nearly nine out of ten (86%) of people who voted at polling stations said they were aware beforehand that they had to show identification to vote at their polling station. Some groups of people were less likely to say they knew about the identification requirements. Polling station voters in the C2DE social grade were less likely to say they knew beforehand (18% said they did not know about the requirement compared to 9% of ABC1s). In the population as a whole, some groups were less likely to say they had heard something about the pilot. This included people aged under 35, C2DEs, those who said they were generally less politically active, and those who said that they didn't vote in the elections. People in Swindon and Watford were also less likely to say they were aware that they needed to show identification. This may be because they didn't consider the requirement to show a poll card as 'identification', although we cannot confirm this from the available data. Returning Officers in the pilot scheme areas ran public awareness campaigns before the elections, and awareness about the identification requirements improved between January and May 2018. In January, 36% of people in the pilot scheme areas said they had seen or heard something about the requirement, and by May this had risen to 55%. Types of identification that voters used In Bromley, Gosport and Woking most voters were able to show either their passport or photo driving licence to vote at their polling station. Local travel passes were the third most frequently shown type of identification. In Swindon and Watford, the vast majority of voters showed their poll card to vote at their polling station. A small proportion of people showed their photo driving licence, passport, debit or credit card instead of their poll card. Most frequently shown types of identification in each pilot area Most frequently shown 2 nd most frequently shown 3 rd most frequently shown Bromley Photo driving licence (54%) Passport (24%) Freedom pass (15%) Gosport Photo driving licence (55%) Passport (21%) Concessionary travel card (17%) Swindon Poll card (95%) Photo driving licence (4%) Passport (1%) Watford Poll card (87%) Photo driving licence (8%) Debit card (3%) Woking Photo driving licence (60%) Passport (25%) Surrey Senior travel card (12%) Very few people applied to use the alternative options provided for those who did not have the required identification. No one in Bromley and Gosport

applied for a Certificate of Identity or Electoral Identity Letter. Feedback from the Returning Officers in both these areas suggests that most people who contacted them to ask about the alternative option found that they did actually have one of the acceptable forms of identification. In Woking, 64 people applied for a Local Elector Card before polling day and 43 voters showed their card as identification at their polling station. Voters in Swindon and Watford could show their poll card as part of the required identification, and they were able to apply for a replacement poll card before polling day. Returning Officers issued 66 replacements to voters in Swindon and 3 to voters in Watford. Voters in Swindon could also ask another elector at the same polling station to 'attest' their identity, and 107 voters used this option.

Although all of the pilot schemes allowed voters to show their identification in private (for example because they were registered to vote anonymously or if they normally covered their face for religious reasons), we are not aware that anyone used this facility. We therefore cannot draw any conclusions about how this process would work in practice. Impact on turnout and participation Although nearly everyone in the pilot scheme areas who went to their polling station to vote was able to show the required identification, a small number did not have the right identification with them and were not given a ballot paper. Many of these people returned later with the right identification, but some did not. People who did not return to their polling station to vote Bromley Gosport Swindon Watford Woking 569 without right identification 154 did not return 0.2% of all polling station voters did not return 120 without right identification 54 did not return 0.4% of all polling station voters did not return 64 without right identification 25 did not return 0.06% of all polling station voters did not return 194 without right identification 42-66 did not return 0.2% of all polling station voters did not return 89 without right identification 51 did not return 0.3% of all polling station voters did not return There is little evidence that the voter identification requirements had a direct impact on turnout in the May 2018 pilot scheme areas. In three areas turnout at the local authority level was no more than 1 percentage point lower than the most recent comparable elections. Turnout in the other two areas was higher than, including in Swindon where turnout was 5 percentage points higher. Overall turnout across England in 2018 was the same, at 36%⁷, as at the last comparable set of elections in 2014. There were some larger changes in turnout at the individual ward level in the pilot scheme areas. These ranged from an increase of 12 percentage points in one ward in Swindon to a decrease of 8 percentage points in one ward in Bromley. The data on turnout and participation cannot tell us much about people who may have decided not to go to their polling station at all because of the identification requirement. However, our research with people in the pilot scheme areas found that 2% of those who didn't vote in May 2018 said it was because they didn't have the right identification. Many more people said they didn't vote because they were too busy (27%), didn't know who to vote for (13%), were away on holiday (12%) or were not interested (10%). Most people in the pilot areas (79%) said the requirement to show identification made no difference to whether or not they voted in May 2018, and overall 3% of people said it made them less likely to vote. However, our research did confirm that non-voters were more likely than voters to say that it had made them less likely to vote: 5% of non-voters said it made them less likely to vote, and 2% said that they wouldn't have been able to vote because they didn't have any identification. Before the May 2018 pilot schemes, accessibility organisations raised concerns that some groups of people would find it harder to vote because they would not easily be able to access the right types of identification. This included concerns about disabled people and people from black

and minority ethnic communities, who are also less likely to participate in elections in general. Overall, we found no clear pattern of decreased turnout based on the different demographic profiles of specific wards in the May 2018 pilot scheme areas. The relatively small size of the May 2018 pilot schemes, the level of turnout and the limited demographic variation across wards of the pilot schemes means that it is difficult to systematically identify examples of a negative impact for particular groups of people. The limitations of sample-based surveying also mean that we did not get enough responses from specific groups of people to be able to report experiences or views across those groups. In Watford we did find a correlation between the proportion of a ward's population that is Asian/British Asian and the number of electors both initially turning up without identification and not returning.⁸ We need to be cautious in drawing conclusions from this analysis as it is based on a small number of data points (only 12 wards in one local authority area). However, this does show that it would be helpful to have more pilots with more diverse populations in order to explore this further.

Beyond the pilots: implications for voters at future elections

Although we have found that most people who wanted to were able to vote in the pilot scheme areas in May 2018, we have also seen some evidence that particular groups of voters might find it harder to show identification at future elections. Our research with people across all elections that took place in May 2018 found that most people (88%) said they would find it easy or very easy to show identification if they had to at future elections. However, we did find that younger people aged 34 and below were slightly less likely (83%) to say they would find it easy. There were no notable differences in responses based on other demographic factors, including social grade, disability or ethnicity. We know that more people vote at other types of elections: some people who don't normally vote at local elections often vote at UK Parliament elections, for example. This means, that at other kinds of elections in the future, more people who want to vote could find it difficult to show identification.

and equality implications

Organisations representing the interests of different groups of people raised concerns with us about whether they would have easy access to the right identification if this requirement was applied at more elections in the future. For example, Mencap, RNIB and Stonewall highlighted the following concerns:

Mencap submission People with learning disability often do not have ID such as a passport as they are unable to travel abroad or cannot afford it. Almost none will have a driving licence and in some cases will not even have access to utility bills or other forms of ID.

RNIB submission The lack of driving licenses amongst blind and partially sighted people, meaning that they had fewer options of what they could provide at the polling station.

Stonewall submission Trans and non-binary people may have been particularly vulnerable to these ID requirements as the photo on their ID may not reflect their gender expression or identity.

Stonewall submission Final bits

Several organisations also raised concerns with us about the public awareness campaigns that Returning Officers ran in the pilot scheme areas. They were concerned about whether the campaigns did enough to target people from groups that were less likely to have the right identification. For example, both Mencap and RNIB felt that activities to raise awareness with the people they represent did not begin early enough in the May 2018 pilot scheme areas. This wider evidence suggests that further work is needed to make sure that an identification requirement doesn't stop people who are eligible and want to vote in future elections. More research and analysis is needed to identify which types of identification will be easiest for people to show, and how those who do not currently have identification can get it. This is particularly important for people

who may find it harder to show the more common forms of photo identification such as passport, photo driving licence or travel card. We have previously recommended that any photographic voter identification scheme should include a free of charge photographic elector card for people who do not have any other acceptable form of identification. More work is also needed to find further ways to tell people about any identification requirement. Again, this should focus on how best to communicate any new requirement to people who are less likely to vote often and those who may find it harder to show one of the more common forms of identification. Related content Register to vote All you need to register to vote is 5 minutes and your National Insurance number. Our Commissioners Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run

Testing the EU referendum question | Electoral Commission Search

Testing the EU referendum question You are in the EU referendum section Home EU referendum On this page The proposed referendum question How we assessed the proposed referendum question What we found Our reports First published: 25 June 2019 Last updated: 1 August 2019 Overview We commented on the intelligibility of the proposed referendum question. We recommended that the question should be amended to: "Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?" Remain a member of the European Union Leave the European Union The Government and UK Parliament accepted our changes in the House of Commons on 7 September 2015.

The proposed referendum question The proposed referendum question included in the European Union Referendum Act was: "Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union?" "A ddylai'r Deyrnas Unedig ddal i fod yn aelod o'r Undeb Ewropeidd?" The response options to this question were 'yes' or 'no'. How we assessed the proposed referendum question We looked at the proposed question from the perspective of voters. We wanted to see if it was written in a way that voters could easily understand and answer. As well as looking at the question ourselves, we gathered evidence to help us with our assessment. This included: carrying out research with voters from different backgrounds and across different areas, through focus groups and one to one interviews asking for advice from experts on accessibility and plain language talking to potential campaign groups, other interested groups and individuals, including political parties who may want to campaign at the referendum What we found We found that the question was written in plain language and was easy for people to understand and answer. However, we had concerns that the question encouraged voters to consider one response more favourably than the other. This could raise concerns about the legitimacy of the result of the referendum. Our research with the public had also indicated that the question needed to make the UK's current EU membership status clear. Our assessment suggested that it was possible to ask a question which would not cause concerns about neutrality, whilst also being easily understood by including both outcomes – remain and leave – in the question and using these as the answer options instead of yes/no. Our reports You can download our reports. Full report of our views on the referendum question (PDF) Report on our research with voters which informed our views on the question (PDF) Previous research Previous research We also carried out research into a question on the UK's membership of the European Union in 2013, after a Private Members' Bill triggered it. The question in this Bill was: "Do you think that the United Kingdom should be a member of the European Union?" The response options to this question were 'yes' or 'no'. We found that this question could lead to misunderstanding, as some people were not clear about the UK's current EU membership status. Amending the question to make the UK's current membership status clear while keeping 'yes' and 'no' as the response options made some people think the question was biased. We set out two recommendations to Parliament in our report. If Parliament wants to retain 'Yes' and 'No' as the response options, we recommended the question should be amended to: a) "Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union?" If Parliament decides not to retain a 'Yes' and 'No' question, we recommended: b) "Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?" We also undertook additional research to explore any issues raised by moving away from a 'Yes' and 'No' question. This confirmed that question b) above was clear and straightforward for voters, and was the most neutral wording from the range of options we considered and tested. Our reports You can download our reports. Read the research report from our previous EU referendum

[question testing \(PDF\)](#) Read our advice to Parliament from our previous EU referendum question testing (PDF) Read our additional research on EU referendum question testing (PDF) Related content Results and turnout at the EU referendum View the results and turnout at the EU referendum Campaign spending at the EU referendum View data about campaign spending at the EU referendum. Report: 23 June 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union Read our report on the 2016 EU referendum Report: The costs of delivering the June 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union Read our report about the costs of delivering the 2016 EU referendum

Report: How the 2011 Scottish Parliament election was run | Electoral Commission Search Report: How the 2011 Scottish Parliament election was run

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Recommendations: Co-ordination of elections Recommendations: Timing of counts Download our full report First published: 4 July 2019 Last updated: 25 July 2022

About the report and our role Our report is about the administration of the Scottish Parliament election held on 5 May 2011. It identifies and comments on key issues that emerged and on experience of the election. It also reviews the impact of combining the election with the referendum on the UK Parliamentary voting system. The Electoral Commission is an independent body which reports directly to the UK Parliament. We regulate party and election finance and set standards for well-run elections and electoral registration. We are responsible for publishing reports on the administration of elections and referendums. For local government elections in Scotland we undertake a number of roles relating to the administration of the elections and for these we report directly to the Scottish Parliament.

Facts and figures Our report focuses particularly on the experience of voters, based on public opinion research and other research data. 3,950,751 people were registered to vote in Scotland and 50.6% of them did so in both the constituency and regional votes. In total 14.1% of the electorate had a postal vote for this election and a high proportion of those, 77.0% in the constituency and 76.9% in the regional vote used their postal vote. Postal votes accounted for 20.2% of all votes cast at the election while the rest 79.8% voted at a polling station. Our report reviews people's experience of voting in polling stations or by post. A total of 321 constituency candidates campaigned to be elected and 21 political parties nominated lists of regional candidates. This was 14 fewer constituency candidates and seven fewer political parties than in the Scottish Parliament election in 2007. Eleven individuals stood on the regional lists, three more than in 2007. Our report gives more detail on campaigning in the election.

Did people feel informed We undertook a public information campaign to increase people's awareness of the Scottish Parliament election and the UK-wide referendum. We sent an information booklet to all households in Scotland and used television, radio and online advertising to inform people about the polls taking place on 5 May. We evaluated levels of people's awareness by conducting public opinion research before and after our campaign. Of those surveyed, 67% recognised at least one element of our campaign. Of those we surveyed, 79% said they had enough information to make an informed decision on how to vote in the election. Of those aged 55 or over, 85% felt informed compared with 72% of 18-34 year-olds. Prior to polling day, some members of political parties and the media were concerned that holding the Scottish Parliament on the same day as a UK-wide referendum would lead to the referendum overshadowing the election. However, analysis of the content of media conducted for us by the University of Exeter prior to polling day suggested that the election gained more coverage in the Scottish media, while the referendum tended to receive more coverage in most of the UK media. Across the UK-based newspapers, television and radio news included in their study, Exeter found that referendum stories outnumbered those on the various elections taking place by

nearly two to one. Across the Scottish media outlets studied, however, (including Scottish editions of UK newspapers), there was far more election coverage, with a ratio of more than six stories on the elections to every one story on the referendum. It would appear that despite concerns, the prominence of the Scottish election was not overshadowed by the referendum. People's experience of voting The 2007 Scottish Parliament election was notable for the high numbers of rejected ballots (2.88% of regional and 4.08% of constituency ballot papers). Ron Gould's independent report on the 2007 elections concluded that while there were a number of contributory factors relating to supplier management problems and too much political involvement in the design process, at the heart of the problem was a poorly designed ballot paper. The 2007 single ballot sheet on which both the regional and constituency ballot papers were located side by side was widely seen to have failed in enabling voters to express their voting preferences. For the 2011 election the two ballot papers were again presented to the voter on separate pieces of paper as they had been at the 1999 and 2003 Scottish Parliament elections and the layout of the ballot papers had been redesigned. Rejection rates for ballots at the 2011 election were 0.42% of constituency ballots and 0.34% of regional list ballots. This returned rejected vote rates to the levels experienced in 1999. In our public opinion research we asked whether voters found it easy or difficult to complete their ballot papers at the 2011 election. Nearly all (97%) said that they found it easy to fill in the Scottish Parliamentary ballots, with three-quarters (75%) finding it 'very easy' and just 1% reporting difficulties. Lessons learnt: what should change Timing of election counts The timing of election counts has increasingly become an area of discussion between political parties and Returning Officers (ROs) in Scotland. Opinion varies as to whether they should take place overnight or the next morning. Tensions emerged over the timing of the count at the 2007 Scottish Parliament election, the 2010 UK Parliament election and again at the 2011 Scottish Parliament election. We have no role in determining the timing of any election counts. However, it is clear that the question of the timing of election counts need to be addressed. We intend to circulate an Issues Paper on the timing of election counts. It will include evidence on the time taken to count votes at different elections and the impact of factors such as: the combination of elections; different electoral systems; and the number of ballot papers. It will identify the different perspectives that can be held by those delivering elections, parties campaigning in them and broadcasters who cover election results. We will circulate the Issues Paper on the timing of election counts by the end of November 2011. We will seek views from those with an interest in the timing of election counts, including governments, political parties, Returning Officers, broadcasters and voters. Following analysis of views received, we will seek to make recommendations in early 2012 on the timing of election counts and the way in which they are organised, taking account of the type of elections and a range of relevant circumstances. Electoral Management Board for Scotland The Commission has championed the development of the concept of the Electoral Management Board (EMB) since 2008 and continues to support it as a robust mechanism for the co-ordination of Scotland's electoral process. The EMB has continued to progress since it was established in November 2008. While still an interim EMB given its lack of statutory recognition for the Scottish Parliament elections it has added value to the planning and delivery of elections in Scotland and built upon the positive support it enjoys among the various stakeholders in the electoral community. We welcomed the decision of the Scottish Government to establish the EMB on a statutory basis for local government elections with a power of direction for its Elections Convener. The subsequent passing of the

Local Electoral Administration (Scotland) Act 2011 in March 2011 is a welcome development in electoral administration for the future. The establishment of the EMB was intended to bring clear benefits to the voters in Scotland through the delivery of better and more consistent electoral administration. This was particularly important in the light of events surrounding the 2007 Scottish elections. The next 12 months is an important time for the EMB and the Elections Convener as they undertake on a statutory basis for the first time activities in relation to the local government elections in May 2012. Ministers in Scottish Government and the Scotland Office, and the Commission, expect that the EMB, led by the Elections Convener, will proactively develop its role as the co-ordinating body for Scotland's elections both strategically and operationally. The EMB's period as a steering group is over we will seek to support it as it develops into the national focal point for the administration of elections. We will consider the implications for the Commission as the EMB assumes a greater role and powers over time. Invalid postal votes Of the 429,432 postal ballots that were returned by voters at the Scottish Parliament election, 25,042 postal votes were rejected or not included in the counts in constituency contests and 25,058 in regional list elections. The rejection rates of 5.9% and 5.8% respectively were markedly higher than at the UK Parliamentary election in 2010 when 3.6% of returned postal votes in Scotland were rejected prior to the count. ROs rejected returned postal votes for the following reasons: the postal vote statement which must accompany the ballot paper was missing; the ballot paper was missing; or because the signature or date of birth supplied by postal voters could not be matched with their postal vote application. Our report contains more information and data about invalid postal votes. Allowing Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) to request a refreshed identifying signature, and also to provide electors with feedback if their postal vote has been rejected would help address this problem. We first made this recommendation to the UK Government in 2007 and have since reiterated it. In September 2011, the UK Government said that it would work with the Commission and electoral administrators to avoid the problems we have highlighted with the current postal voting system, while taking into consideration the need to ensure it remains secure against fraudulent applications for postal votes. We will work with the UK Government to ensure changes are in place by the UK Parliamentary General Election in 2015. Our materials and resources for Returning Officers We received positive feedback from ROs about the materials and resources and the direct support we provided to them, but there was also negative feedback. Some felt that we 'micro-managed' the UK referendum, with consequent impact on the combined elements of the election. There was also some negative feedback about presentational issues, with some electoral administrators saying they found our website difficult to navigate, preferring to have the guidance in one printed volume and not to receive updates by email, in case these were missed. We have taken account of the feedback we received in planning our guidance and resources for elections in 2012 and how we present that information on our website. Costs of the election Our report gives detail on how much the election cost. Scottish Parliament elections are funded by the Scotland Office. They meet the costs incurred by Returning Officers in administering the election. The total maximum recoverable for the constituencies in Scotland was £7,785,521 and for the regions was £20,080. The overall total cost was £7,805,601. The actual cost that Returning Officers incurred in running the elections is not yet known as the Scotland Office has set the deadline of 5 January for the submission of Returning Officers election accounts. Scotland Office also met the costs of Royal Mail's delivery of the freepost election communications of candidates

and political parties. Royal Mail delivered 11,404,377 addressed items and 12,650,313 unaddressed items totally 24,054,690. The total cost of all postings was £6,402,314.

Recommendations: Public awareness The Commission will make template public awareness materials available to the Public Awareness Network of the EMB at an earlier date at future elections. This will ensure that they receive them in adequate time to use them in their local public awareness activity.

Recommendations: Postal voting We recommend that the UK and Scottish Governments amend legislation on postal voting to provide the power for EROs to request a refreshed identifying signature, and to provide feedback to electors, in cases where their postal vote has been rejected as a consequence of mismatched or incomplete identifiers. In order to obtain a clearer understanding of the scale of postal vote rejection on the grounds of mismatched or incomplete identifiers we will work with ROs to review our postal vote data collection forms ahead of the 2012 local government elections and provide additional guidance for those collating the data if required. Urgent steps need to be taken by

ROs, EROs and ourselves ahead of the Scottish local government elections in 2012 to review postal voting materials in Scotland to ensure that the instructions for postal voters are sufficiently clear and the consequences of mismatched or missing identifiers are highlighted to the voter. We will work with the EMB to ensure that this happens and, as part of this review, we will consider other materials and communications for voters in which information about postal voting can be added, including canvass forms and poll cards).

Recommendations: Ballot papers and other voter-focused election material We continue to recommend that all election materials aimed at voters, including ballot papers, should be thoroughly tested with voters to ensure they are accessible before being used in an election. We recommend that the legislation concerning 'commonly used names' is reviewed to ensure clarity as to what ROs can and cannot accept in time for the 2015 UK Parliamentary general election and subsequent elections. ROs must ensure that, when outsourcing the printing of the ballot papers, they have sufficient arrangements in place with their printer to produce a ballot paper of any length. In future elections, the exact colours to be

used for each ballot paper will need to be agreed well in advance of the election and must take account of the lighting conditions in which they will be used. In Scotland, the Elections Convener of the EMB will be best-placed to undertake this role. We

recommend that a member of the RO's staff should always be present at the printing and issue of ballot papers and postal votes in order to ensure that any errors are identified and addressed before they impact on voters. We will work with the forms

sub-group of the EMB in advance of the 2012 Scottish local government elections, to ensure that voter-focused forms are accessible and produced timeously for

electoral administrators. **Recommendations:** Candidates and agents We will evaluate the new format of our guidance for candidates and agents and will consider their feedback as part of that process. Governments must ensure that any changes in the rules on spending at elections - such as the introduction of the long campaign for candidate

spending at the 2011 Scottish Parliament election - are carefully thought through and clearly communicated in good time to all organisations that may need to reflect the rules in their own guidance. We will seek to work with the Scottish Parliament to ensure that the guidance provided to incumbent Members in advance of future elections is comprehensive.

Recommendations: Co-ordination of elections We urge governments to legislate to provide for a statutory EMB with a power of direction for other elections before the next Scottish Parliament election in 2016. Ahead of the 2012 local government elections in Scotland the EMB must be proactive in developing its role as the coelections both strategically and operationally. As the EMB assumes a

greater role and powers the Commission will consider the implications of the EMBS development for our own role in elections in Scotland. We will take account of the feedback received on our performance monitoring and revise our performance standards scheme for ROs to monitor their performance in real-time. We will ensure that new standards are in place for elections held in May 2012. Following any boundary reviews ROs and EROs must make thorough checks with the relevant Boundary Commission to ensure they are able to precisely identify the exact boundaries that are set out in legislation. We welcome the recent decision of the Scottish Government to enact a legislative provision for the 2012 local government elections to allow for the issuing of ballots to those electors who were present in the polling station before the close of poll. We continue to recommend that similar provisions are brought in for other elections.

Recommendations:

- **Timing of counts** We will circulate a discussion paper by the end of November 2011 on the timing of election counts, identifying issues that have arisen at elections across the UK in recent years and inviting feedback from stakeholders. We commit to giving our view on the future timing of counts by mid-2012.
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- [Related content Report on the Scottish Parliament election on 6 May 2021](#)
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Consultation: Draft performance standards for Electoral Registration Officers |
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performance standards First published: 22 January 2020 Last updated: 11 June 2020
Overview We have the power to set and monitor performance standards for electoral
services. We have been setting standards for Electoral Registration Officers (EROs)
in Great Britain since 2008, with the most recent update in 2016. With our guidance
and resources, the performance standards form part of a package which supports EROs
with planning for and delivering well-run electoral registration services across
Great Britain. Electoral registration in Great Britain is changing as a result of the
reforms to the annual canvass being introduced this year. This provides us with an
appropriate and timely opportunity to develop a new performance standards framework.
We want these standards to be used by us and by EROs to understand and improve their
performance, ensuring that registers are as accurate and complete as possible and
that everyone who is eligible to vote and wants to is able to do so. We want your
views on a set of draft standards and how they should be used. How to respond This
consultation is now closed. View our response to feedback Meetings Throughout the
consultation period we will attend scheduled meetings - such as the Association of s
(AEA) branch meeting and Scottish Assessors Association (SAA). We'll also meet
individual stakeholders. We will take these opportunities to get views on the draft
standards and how we use them. We are happy to consider meeting with any other groups
or interested individuals on request. How we developed the new standards How we
developed the new standards While the reforms to the annual canvas give us an
appropriate and timely opportunity to introduce new standards, our intention is that
we establish a set of standards which can be used by EROs and us throughout the year
(including in the lead up to electoral events) to understand and improve their
performance. The aim is to ensure that registers are as accurate and complete as
possible and that everyone who is eligible to vote and wants to is able to do so.
Over the past year, we have been working collaboratively with representatives from
across the electoral community – including the Association of s (AEA), Scottish
Assessors Association (SAA) and Solace – to help shape the draft standards. After
agreeing a set of key principles to underpin the new framework, we established a
working group of electoral administrators from across Great Britain and held a
workshop with them to scope out what a set of standards might look like. From this,
we developed a draft standard around the accuracy and completeness of the electoral
registers, which we tested with this group and the AEA, SAA and Solace. Their
feedback has informed the content of the draft set of standards that we are now
consulting on. As well as seeking views on the draft standards, we also want to hear
views on how they should be used to support well run electoral registration services.
We will consider all feedback provided and use it to inform the final standards and
how they will be used, ahead of the launch of the new framework in May 2020. About
the draft standards The proposed new standards are focused on the outcomes that
should be delivered, rather than the processes that are followed. The objective is
to help EROs and their teams to understand the impact of their electoral registration
activities. This should help EROs to make informed decisions about what activities
are undertaken, how these activities are carried out and how their limited resources
can be deployed efficiently and effectively. Objectives of the draft performance

standards To support EROs and their teams to deliver efficient and effective electoral registration services, and to allow them to demonstrate the impact of their electoral registration activity To provide reassurance to the public and key stakeholders (such as political parties and elected members) that EROs are doing everything they can to ensure that everyone who is eligible and wants to vote is able to do so What the draft standards comprise of An outcome: This states the broad goal that EROs should be seeking to achieve What inputs are needed? This sets out the resources that will need to be put into the service to enable the necessary activities to be delivered What activities are being undertaken? This does not provide an exhaustive list of activities, but instead summarises the headline activities that EROs are likely to need to undertake to be able to meet the outcome. Our guidance and resources for EROs will support them in determining the specific activities that will need to be carried out in their particular circumstances What information is needed to understand the impact of our activities? This highlights the data and qualitative information which will help to demonstrate the impact of the activities and which should form the basis of how we and EROs can determine the success of their work. Again this is not an exhaustive list and the information listed may be supplemented by additional data or information that the ERO feels is relevant to their performance What difference is being made? This summarises the combined effects that the activities should have and which, taken together, would contribute to the delivery of the overall outcome How can we determine the success of our work? This sets out measures that will help to demonstrate what difference the work is making. In some cases the difference will not be straightforward to quantify or otherwise measure, and so an aggregation of several measures may be relied upon to demonstrate what the work is achieving The draft standards have been designed to be flexible enough to recognise the varying local circumstances each ERO is working within. With this in mind, whilst we recognise the benefits of EROs using targets for their registration activity locally, we remain of the view that it would not be appropriate to set performance targets at a national level, given the activities and impacts will vary significantly by local area reflecting the particular demographics and circumstances EROs are each working within. Questions Questions Do you think the draft standards will support EROs with understanding and improving their own performance? Do you think the standards will enable the Commission to understand the performance of EROs and to identify where support and challenge is needed? Are the standards focussed on the right outcomes? If not, what outcomes should be reflected? Do the draft standards demonstrate a clear link from inputs through to the overall outcomes? Do the standards focus on the right activities? If not, what activities should be included? Do you have any thoughts on the measurability of the impact of the activities set out in the draft standards? Do the standards cover the full range of responsibilities of the ERO? Are there any gaps or is there anything included that shouldn't be there? Using the standards: Electoral Registration Officers We want to ensure that EROs and their teams find the standards useful in understanding, improving and reporting on their performance. The standards, and the tools and templates we will make available to support them, have been designed to help EROs understand the impact of their activities on the overall delivery of their registration services. They should also help to identify where improvements can be made, and support EROs to report on their own performance locally. EROs should be using the data, and qualitative information set out in the standards, to help them understand the impact of their activities in any case, so they can identify what works, what doesn't, and where improvements can be made. The framework is designed to

support this analysis and focus EROs on the key data and information that will indicate what is working well and what is not working so well. The standards, and the supporting tools and templates, should also help EROs to demonstrate locally – whether within an ERO's local authority, to elected members, or more broadly – how the activities they are carrying out contribute to the provision of an efficient and effective electoral registration service and, ultimately, will help to ensure that everyone who is eligible and wants to vote is able to do so. It is critical that data is readily available to EROs through their electoral management software (EMS) systems at any point within a year. The analysis of accurate and easily available data is vital for EROs to understand their performance, monitor their progress and assess the impact of their registration activities. We are continuing to work closely with Cabinet Office as part of the preparations for the introduction of canvass reform to ensure the relevant data can be easily accessed by EROs when they need it.

Guidance and resources

Guidance and resources We will continue to provide guidance and resources for EROs designed to support the end-to-end delivery of well-run electoral registration services, which will reflect the standards. The guidance and supporting resources will continue to set out EROs' statutory responsibilities and also provide wider practical guidance to help administrators plan for and manage the day-to-day delivery of electoral registration services. We are continuing with plans to reform our approach to presenting guidance on our website, drawing on feedback from administrators and user testing. As we update our guidance for EROs as a result of canvass reform, we will move away from the current PDF format and will instead present our guidance in a web-based format, in line with modern practice and evolving technology. The objective of this new approach is to make the guidance clearer and easier to navigate and use, while retaining features that we know are important to administrators, such as the ability to print hard copies of sections of the guidance as needed.

Additional tools to support the standards

We intend to develop new tools and templates to support EROs in using the performance standards and reporting on their performance locally. We expect these would include: a resource on using data, to include information on what data is available, how EROs can access it, how they can use it and what it should tell them additional planning and key performance indicator (KPI) setting guidance, including how to develop, monitor and evaluate against KPIs reporting templates, providing a framework for EROs to report on the impact of their activities locally.

Questions

Do you think the standards and the types of additional tools the Commission intends to provide will support EROs to understand and report on their own performance? Are there any other additional tools and guidance that would help to support EROs in using the standards?

Using the standards: Electoral Commission

We have the power in law to issue directions to EROs to provide reports on their performance against the standards, and to prepare and publish assessments of their performance against the standards.

Proposed approach

Our aim is to use the standards to inform how we engage with EROs and their teams over the course of the year. This will help us to understand their performance and to identify any issues or concerns, enabling us to provide support and challenge where it is most needed. However, we also have a responsibility to be transparent to the range of interested stakeholders across Great Britain, including voters, about the performance of EROs and, in particular, to highlight where the outcomes of the standards are not being delivered. We therefore intend to summarise the data and information gathered through our engagement with EROs and their teams to inform regular progress reports. These reports would provide reassurance to the public and key stakeholders (such as political parties and elected members) that EROs are doing

everything they can to ensure that everyone who is eligible and wants to vote is able to do so, highlighting any instances where this is not the case. Engagement and reporting Engagement with EROs Over the last year we have already started to evolve the way we work with EROs and their teams. We have moved towards more regular engagement across the year, rather than focussing our activity around the annual canvass and electoral events. We want to continue to build on this and to use the new standards to inform our discussions on electoral registration issues. We want to provide a structure to help ensure we can develop a shared understanding of performance and identify any areas for improvement, as well as examples of good practice. While we will still want to collect data from all EROs to help us understand the state of the electoral registers across Great Britain, we are not proposing that EROs would routinely collate and provide us with all the information listed within the standards. However, we expect that EROs will be using the relevant data and information themselves to help them understand the impact of their activities and where improvement is needed. We also intend to work with EROs and their teams in analysing the data and information to help us with supporting and challenging their performance locally. Our objective is to work with all EROs and their teams at least once every two years. We will prioritise the order, frequency and intensity of the engagement based on risk. We will continue to take into account a range of factors when determining risk, including: experience of the ERO any significant changes in staffing in the electoral registration team any known issues with the delivery of electoral registration activities other relevant local circumstances Reporting We are proposing publishing regular reports that highlight the outcomes of our engagement with EROs and their performance locally. This will enable us to draw out successes and examples of good practice, as well as any issues faced, and to report on progress and improvements. The information we gain through our engagement with EROs will also help us to develop a broad understanding of the challenges faced by the electoral community in delivering registration services. This will facilitate reporting on general data analysis and wider themes, for example, in relation to local authority resilience and capacity, or the use of data locally to support registration services.

Question Will our proposed approach to how we engage with EROs and their teams enable us to provide effective support and challenge? Is there anything more or different we should be using the standards to do? Do you have any views on the proposed approach to reporting? Download and review the draft potential performance standards Appendix A - Draft potential performance standards for Electoral Registration Officers

Briefing summary Full briefing First published: 17 October 2019 Last updated: 17 October 2019 Summary Date: 17 October 2019 For: MPs Full briefing This briefing outlines the Electoral Commission's response to proposed legislation on electoral integrity which was included in the Queen's Speech. Voter identification The proposed legislation would introduce a requirement for voters at polling stations to show identification before they can be issued with a ballot paper. We undertook independent evaluation of the Government's voter ID pilots in 2018 and 2019 . These clarified the way in which a voter ID scheme could be delivered in Great Britain but did not point to definitive conclusions, particularly for higher turnout polls. We identified areas for further consideration, relating to security and accessibility.

We welcome the Government's commitment to for the provision of a free of charge, locally issued photo ID, as currently provided for electors in Northern Ireland. This would be available on application to voters without an approved form of photo ID. If legislation is approved by Parliament the Commission would expect to conduct public awareness campaigns in the lead-up to elections, to inform voters on what they need to do to comply with new identification rules. We will also provide guidance for Electoral Registration Officers and Returning Officers to help them deliver new voter identification requirements. We publish data on allegations of electoral offences annually and in 2014 published a report on electoral fraud. We also carry out annual survey work with voters, which regularly finds concerns about electoral fraud and the integrity of elections, including as a result of the lack of a requirement to show ID. Postal and proxy voting Proposal to introduce restrictions on campaigners handling postal votes – this would formalise the 'best practice' approach in our guidance and a voluntary code of conduct for campaigners. That would be beneficial as we do not see universal compliance by campaigners with current non-legally binding arrangements. Proposal to require people to re-apply to vote by post every three years – as we have previously recommended , would mean that voters are encouraged to regularly review and confirm that they still want to vote by post, or choose to vote in person at a polling station instead. This would help to ensure records are up-to-date and accurate. Proposal to limit the number of people for whom someone may act as a proxy voter to a maximum of two regardless of their relationship – as we have previously identified, this could disadvantage some people (including overseas voters) who have a genuine need to appoint a proxy. This should be considered in developing the legislation. The Government makes a welcome commitment of further support to people with disabilities. Extending the types of people who can act as a companion for disabled voters and improving the tools provided to support voters with visual impairments should help support people to cast their votes independently and in secret. We will work with the Government and groups representing people with sight loss and other disabilities to ensure that the proposed legislation delivers meaningful benefits. Other measures We strongly welcome the Government's commitment to implementing an imprint requirement for digital campaigning material; this is urgently needed to ensure transparency for voters about who is spending money online to influence them. We will work to ensure these proposals can improve transparency and public confidence. We also welcome the Government's intention to consult on measures to strengthen protection of our democracy from foreign interference. We continue to recommend our laws are updated to prevent foreign funding of elections and referendum campaigns. Other key priorities for the Electoral Commission While not included in the Queen's Speech, we continue to firmly recommend the UK Government

introduce other legislative changes to make our elections more transparent and maintain trust and participation in our democratic processes. These include:

Simplifying and modernising electoral law We need comprehensive electoral law reform , including a new overarching UK Elections Act. The UK's Law Commissions have already provided a blueprint for electoral law reform that is widely supported by those who deliver, regulate and campaign at elections.

Strengthening digital campaign regulation Effective campaigning is an essential part of well-run elections, but we need transparency and safeguards to maintain trust and confidence. We have set out a package of recommendations to increase transparency about digital campaign spending, and to strengthen our investigation and enforcement tools.

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Report on the May 2023 local elections in Northern Ireland | Electoral Commission Search Report on the May 2023 local elections in Northern Ireland You are in the Northern Ireland local council elections section Home Northern Ireland local council elections Currently reading: of 3 - Show page contents On this page Voting at the elections Campaigning at elections Delivering the elections Report on the May 2023 local council elections in Northern Ireland This report looks at how the May 2023 Northern Ireland local council elections were run, how voters and campaigners found taking part, and what lessons can be learned for the future. We have reported separately on the elections held this year in England . On 18 May 2023, the Northern Ireland local council elections were held. A total of 1,380,372 people were registered to vote, up from 1,305,553 at the last local council elections in 2019. Overall, voters continue to have positive views about how elections in Northern Ireland are run, with most people confident the elections were well-run and satisfaction with the registration and voting processes remaining high. However, the large number of rejected postal and proxy applications show that the digital registration number (DRN) continues to be a barrier to voters. It is therefore vital that the UK Government urgently reviews the DRN to ensure that these barriers are removed while also maintaining the integrity of the absent voting process. Reporting on their experiences of the Northern Ireland local council elections highlight that their ability to reach voters was constrained by spending limits. We welcome the UK Government's intention to review these spending limits to ensure they allow candidates to effectively engage with the electorate. Half of all candidates also reported experiencing threats, abuse and/or intimidation. It is completely unacceptable that candidates continue to face any form of abuse when campaigning at elections. Tackling these problems will require coordinated action from a range of partners across the electoral community, including political parties and campaigners themselves as well as the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and Public Prosecution Service (PPS). While the administration of polling day went well, with voters and campaigners reporting high levels of confidence, there were some concerns raised relating to campaigning in the vicinity of polling stations. We have recommended that the Chief Electoral Officer reviews and updates the Code of Conduct for canvassing in the vicinity of the polling stations to set out agreed standards on what is acceptable behaviour. The administration of the counts also generally went well, but more could be done to improve the efficiency of the latter stages of the count. The Chief Electoral Officer should explore what improvements can be made to the count process and its management that will support efficient count calculations and provide effective oversight of count processes. The capacity and resilience of electoral administrators, both in Northern Ireland and across the UK, remains a significant challenge. It is vital that electoral administration changes expected to be implemented ahead of elections in 2024 are well managed and that the UK Government carefully considers whether the necessary time and resources are, or will be, available before making any final decisions about implementing the remaining Elections Act changes. Voting at the elections The experience of voters at the 2023 Northern Ireland local council elections Voters continue to have positive views about how elections in Northern Ireland are run, with most people confident the elections were well-run and satisfaction with the registration and voting processes remaining high. The large number of rejected postal and proxy applications show that the digital registration number (DRN) continues to be a barrier to voters. It is vital that the UK Government urgently reviews the operation of the DRN to ensure that these barriers are removed while also maintaining the integrity of the absent voting

process. The Chief Electoral Officer put in place a number of new initiatives to improve accessibility arrangements, but more needs to be done to raise awareness of the support that is available. Voting at elections On 18 May 2023 the Northern Ireland local council elections were held. A total of 807 candidates contested 462 seats across the 11 councils in Northern Ireland. The last local council elections took place in 2019. A total of 1,380,372 people were registered to vote, up from 1,305,553 at the last local council elections. The date of the local council elections was postponed by two weeks from 4 May to 18 May 2023 to avoid the counting of ballot papers clashing with the coronation of King Charles III on 6 May. The Elections Act 2022 introduced provisions to increase flexibility in relation to what support could be provided in polling stations to enable, or make it easier, for disabled people to vote independently and in secret. Voters continue to have positive views about how elections are run. Voters continue to have positive views about how elections are run. After each election we ask members of the public who were eligible to vote for their views on voting and elections. This helps us understand if views have changed since the last comparable set of elections. Satisfaction with the registration and voting processes remains high. People had high levels of satisfaction with the process of registering to vote and voting. Our research shows that: 86% of people were satisfied with the process of registering to vote – this is consistent with the levels of satisfaction reported by people after the 2019 local council elections (84%) 97% of voters were satisfied with the process of voting – this is broadly consistent with the 2019 local council elections (95%) 93% of people report being able to vote using their preferred method of voting – this is consistent with the 2022 Assembly elections (91%) Most people continue to be confident that elections are well-run. When asked, four-in-five (80%) said they were confident that the elections were well-run. This is broadly consistent with the 2019 local council elections (75%). The most chosen reasons for being confident were: it was quick and easy to vote (67%) the polling station was accessible and easy to get to (65%) a lack of negative experiences when taking part in the election (57%) Only 8% said they were not confident that the elections were well-run and when we asked people why they were not confident, it was because of issues accessing information. The most chosen reasons for not being confident were: a lack of information about the elections or candidates (28%) media, TV and press coverage was biased (27%) campaigns were based on incorrect or untrue claims (22%) Confidence that the election was well run was lower amongst those limited a lot by a disability or health condition, with 72% saying they were confident the elections were well-run. Most people think voting is safe from fraud and abuse. Views about the safety of voting and whether electoral fraud is a problem were consistent with the 2022 Assembly election, with 84% of people saying they thought voting was safe from fraud and abuse. This was an improvement when compared with the last local council elections in 2019 where 77% of people said they thought voting was safe from fraud. When asked if they thought electoral fraud was a problem in Northern Ireland, 14% of people said they thought it was, which is a significant reduction from 35% at the last local council elections and 20% at the 2022 Assembly election. The main reasons given by people who thought fraud had taken place was that they believed postal or proxy voting was not secure or that they had a general impression that fraud was a problem. The PSNI provide us with data on alleged cases of electoral fraud relating to offences under the Representation of the People Act. It has confirmed they have one allegation relating to irregularities on a nomination form that is under investigation. Turnout at these elections increased Overall turnout at the election was 54.7%, an increase of two

percentage points on the last local council elections in 2019 (52.7%). The most common reasons given by people who told us they didn't vote were: a lack of time or being too busy at work (15%) a lack of interest in, or being fed up with, politics (14%) being away on polling day (12%) medical reasons unrelated to Covid (11%) The digital registration number continues to be a barrier to voters The digital registration number continues to be a barrier to voters In Northern Ireland, people can vote in one of three ways; in person, by post or by proxy (asking someone they trust to vote on their behalf). Unlike in the rest of the UK, voters must provide a valid reason why they cannot attend their polling station on polling day to be able to vote by post or proxy. Voters who have registered to vote online in Northern Ireland are required to provide a digital registration number (DRN) when applying to vote by post or proxy. A DRN is supplied to voters when they register online or can be requested from the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland. The DRN is intended to be a digital replacement for the wet ink signature that is required on paper registration applications. The DRN, or the wet ink signature, is a security measure used to link the person applying for a postal or proxy vote, with their electoral registration application. The DRN is not a requirement elsewhere in the UK. There are low levels of awareness surrounding the digital registration number At the 2023 Northern Ireland local council elections we ran a targeted campaign to raise awareness of the DRN, alongside our large-scale voter registration campaign, 'Got 5?'. This campaign targeted those groups we knew were more likely to need a postal or proxy vote. The campaign directed voters to the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland's website where they could request their DRN. It was supported by both partnership and public relations activity. Despite this campaign, awareness levels are low: 43% of people who registered online say they can't remember receiving a DRN 56% of people would not be confident accessing their DRN Large numbers of postal and proxy vote applications continue to be rejected In total there were 14,286 postal and proxy vote applications approved for the 2023 local council elections, with 7014 applications rejected. Of those rejected applications, 5,118 (73%) were rejected because there was no DRN. This is a significant increase from the 2022 Assembly election in which 3,636 applications were rejected because there was no DRN, which equated to 60% of all rejected applications. The Electoral Office for Northern Ireland received 8,700 requests for a DRN in the run up to the election, with 53% of those requests made in the last week before the absent vote deadline on 26 April 2023. This put a considerable administrative burden on the Electoral Office and created a significant challenge for staff to respond to requests for DRN in a timely manner. It is clear from the rejection rates and low awareness levels that the DRN is acting as a barrier to voters, a view that has also been explicitly expressed to us by candidates, political parties, and electoral administrators. It is also unclear if the DRN is achieving its intended purpose as a security measure against potential fraud. The personal identifiers required to request your DRN are the same as those needed to apply for a postal or proxy vote, which in effect means voters are being asked to supply the same information twice. The DRN is not a requirement elsewhere in the UK. Even when changes to absent voting rules are introduced in Great Britain later this year to enhance the security of the process there, a DRN will not be used but instead voters will be asked to provide their National Insurance number to confirm their identity and protect against voter fraud. The Electoral Office has advised that it is reviewing its processes relating to the administration of the DRN and has run workshops with political parties to collect their views on how the process could be improved. While this is welcome it is unlikely that this alone will

address the fundamental issues that the DRN causes for voters and the Electoral Office. Ultimately, only legislative change would be able to remove this barrier to voting. Recommendation 1 Recommendation 1 The large number of rejected postal and proxy applications show that the DRN is a barrier to voters. We recommend that the UK Government urgently reviews the operation of the DRN to ensure that these barriers are removed, while also maintaining the integrity of the absent voting process. The Chief Electoral Officer took steps to support disabled voters at the elections but more needs to be done to raise awareness of what is available The Chief Electoral Officer took steps to support disabled voters at the elections but more needs to be done to raise awareness of what is available Further to changes in the law, electoral administrators across the UK now have increased flexibility on what support and equipment they can provide in polling stations to enable, or make it easier, for disabled people to vote independently and in secret. Restrictions have also been removed on who can be a 'companion'. Anyone who is 18 or over can now accompany a disabled voter to the polling station and, if requested by the voter, provide support. The companion no longer needs to be eligible to vote at the elections taking place, but they are still required to complete a declaration before assisting the voter. The Chief Electoral Officer provided a range of support at polling stations We published guidance for Returning Officers (ROs) to support them to implement the new accessibility arrangements, which ROs across the UK are required to consider. We consulted extensively on this guidance to ensure we could get wide input to help identify the measures that would help to improve the accessibility of polling stations. The Chief Electoral Officer put in place a number of new initiatives to improve the accessibility of voting at the local council elections. These included making hearing loops available at polling stations and an online application process on the Electoral Office website where voters could make a request for additional adjustments or support to be put in place at their polling station. The Electoral Office once again ran a telephone service, in partnership with the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), to provide an audio solution for voters with visual impairments. Almost all adults who voted in person and told us that they have a disability or long-term health condition (94%) said that, once they arrived at their polling station, it was easy to get inside the building to vote. Only a small proportion (2%) of in-person voters said that they had help filling in their ballot paper in the polling booth. Voters with a disability or long-term health condition were more likely to report needing help to vote, with most people getting help from their spouse/partner. 4% of in-person voters with a disability or long-term health condition said that they needed additional assistance or equipment to allow them to cast their vote independently and in secret. Further work is needed to ensure disabled voters receive and are aware of the support available We asked those who have a disability or long-term health condition for their views on the experience of voting. 49% agreed that they received the equipment, information and support that they need in order to vote (5% disagreed) 61% felt that staff at polling stations are properly trained to assist them with voting (9% disagreed) 60% disagreed with the fact that the way elections are run at present prevents them from voting in person, with 8% agreeing It is clear from feedback from the Chief Electoral Officer that awareness of the support available was low. This is supported by the fact that no requests were received through the new online application process where voters could request additional adjustments at polling stations. We will continue to work with the Chief Electoral Officer and civil society organisations to ensure disabled voters are aware of, and receive, the support they need to vote. Most people were confident they

knew how to vote without making a mistake Most people were confident they knew how to vote without making a mistake Nearly all voters (97%) said that they found it easy to fill in their ballot paper, but some votes continue to be rejected and not included in the count. 9,740 ballot papers were rejected at the count, which represents 1.3% of all votes cast. This was a slight increase compared to the 2019 elections (0.9%) and in line with the 2022 Assembly election (1.3%). Campaigning at the elections The experience of campaigning at the 2023 Northern Ireland local council elections Candidates report that their ability to reach voters is being constrained by spending limits. The UK Government has already indicated its intention to review the spending limits for candidates to ensure they allow candidates to effectively engage with the electorate. Half of all candidates reported experiencing threats, abuse and/or intimidation. It is completely unacceptable that candidates continue to face any form of abuse when campaigning at elections. Tackling these problems will require coordinated action from a range of partners across the electoral community, including political parties and campaigners themselves, as well as the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and the Public Prosecution Service (PPS). Campaigning at the elections A total of 807 candidates stood in the 2023 local council elections (12 fewer than in 2019). Sinn Féin fielded the most candidates with 162, followed by the DUP with 152, Alliance with 110, the Ulster Unionist Party with 101 and the SDLP with 86. In total, 15 political parties and 56 independent candidates contested the elections. Candidates report that their ability to reach voters is being constrained by spending limits Candidates report that their ability to reach voters is being constrained by spending limits At the 2023 local council elections, campaigners provided information in a variety of different ways. The most common way people reported seeing information on parties and candidates included: leaflets from a candidate/political party (74%) posters/billboards (52%) social media (27%) advert or message on television (26%) Candidates responding to our survey also told us that leaflets, posters / billboards and social media, along with canvassing, were their most used campaigning methods, specifically: almost all (96%) of candidates told us they used leaflets and canvassing over three-quarters (79%) listed posters/billboards and social media in their top three campaigning methods Despite candidates being able to engage with the public using a variety of methods, political parties and candidates have told us that the spending limit was too low for candidates at these elections, and this impacted their ability to campaign. Candidates responding to our survey said: Level of spending appropriate for 15 years ago. Limit is now too small and unable to communicate properly with whole electorate now. The spend limit meant we had to limit the materials in terms of number and type of leaflet... The spending limit is lower at local council elections in Northern Ireland compared to local council elections elsewhere in the UK, reflecting the fact that freepost election communications are available to local election candidates in Northern Ireland. However, parties and candidates have told us that the sharp rise in the printing costs of campaign materials has impacted their ability to use this freepost entitlement. Figures provided to us from Royal Mail indicate an 8.2% drop in the number of candidate mail items being sent from the most recent comparable election in 2019 (4.5 million to 4.13 million). It is important that voters have access to information to help them make an informed decision when they vote. However, only 67% of adults said they felt they had enough information on candidates to make an informed decision. A lack of information can have an impact on confidence in the elections. While most people are confident the election was well run (80%), for those not confident the top reason for this was the lack of information on the election and

candidates (28%). The UK Government has announced that it intends to increase party and candidate spending limits for all reserved polls (except for local council elections in England, which it did in 2020), in line with inflation. While we wait to see the full proposals, we welcome the proposed review of the spending limits for candidates at the Northern Ireland local council elections. It is important to ensure any changes to the limits allow candidates to effectively engage with the electorate and for voters to be confident they have the information they need to inform their decision at the ballot box. Candidates continue to raise concerns about harassment. Candidates continue to raise concerns about harassment. After each election we ask candidates about their experiences of taking part. Our research following the 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly highlighted that a majority of candidates (71%) said they had some sort of problem with threats, abuse, or intimidation. Candidate responses after the 2023 local council elections indicate that harassment continues to be a significant issue (note: responses cannot be directly compared due to the different elections taking place each year and the self-selecting nature of the sample). In the lead up to the local council elections, we made it clear that intimidating and abusive behaviour has no place in our political system and worked closely with the PSNI to raise awareness of the support available to candidates, particularly female candidates, who face abuse and/or intimidation while campaigning. In March 2023, we published joint guidance with the PSNI, the PPS and the Electoral Office on the steps candidates can take to campaign safely, what support is available, and how to report an incident. The PSNI also attended our pre-election seminars for candidates to share this information and make contact with candidates. Almost half (46%) of all candidates reported looking at the guidance on campaigning safely. Half of all candidates reported experiencing threats, abuse and/or intimidation. When asked about how much of a problem candidates had with harassment, intimidation, or threats in this election, 50% of those who responded to our survey said they had a problem, with 6% reporting having a serious problem. 50% of candidates reported having no problem with harassment, intimidation or threats. The types of harassment most frequently experienced included: having campaign assets (such as posters) removed or destroyed (74%) or defaced (65%) someone intimidating or intentionally making you feel unsafe (41%) abuse posted on social media (26%). Women were more likely than men to have experienced harassment. The harassment most frequently came from members of the public (57%) and anonymous/unknown sources (40%). 17% was received from campaigners/volunteers and 13% from other candidates. When asked if they had avoided doing something as part of their campaign to keep themselves safe, 39% of respondents said that they avoided campaigning on their own and 19% avoided campaigning on social media. Almost 200 incidents were reported to the police relating to the elections. The vast majority of these (168) related to the theft, removal or damage of election posters. Other incidents reported related to intimidation, harassment or assault linked to campaigning. Despite the significant number of reported incidents, it appears many more go unreported, with only 25% of candidates telling us they reported incidents that happened to them or they witnessed happening to others. The Elections Act 2022 introduces a new electoral sanction for those found guilty of intimidating candidates, campaigners and elected representatives. This will come into force from 1 November 2023. This should strengthen the deterrent against intimidating behaviour by enabling someone to be banned from standing for elected office, as well as imposing criminal sanctions, such as a prison sentence or fine. The UK Government has also recently committed to explicitly exempt reasonable security expenses from contributing to spending limits for parties and candidates at certain elections, to

ensure that these limits are not a barrier to providing adequate security during election campaigns. Recommendation 2: The electoral community should take action to protect voter trust and confidence in the democratic system Recommendation 2: The electoral community should take action to protect voter trust and confidence in the democratic system Candidates and campaigners should be able to participate freely in the democratic process, ensuring that voters can hear from a range of voices and have confidence in our elections. However, abuse and intimidation continue to persist.

Tackling these problems will require coordinated action from a range of partners across the electoral community, including political parties and campaigners themselves, as well as the PSNI and PPS. s should recognise the impact their choices have on how the public views our democratic system. They should actively discourage the use of inflammatory language and emphasise the importance of respect and constructive engagement with opposing viewpoints. Political parties should consider reviewing their membership criteria to include a clause explicitly emphasising respect for other campaigners and fostering a healthy political debate. The PSNI and PPS must continue to treat allegations and cases of election-related intimidation seriously and demonstrate that those committing offences against candidates and campaigners will face significant sanctions. Candidates continue to raise concerns about harassment We will build on the positive relationship we have with the PSNI, PPS and the Electoral Office and will continue to work together to promote our joint guidance on campaigning safely to ensure all candidates and campaigners are able to freely participate in the democratic process. Delivering the elections The experience of electoral administration at the 2023 Northern Ireland local council elections The 2023 Northern Ireland local council elections were well-run, with voters and campaigners reporting high levels of confidence. The administration of polling day generally went well, although some concerns were raised relating to campaigning in the vicinity of polling stations. A review of the Code of Conduct for campaigning in the vicinity of polling stations should be undertaken ahead of the next elections to help address these concerns. The administration of the counts generally went well, but more could still be done to improve their efficiency. The Chief Electoral Officer should explore what improvements can be made to the count process and its management that will support efficient count calculations and provide effective oversight of count processes. The capacity and resilience of electoral administration teams remains a significant challenge and the UK Government must carefully consider if the necessary time and resources are, or will be, available before making any final decisions about implementing the remaining Elections Act changes. Delivering the elections The local council elections took place across all 11 councils in Northern Ireland. Each council is made up of seven District Electoral Areas (DEAs), except for Belfast which has 10. In total there are 80 DEAs across the 11 councils. Councillors are elected to represent a DEA, with each DEA made up of five, six or seven wards. In total there are 462 wards. For the Northern Ireland local council elections, the local council Chief Executives are appointed as Deputy Returning Officers (DROs). There are 11 DROs, one for each of the 11 councils in Northern Ireland. The DROs act with the authority of the Returning Officer. Their responsibilities at these elections included managing nominations, the counting of votes and the receipt of candidate spending returns. The Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) for Northern Ireland is the registration officer and returning officer for all elections in Northern Ireland. The Chief Electoral Officer's duties include managing electoral registration, absent voting, and polling stations. An interim CEO was appointed on 3 April 2023 to oversee the local council elections while the process to recruit a permanent CEO was

completed. Our evidence shows that, overall, the elections were well-run, and voters and campaigners reported high levels of confidence. However, underlying issues relating to capacity and resilience remain. Additionally, improvements to the efficiency of the count process are needed to support the effective delivery of future elections. The administration of polling day generally went well, although campaigning in the vicinity of polling stations remains an issue. The administration of polling day generally went well, although campaigning in the vicinity of polling stations remains an issue. The administration of polling day generally went well, with a majority of voters (80%) and most candidates (89%) reporting that they were confident the elections were well run. Concerns raised relating to campaigning in the vicinity of polling stations A small number of complaints were received relating to the behaviour of campaigners in the vicinity of polling stations. Candidates responding to our survey said: The guidance to stay a distance from polling stations and not hand out sample ballots is widely ignored by some parties. ...area in which candidates and supporters are able to hand out leaflets at the polling station seems to change from election to election... s are an essential element of a healthy democracy, and their right to put their arguments to voters should be supported and protected. It is equally important, however, that the activities of campaigners do not bring into question the integrity of the electoral process. All political parties have agreed to a Code of Conduct for canvassing in the vicinity of polling stations, which provides a guide on what is considered acceptable behaviour. However, it has been some time since this Code was reviewed. Also, its scope is limited to campaigning in the vicinity of polling stations. Elsewhere in the UK, political parties have agreed to a code that also covers campaigning in the community in the run up to polling day. Upcoming Elections Act changes to the rules on postal and proxy voting provide an opportune time to review the scope of the Code in Northern Ireland. Recommendation 3 Recommendation 3 The Chief Electoral Officer, working in consultation with political parties and the Electoral Commission, should review and update the Code of Conduct for canvassing in the vicinity of the polling stations. The updated Code should provide political parties with agreed standards on what is acceptable behaviour both before and during polling day. Improvements to the count process are needed to support the effective delivery of future elections. Improvements to the count process are needed to support the effective delivery of future elections. The counting of votes was managed by the 11 DROs, across 11 count venues, to fill 462 council seats across Northern Ireland. The majority of candidates (81%) were satisfied with the efficiency of the count, and the majority of voters (70%) agreed the votes were counted accurately. However, it is clear from our observations and feedback provided to us that the latter stages of the count are not as efficient as they could be. Action needed to improve the efficiency of the count Single Transferable Vote (STV) election counts are historically long events, with most taking two days to complete, subject to how the votes fall. 1 Improvements introduced to the verification and primary sort stages in 2016 and 2017 have supported the effective management of the early parts of the count. However, it is clear that improvements could be made to the latter stages of the count which could improve the efficiency of the process as a whole. The management of the adjudication of doubtful ballots and the decision making on the transfer and exclusion of ballot papers in some instances took a considerable time. In one instance, in the Waterside DEA of Derry and Strabane City Council, there was an error at the final stage of the count, which was confirmed by an election petition. The high court ordered a continuation of the count, with the redistribution of surplus votes from elected candidates. The

continuation of the count took place on 9 August with the initial result remaining unchanged. Positive steps were taken to improve oversight of the count process, including through the establishment of a central hub by the Electoral Office, to which all 11 councils shared their count sheets digitally. This allowed the Chief Electoral Officer to see in real time what was happening and help identify any potential discrepancies. Nevertheless, the hub's ability to provide oversight was limited by its reliance on a small number of people checking a selection of stages of the count across 11 councils. An increased use of technology could play an important role in improving efficiencies at the count and supporting the further development of an oversight mechanism for the Chief Electoral Officer. It could also mitigate against the risk of human error and potentially, in time, provide cost savings in the delivery of elections.

Recommendation 4

The Chief Electoral Officer, working with us and other key stakeholders, should explore what improvements can be made to the count process and its management that will support efficient count calculations and provide effective oversight of count processes. The capacity and resilience of electoral administrators remains a significant challenge. The capacity and resilience of electoral administrators remains a significant challenge. The Chief Electoral Officer continued to highlight problems around recruiting and retaining experienced polling station and count staff, with a growing number of recruits dropping out ahead of polling day. Alongside this, these were the first elections in Northern Ireland when changes introduced by the Elections Act came into force. Further significant electoral administration changes arising from the Elections Act are expected to be implemented ahead of elections across the UK in 2024. These include changes to the arrangements for postal and proxy voting appointments, and the removal of the 15-year registration limit for overseas voters. This will increase risks, which will be exacerbated without sufficient clarity and resources for the Chief Electoral Officer to prepare effectively, well in advance of delivery. Before making any final decisions about implementing the remaining Elections Act changes, the UK Government must carefully consider whether the necessary time and resources are, or will be, available. Any decisions must be informed by a robust analysis of available data and evidence about realistic levels of preparedness, particularly given the complex range of changes that must be delivered and the interdependencies between them. The UK Government should continue to work with the electoral community in Northern Ireland to ensure there is sufficient clarity and time to implement these changes.

Supporting evidence

Post poll 2023 Northern Ireland Tables 1. In STV elections, voters rank candidates in order of preference. Any candidate who obtains enough first preference votes to reach the minimum required to be elected (known as the quota), is deemed elected. If a voter's first-choice candidate does not get elected, or if they are elected with more votes than the next candidate, their vote can be transferred to help elect their second choice and so on. If no candidate has reached the quota at the end of a stage, the candidate with the lowest number of votes is excluded and their votes transferred. At the 2023 local council elections and 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly elections, there were many stages of the count where only a small number of votes were able to be transferred at each stage, with more stages than needed before candidates had enough votes to get above the quota and be deemed elected.

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Looking ahead to 2020/21 and using our resources to support the delivery of our goals | Electoral Commission Search Looking ahead to 2020/21 and using our resources to support the delivery of our goals You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21 First published: 16 September 2021 Last updated: 16 September 2021

Looking ahead to 2021-22 2021-22 will be a busy year for the Commission. We are responsible for overseeing the delivery of a large and complex set of polls, and for ensuring that they are delivered safely and in a way that commands public confidence against the continuing backdrop of the pandemic. The arrival of a new Chair, the outcome of the enquiries by the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee of the UK Parliament and the Committee on Standards in Public Life, and the progress through Parliament of a significant Elections Bill will all impact on the work of the Commission as we start to emerge into a post-Covid environment. We will produce a Corporate Plan for the next five years. And we will for the first time be directly accountable to the Scottish Parliament and the Senedd Cymru in the same way as we are accountable to the UK Parliament through the Speaker's Committee. Our first priority is the delivery of the May 2021 polls, which will be the most complex for some considerable time. As highlighted above we have done substantial work with stakeholders and voters to prepare, but we do not underestimate the magnitude of the task. We welcomed a new Chair in the spring as well as two new Commissioners. This will provide refreshed strength in our strategic direction and governance as the Commission continues to deliver against a background of continuing change. Spring sees the expected introduction of the Electoral Integrity Bill; we will work closely with the UK Parliament to ensure parliamentarians have timely and evidence-based advice. Both the Committee for Standards in Public Life and the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee of the UK Parliament will publish reports relating to the Commission and electoral law. We welcome this scrutiny and look forward to seeing the recommendations. We welcome too our new accountabilities and relationship with the Senedd Cymru and the Scottish Parliament. We will work closely with both over the coming year to build our new relationship and support the implementation of any emerging plans for electoral reform. We will equally continue to work with stakeholders in Northern Ireland, particularly in supporting the 2021 canvass and preparing for the next Northern Ireland Assembly elections Core to our role is to continue to work constructively with all concerned – governments, parliaments, parties and campaigners, electoral administrators and other interested groups – to maintain confidence and trust in elections, including making preparations for the delivery of the May 2022 scheduled elections. We recognise the challenges. Strain and pressure on electoral administrators as a result of outdated and increasingly complex electoral law and continued pressure on resources and capacity continues to pose a risk to the successful delivery of registration and elections. We will continue work to develop and implement a strategy to support the increased resilience of local electoral services. And the nature of political campaigning continues to develop. Parties are spending a higher portion of their budgets on digital advertising and voters need to have confidence that they can critically examine and test political messages they see online. There is a risk that public confidence in digital campaigning will continue to fall, which poses a challenge for us, other regulators, governments and campaigners A different kind of challenge comes from adapting to the emerging post-Covid landscape. The Covid-19 pandemic has brought change and challenge for us as it has for every organisation. As it recedes we will put in place new post-Covid-19 working practices reflecting the fundamental changes

likely to be brought about for us and for our stakeholders. All of this will feed into the new five-year Corporate Plan and Financial Strategy which we will develop over the course of the year and which will set out how we propose to meet these and other challenges. We will continue to deliver on our four goals Goal one support the May 2021 polls, working closely with the electoral community to ensure that they are delivered effectively continue to provide expert advice and guidance to electoral administrators, candidates and agents, including providing guidance, support and challenge in relation to preparations for the May 2022 elections continue to work with partners on improving the accessibility of elections so that everyone has equal access to election information and processes undertake a voter registration campaign ahead of polls, focusing particularly on groups which are harder to reach. support Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) in Great Britain, and lay new performance standards for them before the UK, Scottish and Welsh Parliaments.support the 2021 canvass in Northern Ireland and for the May 2022 Assembly election, including through electoral registration public awareness activity continue work to develop and implement a strategy to support increased resilience in the delivery of electoral services at a local level. support the implementation of the Scottish and Welsh governments' changes to the franchise and raise public awareness through our targeted Welcome to Your Vote campaign and working with a wide range of partner groups. continue to combat electoral fraud through close engagement with the police and with local authorities, supported by our Your Vote is Yours Alone campaign and by research and data analysis. Goal two Maintain the registers of political parties and campaigners, ensuring voters have clarity about registered parties and campaigners on the ballot paper Publish financial data from parties, candidates and campaigners, including that related to elections, ensuring transparency for voters Continue to evolve our effective enforcement of the political finance rules, ensuring voters, parties and campaigners have confidence that the rules are enforced proportionately and with impact, within our current powers. We will continue to publish the outcome of each investigation for transparency, including in full reports where that is warranted, so voters, parties and campaigners can see the way we act to enforce the rules. We will also continue to publish the outcomes of all investigations. Deliver a new Political Finance Online system to support parties and campaigners to deliver their financial returns efficiently Provide timely advice and guidance to parties and campaigners to support them in meeting their legal requirements, including for the major and complex polls scheduled for 2020 Consult on and then develop our new strategic framework to ensure effective and impactful proactive support which will have the greatest effect on compliance with the law continue to enhance the quality of our regulatory work by rolling reviews of regulatory procedures and completing a project on enhancing our enforcement processes. respond to the changing environment and impacts of digital campaigning. We will work with government, social media companies and other providers of digital advertising to ensure their services and policies support transparency for election and referendum campaign activity; we will continue to scrutinise their proposals and bring forward proposals of our own as appropriate. Administer the policy development grants scheme and ensure it operates effectively by making timely recommendations to the UK Government for any necessary changes Goal three continue to provide expert advice and support to political parties, campaigners, governments and the public to inform policy change, educate and inform the public and promote partnership working Support the UK Parliament to scrutinise the expected Elections Bill report on the administration of elections in line with our statutory duties to ensure we utilise learning to improve the delivery

of future events continue to promote and build support for improvements to our democratic processes take forward work on a project to explore voters' attitudes to the voting process and options for change that would ensure their needs and expectations can continue to be met into the future continue to develop our evidence base to enable greater understanding of the electoral environment, including horizon scanning for emerging issues, risks and opportunities to the electoral system undertake public awareness activity to increase voter understanding of the rules already in place to regulate the digital campaigning techniques increasingly used to reach voters continue to expand our suite of education and learning materials designed to support understanding of the democratic process, for students and teachers across the whole of the UK. continue to develop our corporate website, using open data and digital tools to improve accessibility Goal four Design new working practices and shape a culture which helps us maximise performance and meet changed staff expectations as we start to emerge from the pandemic Publish a new Corporate Plan for 2022-27, led by the new Chair of the Commission. We will also develop a new five-year financial strategy Develop new working arrangements with the Senedd and the Scottish Parliament as well as the UK Parliament to reflect our new accountabilities Delivered and developed our People Strategy Continue our focus on equality, diversity and inclusion through our new Race at Work Taskforce and the publication of a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Continue our focus on learning and development, including our Leadership and Management Development Programme Continue to develop our quality management approach, building on our initial progress in 2020/21 Continue to upgrade our internal financial systems and performance tracking systems to improve efficiency and our ability to forecast Our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion The Commission is committed to the principle of equality of opportunity and the value of diversity. We are subject to a range of legislation including the Public Sector Equality Duty as set out in the Equalities Act 2010, and Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, which prohibits discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity and good relations across a range of protected characteristics. Our commitment goes beyond compliance. We serve a diverse society, and diversity is at the heart of a democracy that works for every voter. We have three key objectives: that everyone who is eligible is able to participate in the democratic process, by identifying barriers, making recommendations and working with others to remove them that we embed equality and diversity in all our work, treat all customers fairly and with respect, and are transparent in the decisions we make equality of opportunity for everyone and that all staff are treated fairly and with respect These objectives are central to the Commission's work: We know which groups of voters are least likely to be registered, and have focussed communications and engagement activities to assist them. For example we have designed campaigns aimed at younger voters and in particular those from black and minority ethnic backgrounds whom we know from research are less likely to be registered, and have worked with a large range of groups such as those representing refugees, gypsies and travellers and voters with a disability. We completed equality impact assessments on relevant policies and procedures throughout 2020/21. The equality impact assessments support a commitment to evidence-based policy making. In addition to arrangements for consultation and monitoring, the assessment process helps to develop effective policies that meet the needs of people in respect to any protected characteristics. We have reviewed and enhanced our process and will fully implement this during 2021-22. We want to improve the diversity of our staff at all levels in the organisation, and consider it important that we reflect the diversity of the people

we serve. We have taken a range of initiatives. Our People Strategy has equality, diversity and inclusion at its heart. Our work on diversity is supported by a number of staff groups. Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion group meets regularly. Our Chief Executive chairs a Race at Work Taskforce and we have appointed a champion to lead actions on this work. The Dignity, Respect and Empowerment group holds the organisation to account on challenging bullying and harassment, working with a Director level Anti-Bullying Champion. Our Wellbeing Group and our Mental Health First Aiders provide support to staff. We will be publishing a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy during 2021-22 alongside a new Employer's Statement on Equal Opportunities.

Northern Ireland Under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) (as amended by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006), the Electoral Commission is required when carrying out its functions to have due regard to the need to: promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and encourage participation by disabled people in public life ('the disability duties'). Under Section 49B of the DDA 1995, the Electoral Commission is also required to submit to the Equality Commission a disability action plan showing how it proposes to fulfil these duties in relation to its functions.

In January we published a draft Disability Action Plan and began a 12 week public consultation in Northern Ireland, as recommended by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. We intend to have the final action plan in place by June 2021 and will report annually on our progress on implementing the plan to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

Wales

The Electoral Commission is committed to the principle that in its conduct of public business and provision of resources and services, the Welsh and languages should be treated on a basis of equality. During 2020/21, important work was undertaken with regard to the Welsh language within the Commission. Our campaigns were created and run bilingually in Wales, such as Got 5/Oes 5 'da ti general voter registration campaign, and the Welcome to Your Vote/Croeso i Dy Bleidlais campaign, to encourage registration among those newly enfranchised voters in Wales. New educational resources were also created for use in schools in both Welsh and . A complaint was made to the Welsh Language Commissioner during 2020 relating to the Commission's statutory process to maintain the registers of political parties and to take registration decisions. In its response the Commission reinforced its commitment to providing an exceptional service to partners in Wales in the language of their choice and to ensuring that the Welsh Language Standards, set in July 2016, are not only met, but that the Commission is innovative and ambitious in the services that it provides. We commissioned an external agency to carry out a review of the Commission's adherence to the Standards and the final report from this work will inform the organisation's next steps regarding Welsh Language provision.

Scotland

We continue to work with a range of delivery partners to promote equal access to and understanding of democracy in Scotland. Using our resources to support the delivery of our goals

Our people Staff relations and engagement

The expertise, hard work and high level of commitment of our workforce enable successful performance and delivery of our Corporate Plan. We value the positive and constructive relationship we have with colleagues and work hard to maintain it. Our staff engagement group meets on a regular basis to seek input from colleagues on emerging issues and help to maintain good relations with staff. We also actively encourage staff involvement as part of the day-to-day process of line management, and we share information on current and prospective developments widely and regularly. To support this, we have a recognition agreement with the Public and Commercial Services Union. We completed our latest staff survey in March 2020 and 86%

of employees responded. Our employee engagement score was 72% (up from 65% in 2018-19). Our scores compared most positively to the Civil Service benchmark in areas such as our people agreeing that: we took action after the previous survey they feel a strong personal attachment to our organisation and its work they would recommend the Electoral Commission as a place to work. The areas where we compared least positively to the Civil Service benchmark and we need to improve on include people agreeing that: there are opportunities for them to progress in their careers at the Electoral Commission they have the IT systems and equipment they need to do their jobs effectively we are committed to creating a diverse and inclusive workplace.

Occupational health and safety We review our health and safety policy annually. We also have procedures, guidance and risk assessments in place to cover our core activities. A health and safety group oversees our arrangements. They meet regularly and report to our senior leadership group. However, primary responsibility for health and safety sits with people managers. We initiate independent health and safety audits of our premises each year, which involves inspecting working environments and reviewing safety management systems. These audits tell us if our arrangements are suitable and highlight any improvements we need to make. In 2020/21 we carried out specific risk assessments to ensure our sites were Covid secure prior to re-opening; routine assessments will restart once travel across the UK is permitted and our sites are back in use.

Our environmental impact We recognise that delivering our activities has an impact on the environment and we continue to work towards minimising this impact. We lease office space in four cities from a combination of public and private sector property owners. We do not have direct control of utility supplier and waste disposal targets and management at our premises. For a number of our offices, the property owner manages energy and water consumption as well as waste disposal and recovers costs through a consolidated service charge. Offices in Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast have relocated to smaller, more environmentally efficient premises in the last 10 years. We completed the renewal of the lease for our London office in 2020. Initiatives are in place to help minimise environmental impact: reduced printed resources provided to electoral administrators and other groups, focusing on electronic provision wherever possible encouraged the use of video and teleconferencing to avoid unnecessary travel with consequential CO₂ emissions operated recycling facilities in all our offices upgraded to more energy efficient information communication technology equipment.

Summary (London office) Performance commentary on emissions We aim to decrease our fossil fuel consumption year on year, an ongoing effect of the property owner's introduction of measures to reduce levels of electricity consumption, including lower 'out of hours' operation of plant and machinery and the introduction of energy-efficient lighting. Coronavirus has meant that the office has not been open during 2020/21 for all staff therefore our performance has not been measurable this year.

Waste report General waste and recycling figures are based on a proportion of total building waste and are not directly controllable by us. Confidential waste disposal for the organisation is handled separately from that for other building occupants. We shred the confidential waste we generate on-site before it is recycled into low-grade paper. The general and recycled waste is based on a proportion of total building waste. All general waste produced in the building, including that generated by us, is sent to a nearby energy from waste plant, instead of landfill sites. Using our financial resources efficiently In 2020/21, the resource initially made available to us by the UK Parliament was £23.3m for voted activity. We received non-voted funding of £200k to pay Commissioners' fees. In January 2021, we had our Supplementary Estimate Approved,

which decreased our resource budget to £20.3m and increased our capital budget to £1.5m. We also reduced our AME budget to £0.3m. The budget changes were due to the postponement of the polls scheduled for May 2020 and the increased costs for our political finance online system. Our final budget breakdown:

Departmental Expenditure Limit Voted (£m)	Non-voted (£m)	Total (£m)	Resource	20.3	0.2	20.5	Capital	1.5	n/a	1.5							
Annually Managed Expenditure	Voted (£m)	Non-voted (£m)	Total (£m)	Resource	0.3	n/a	0.3	Total Net Budget	Voted (£m)	Non-voted (£m)	Total (£m)	Resource	20.6	0.2	20.8		
Capital	1.5	n/a	1.5	Net cash requirement	Voted (£m)	Non-voted (£m)	Total (£m)	Non	21.5	n/a	21.5	In achieving our objectives, we have used £19.1m worth of resources for	the whole year. This was out of the available sum of £20.5m approved by the UK				
Parliament in our Supplementary Estimate (HC 64) for the net resource voted	requirement.	The graphic below summarises our financial performance on the 'voted' element of our budget.	Financial performance 2020/21	Our financial performance follows our strategic performance, being dominated by a shifting electoral timetable.	For the year 2020/21: our staff costs represented 55% of our resource expenditure, which is an increase of 8% from 2019/20. our capital expenditure increased by £0.4m due to the refurbishment works within the London office.	Expenditure 2020/21 (£m)	Staff costs £10.7	Public Awareness £2.2	Local Government Scotland £0.1	Capital Expenditure £1.3	Operating Costs £4.2	Policy Development Grant £1.9	Senedd £0.2	We report our underspend to reflect in-year operational decisions; R-DEL excluding depreciation and PDGs. In 2020/21 this was £1.0m against the voted budget of £17.9m (5.6%). This was predominantly due to unused contingency and other savings in campaigning for the May 2021 elections. The operating underspend - £000s	Event activity £448	Core staff and operating costs £591	The operating underspend is comprised of: £591k reduced spend within our campaigning budget for the May 2021 campaigns. (including contingency for Covid related campaigns that was not required) £103k as a combination of under and over spends within staff costs £253k due to reduced Welsh translation and travel costs £92k as a combination of individually small underspends across the Commission Other underspend £112k in unclaimed policy development grant £39k in depreciation £147k in provisions due to lower than expected costs £279k in capital projects The £80k underspend against non-voted funding is due to lower than expected costs for Commissioners due to vacancies. Our income in our accounts relates to charges for registering political parties and work completed for the Senedd and Scottish Parliament. We collect fines raised against political parties and individuals for failure to comply with the rules on party and election finance and then surrender these to the Consolidated Fund as required by law. The penalties due was £41k in 2020/21 received by 31 March 2021 and surrendered to the Consolidated Fund. In addition to monitoring performance against budgets, we also managed within our cash limits set by the UK Parliament. We required cash amounting to £20.3m in 2020/21 to finance our voted activities, which was £1.2m less than the sum of £21.5m approved by the UK Parliament in our Supplementary Estimate. The reconciliation of net resources outturn to net cash requirement provides a reconciliation from our outturn to the net cash we required in-year. The Statement of Cash Flows shows that the cash balance as at 31 March 2021 was £26k. The Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2021 shows positive taxpayers' equity of £0.9m. Supplier payments Although we are independent of government, we aim to comply with the Prompt Payment Code that operates across the public sector. The target is to pay undisputed invoices within 30 days. In 2020/21, we paid 85% of invoices (81.6% in 2019/20) within 30 days. The pandemic created a backlog in paying invoices during the first part of the year due to the closure of the offices; e-processes were set up and within the last

six months of 2020/21 100% of invoices were paid within 30 days. Freedom of Information, complaints and parliamentary questions We are committed to the principles of openness and transparency in public life and acknowledge the duty to provide information to the public. In 2020/21, we received 153 Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. We responded to 136 (91.9%) of these within the 20 working days statutory timeframe (target: 90%); a proportion of large and complex requests continues to be high. There were nine FOI internal review requests, one of these requests led to additional information being sent to the requestor. The global pandemic had an impact on the number of FOI requests submitted to the Electoral Commission and the pattern of submission was not the same as in previous years. The complexity and impact of the requests did have an impact on the organisation, but this was mitigated by improvements in process and communication across teams. This led to the improvement in the number of requests responded to within the statutory response periods. We received five subject access requests. We responded to all of these promptly. We received one complaint and this is pending closure from the ICO related to a response issued in 2019. We also received two requests for erasure under the General Data Protection Regulation/Data Protection Act 2018. We handled 29 complaints, compared to 51 in 2019/20. Of the 29 complaints handled; 17 have been completed and 12 are still active. Of the 17 that were completed; 11 were not upheld, two were partially upheld, one was upheld, three were closed due to no clarification being received from the complainant. The learnings gleaned from the investigations of these complaints were fed back to the relevant teams to support our commitment to continuous improvement. These complaints spanned a range of topics. Eight complaints focussed on alleged delays in assessing applications to change a party's name. None of these complaints were upheld. We received one request for review by the Chief Executive. While this review did not change the original outcome of the complaint, it did enable further explanation and assistance. In addition, we received correspondence from 181 members of the public that did not constitute complaints under our policy. Where possible the complaints team responded directly to the individual or alternatively forwarded the correspondence to the appropriate team to provide a response if technical expertise was required. Via our dedicated public information service, we responded to 4,463 public enquiries, received by phone and email. Through this service, we have answered questions about how to register and vote in the May 2021 elections taking place across Great Britain. We have explained the public safety measures in place at polling stations, and how people can use absent voting methods to have their say without attending a polling station. We responded to 27 parliamentary questions during 2020/21, including questions about digital campaigning, electoral fraud, the accuracy and completeness of the electoral registers and the effectiveness of electoral law. Chris Matheson MP, a member of the Speaker's Committee, was our spokesperson in the UK Parliament and answered questions on our behalf. Supply estimate for 2021-22 Our supply estimate for 2021-22 (HC1371) provides for a net resource requirement of £17.4m. The Speaker's Committee approved this on 23 March 2021 and was laid before House of Commons on 22 April 2021. The Commission is established by legislation and following the principles of the FReM there is an assumption of continued provision of service, there is nothing to suggest services provided by the Commission will cease or future funding will not be provided. We plan to use these resources to continue delivering our four goals around the delivery of elections, the regulation of political finance, the use of our expertise to improve democratic processes and the best use of our resources.